# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

**SIXTH SERIES—VOLUME 418 (Part 2)**

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

OFFICIAL REPORT

THIRD SESSION OF THE FIFTY-THIRD PARLIAMENT
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND
FIFTY-THIRD YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

**SESSION 2003–04**

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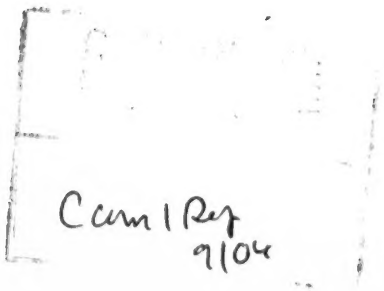
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*23 February 2004*

# Written Ministerial Statements

*Monday 23 February 2004*

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### Workplace Health and Safety

**The Minister for Work (Mr. Desmond Browne):** Today, the Health and Safety Commission (HSC) are launching a new strategy for workplace health and safety in Great Britain. We fully support this strategy, which is based on the experience of the last 30 years, evidence available now and extensive consultations with a wide range of stakeholders.

The strategy represents a significant change of approach for the health and safety system as a whole and the role of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and local authorities within that system. It sets out HSE's ambition to be a modern regulator, responding to new issues in the changing world of work. It emphasises the focus on managing risks, not trying to eliminate them. The strategy also places a greater emphasis on seeking improvements in occupational health.

To make the greatest impact, HSE and its partners will focus more resource on those areas of greatest need and less where the risks are well managed.

The strategy recognises that HSE cannot achieve improvements on its own. The whole of the health and safety system needs to be involved. This means forming close partnerships with local authorities and other stakeholders.

The strategy also recognises that the people best placed to make workplaces safe are the staff and managers who work in them. To support them there is a need to promote greater involvement of workers and to make accessible to them clearer and simpler advice and information.

Over the last 30 years there have been significant improvements in workplace safety. We want to see similar improvements in occupational health. That will require working together with other health organisations.

Improvements in occupational health have a close synergy with the wider Department for Work and Pensions agenda of preventing people from leaving work due to ill health and helping people move back into work. Preventing accidents and ill health at work plays a major role in this agenda, particularly in relation to occupational health issues such as stress and musculoskeletal disorders.

The Government want to see occupational health and safety as a cornerstone of a civilised society and with that achieve a record of both health and safety that leads the world. Much has been done, but there is more to do. The strategy is needed to help us to tackle new issues, especially in occupational ill health and to ensure that workplace safety continues to improve.

We fully endorse the new strategy, which has been placed in the Library.

## CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### Historic Environment

**The Minister for Sport and Tourism (Mr. Richard Caborn):** I would like to update the House on the progress made on implementing the recommendations contained in the Government's statement on the historic environment, "A Force for Our Future", since March 2003.

The statement, published in December 2001, articulates the Government's vision for the historic environment at the heart of national life and sets an agenda for unlocking its full potential. This programme of action emphasises the value of the historic environment as an educational resource, its relevance to all members of the community and how it can work as an economic and regenerative asset in urban and rural settings.

The Government will continue to take this agenda forward in a number of ways, in particular through the review of heritage protection, English Heritage's annual state of the historic environment reports, the DCMS/DfES Joint Committee on Built Environment Education and English Heritage's funding agreement, which is co-sponsored by DCMS, DEFRA and ODPM.

Since March 2003 the following has been achieved:

*June 2003*

The Government historic estate unit published "*Protocol for the Care of the Government Estate 2003*" recommending its adoption by Government Departments who own and manage historic estate and providing a model of good practice for all publicly funded bodies.

The Historic Houses Association launched www.historichousevenues.com, an online resource listing privately owned historic houses and gardens throughout Britain which offer exclusive facilities for pre-booked groups and individual visits, special events, catering and accommodation. The aim is to increase public access and develop commercial activity.

*July 2003*

English Heritage published "*Streamlining Listed Building Consent: Lessons from the Use of Management Agreements*", a report on the effectiveness of listed building consent management guidelines and their potential to streamline the listed building consent regime.

The Architectural Heritage Fund, with support from English Heritage and Cadw, launched an online directory of sources of funding available for rescuing and restoring historic buildings at www.ffhb.org.uk

English Heritage published "*Managing Local Authority Heritage Assets—some guiding principles for decision-makers*", promoting best practice in the management of council-owned heritage assets and high quality design in new work related to them, including public spaces.

The Minister for Media and Heritage launched "*Protecting Our Historic Environment: Making the System Work Better*", a consultation document aiming to improve and refocus the way in which England's historic environment receives statutory protection.

The Government published its consultation "*Historic Environment Records: Benchmarks for Good Practice*", inviting views on how best to ensure that the rich resources currently held in sites and monuments records across the country can be developed and made available to professionals, schools and colleges as well as the wider public.

English Heritage convened a series of meetings to develop and share best practice on access for people with disabilities to historic properties and sites.

*August 2003*

English Heritage published its consultation document "*Local Authority Performance Indicators for Historic Environment Services*", seeking views on developing a performance assessment framework for local authorities managing the historic environment.

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport launched the DCMS/DfES Joint Advisory Committee on Built Environment Education, which will focus on how best to promote the built environment as an educational resource.

*September 2003*

Six new commissioners were appointed to the English Heritage Commission, including for the first time a commissioner responsible for access and outreach issues.

Ministers in DCMS, ODPM and DEFRA signed an innovative joint funding agreement for English Heritage. This recognises for the first time the contribution English Heritage makes to the delivery of all three Departments' targets.

Heritage open days 2003, organised by the Civic Trust with support from English Heritage, attracted over 800,000 visitors to 2,512 properties and activities. There was a significant increase in the number of participating properties and activities, local organisers and volunteers.

The Historic Houses Association and English Heritage, with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, launched a pilot scheme to assist private owners of historic houses to develop education programmes.

*October 2003*

Royal Assent was given to the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Bill.

The UK signed a Co-operation Agreement with UNESCO, which will enable developing countries to benefit from UK heritage and conservation expertise. UK experts will assist developing countries with identifying world heritage sites and preparing management plans and conservation strategies for both cultural and natural world heritages sites.

The Minister for Media and Heritage launched the National Heritage Training Group's business plan "*Building on the Past: Training for the Future*". It sets out the group's plans to tackle the skills deficit in traditional building crafts, including a traditional building crafts training plan.

*November 2003*

"*Heritage Counts*", the second state of the historic environment report, was launched:

> Key themes covered were: historic environment assets; the economic value of the historic environment; outreach, knowledge and access; indicators, including a consultation on a framework for historic environment indicators.
>
> The report published MORI research commissioned by English Heritage, with funds from DCMS and the Heritage Lottery Fund, to establish who is not engaging with the historic environment and why.
>
> It also published research produced by Heritage Link into the contribution made by volunteers to the historic environment.

English Heritage published "*Easy Access to Historic Properties*" for consultation. The publication gives guidance to those responsible for the historic environment on the provision of access for people with disabilities. The updated version takes into account the implementation of Part III of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the updated Part M of the Building Regulations.

*December 2003*

The 2003 Pre-Budget Report confirmed that funding for the Listed Places of Worship grant scheme would continue until the end of March 2006.

The Disability Rights Commission, in association with English Heritage, held a consultative conference on making historic buildings accessible to people with disabilities.

The Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act came into effect.

## HEALTH

### Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre NHS Trust

**The Minister of State, Department of Health (Mr. John Hutton):** On 12 February my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced that he would support the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre NHS trust in its bid to be part of the first wave of NHS foundation trusts. The NHS trust can now apply to the office of the Independent Regulator, chaired by Bill Moyes, for authorisation as an NHS foundation trust, and set up new governance arrangements including recruiting members and holding elections to the Board of Governors.

The Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre NHS trust is now working towards authorisation as an NHS foundation trust along with 24 other NHS trusts.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Race Relations (Amendment) Act

**The Minister for Citizenship and Immigration (Beverley Hughes):** I have today made a technical amendment to the authorisation under section 19D of the Race Relations Act which enables immigration officers to prioritise arriving passengers for examination and immigration offenders for removal on the ground of nationality. The change is that nationalities will be

prioritised if adverse decisions and immigration breaches reach more than 50 in total and five of every 1,000 admitted persons of a particular nationality.

The change is necessary to keep the system of prioritisation manageable in the light of improvements to data collection. We do not anticipate that this will make a significant difference to the number of nationalities prioritised and decisions will continue to be made on the individual merits of each case.

**The Minister for Citizenship and Immigration (Beverley Hughes):** I have today made an authorisation under section 19D of the Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended) which will enable immigration officers to prioritise the examination of passengers of Somali national origin. For a period of three months this will allow such people to be examined more rigorously than would otherwise be the case.

The purpose of this measure is to enable the immigration service to obtain information on the number and profiles of Somali-born passengers entering the UK. The aim of this measure is to establish how the large numbers of in-country asylum applicants claiming as Somali, apparently without documentation, enter the UK.

**The Minister for Citizenship and Immigration (Beverley Hughes):** I have today made an authorisation under section 19D of the Race Relations Act 1976 as amended which enables the Home Office to implement measures targeting the top five nationalities in terms of third country/Dublin cases for additional examination on the grounds of nationality.

This change will enable officials to compare the fingerprints of asylum seekers of these five nationalities against other governments' fingerprint databases of asylum seekers, failed asylum seekers and those granted some form of leave to remain.

This change also allows officials to compare the details of asylum seekers from the five prioritised nationalities with the details of individuals originally from those countries but now holding a form of immigration status elsewhere who have been granted a visa to travel to the UK.

The purpose of these measures is to identify individuals who have claimed asylum, are failed asylum seekers or absconders, or who already have some form of status in another country and who subsequently claim asylum in the UK.

Iraq, Turkey, Iran, Somalia and Sudan were the top five nationalities subject to third country/Dublin action in the last six months of 2003. This means that other EU member states are properly responsible to consider the asylum claim of the individuals concerned.

Any individuals identified under these processes may be returned to the safe third country identified as responsible for them under existing immigration law.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Hong Kong

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Bill Rammell):** The latest report on the implementation of the Sino-British Joint Declaration on Hong Kong was published today and copies have been placed in the Library of the House. A copy of the report is also available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website www.fco.gove.uk. The report covers the period from 1 July to 31 December 2003 and includes a foreword by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary. I commend the report to the House.

## INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Iraq

**The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn):** I have placed in the Libraries of both Houses a copy of DFID's interim country assistance plan for Iraq. It sets out how DFID aims to contribute to the reconstruction of Iraq in the period up to March 2006. I have also decided to make an initial contribution of £65 million—US$120 million—to the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq, managed by the World Bank and United Nations, out of the resources pledged by the United Kingdom for the reconstruction of Iraq at the Madrid donors conference in October 2003, which I outlined in my written statement of 14 October 2003, column 9–10 WS.

Saddam Hussein's tyranny led to a significant increase in poverty and Iraq was isolated from the rest of the world, including its own region, for much of his rule. In many respects Iraq's social and economic indicators now resemble those of a low-income country rather than a major oil producer. But Iraq's abundant human and natural resources offer the potential for a rapid return to relative prosperity, if the right conditions are created in the short and medium term.

Against this background, DFID's objectives for the next two years are to support: rapid, sustainable and equitable economic growth; effective and accountable governance; and social and political cohesion and stability.

To work towards these goals DFID will focus on three levels:

*Internationally:* by supporting the United Nations and World Bank International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq (IRFFI), assisting the Ministry of Planning and Development Co-operation, and continuing dialogue with other donors on the co-ordination and effectiveness of assistance to Iraq.

*Nationally:* by funding projects which benefit the poor, promote an inclusive political process and economic reform, and strengthen public administration. Examples include helping the growth of small and medium-sized businesses; setting up a fund to support the participation of citizens, parties and interest groups in the political process; and technical assistance to Iraq's public administration system.

*In southern Iraq:* by funding projects to reduce poverty and helping to restore the area's administrative and political links with Baghdad so that it can benefit from Iraq's national development efforts.

At the Madrid donors conference, the United Kingdom pledged a total of £544 million for the period from April 2003 to March 2006, a significant proportion of which would be channelled through the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq (IRFFI). The allocation of our initial contribution between the UN and the World Bank Trust Funds will be decided shortly. Any further DFID contributions to the Funds will be considered in the light of the effectiveness of their operations and their need for additional funding.

A total of over $32 billion was pledged to Iraq at the Madrid conference. These pledges, together with a substantial reduction in Iraq's debt, which should be negotiated this year, will provide a sound basis for the country's initial reconstruction. If the right steps are taken now, and the political situation in the country is stabilised, much of Iraq's longer term investment needs should be met by commercial loans, foreign direct investment and its own resources. Iraq's human capital, and its oil reserves of about $2,500 billion at current prices, should enable it to meet its future needs without significant external grant assistance.

The country assistance plan is also available on the DFID website: www.dfid.gov.uk

## DEFENCE

### Iraq (Campaign Medal)

**The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram):** I am pleased to announce that Her Majesty has graciously approved the detailed qualifying criteria for the award of a Campaign Medal for recent operations in Iraq. I have laid the Command Paper instituting the Iraq Campaign Medal in Parliament today.

### Supplementary Estimates

**The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram):** Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary supplementary estimate, the Ministry of Defence Departmental expenditure limits will be increased by £506,795,000 from £30,792,381,000 to £31,299,176,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

*1000s*

| | *Change* | *Voted* | *New DEL Non-voted* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Resource | 342,500 | 31,866,919 | 448,247 | 32,315,166 |
| Capital | -35,705 | 6,401,972 | 19,925 | 6,421,897 |
| Depreciation[1] | 200,000 | -7,337,887 | -100,000 | -7,437,887 |
| Total | 506,795 | 30,931,004 | 368,172 | 31,299,176 |

[1] Depreciation, which forms part of Resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

The transfer of £116,550,000 from Capital to Resource DEL.

An increase in RfR2 of £231 million Resource DEL for military operations.

A transfer of £5 million Resource DEL from FCO in respect of the Global Conflict Prevention Pool.

A transfer of £910,000 from DFID in respect of the Conflict Prevention Pool for programmes in sub-Saharan Africa.

A transfer of £11,200,000 Resource DEL to the DTI in support of dual-use aero-engine technology programmes.

A transfer of £305,000 Resource DEL from the DWP to the Veterans Agency relating to a change in allowances.

A transfer of £120,000 Resource DEL to the Single Intelligence Account relating to electricity for a shared site.

A transfer of £55,000 Resource DEL from the Home Office in respect of the Voluntary Opportunities Matched Funding Project.

An increase in the Non-budget items of £147,541,000 arising from changes in provision values related to the change in the Treasury Discount Rate.

An increase in Resource Appropriations in Aid of £157,579,000.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from:

A transfer of £116,550,000 from capital DEL to resource DEL as a result of budgetary re-balancing.

An increase in RfR2 of £78 million capital DEL for military operations.

A transfer of £5,500,000 capital DEL from the Home Office to MoD as payment for part of the former RAF Newton site.

A reduction in Capital DEL of £2.655,000, as a result of repaying the funding provided from the reserve in FY01/02 which was brought forward from 2003–04 for op veritas urgent operational requirements.

An increase in non-operating Appropriations in Aid of £134,613,000.

A profit of £17,674,000 on the disposal of fixed assets.

### Ministry of Defence Votes A 2004–05

**The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram):** The Ministry of Defence Votes A 2004–05 will be laid before the House on 23 February as HC 283. Votes A outlines the maximum numbers of personnel that can be retained for Service in the Armed Forces for financial year 2004–05.

Copies of these reports will be laid in the Libraries of both Houses.

# Written Ministerial Statements

*Tuesday 24 February 2004*

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### Supplementary Estimates

**The Minister for Rural Affairs and Local Environmental Quality (Alun Michael):** Subject to parliamentary approval of any necessary supplementary estimate, the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs DEL will be decreased by £77,907,000 from £3,035,822,000 to £2,957,915,000 and the administration costs limits will be decreased by £193,238,000 from £540,470,000 to £347,232,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

*£'000s*

| | *Change* | *Voted* | *New DEL Non-voted* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Resource | -32,035 | 2,378,872 | 397,641 | 2,776,513 |
| Capital | -45,872 | 286,873 | 75,745 | 362,618 |
| Depreciation* | - | -83,495 | -97,721 | -181,216 |
| Total | -77,907 | 2,582,250 | 375,665 | 2,957,915 |

*Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

a take up of £6,317,000 administration resources from ODPM for accommodation costs relating to Ashdown House;

a decrease of £95,000,000 in our non-voted resource budget relating to funding originally provided in respect of the Environment Agency Closed Pension Fund, but which is no longer required in 2003–04;

a reclassification of £45,919,000 capital flood defence grants (paid to the Environment Agency) to non-Voted resource DEL and matching grant in aid, to reflect the correct accounting treatment of these grants (see below offsetting decrease in capital);

an increase to our non-Voted resource DEL of £1,948,000 to complete the transfer of English Nature's unfunded pension liabilities into the Principle Civil Service Pension Scheme;

a transfer of £105,000 administration resources to the DTI for the Farm Business Advice Service (FBAS);

a reclassification of £199,486,000 administration resources to programme resources in respect of the Department's front line services, as agreed with Treasury;

a movement of £50,000,000 from non-Voted resources on to the Estimate (Vote) to reflect latest allocations /forecasts, as agreed with Treasury;

an increase of £2,000,000 to our resource expenditure and operating income to reflect the receipt from British Waterways of interest and capital repayment on its National Loans (NLF) loans and its onward payment to NLF;

an increase of £3,951,000 programme resources and appropriations-in-aid in respect of Pig Industry Restructuring;

a take-up of £8,184,000 programme resources from DWP in respect of Warm Front Pension Credit Costs;

the take-up of our Departmental Unallocated Provision (DUP) of £10,689,000 as programme resources;

a take-up of £500,000 programme resources from DfES for School Milk;

the take-up of £36,000 administration resources and £95,000 programme resources from the Invest to Save Budget, representing Defra's successful projects in the fifth round of awards;

a take-up of £71,000 programme resources from SEERAD for Emissions Trading Registry.

an increase of our Executive Agencies' administrative resources and appropriations-in-aid by £20,000,000 to take account of latest allocations/forecasts and to reflect the appropriations-in-aid target in the Estimate.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from:

a reclassification of £45,919,000 Capital flood defence grants (paid to the Environment Agency) to non-Voted resource DEL and matching grant in aid, to reflect the correct accounting treatment of these grants (see above offsetting increase in resource);

switch on the Estimate £60,000,000 from in-house capital to resources (Local Authority Grants) to reflect latest allocations/forecasts. Note: This switch is Budget neutral, i.e. Local Authority Grants are classified as resource for Estimate purposes but capital in the Budget;

an increase in capital expenditure and non-operating appropriations-in-aid of £2,510,000, in respect of grain store receipts. This relates to an agreement with Treasury—which allows us to recycle grain store receipts in to the Rural Payments Agency's (RPA) Change programme by increasing expenditure in line with income received;

take-up of £47,000 capital from the Invest to Save Budget, representing Defra's successful projects in the fifth round of awards.

### Forestry Commission

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Mr. Ben Bradshaw):** Subject to Parliamentary approval, the Forestry Commission's DEL will be reduced by £1,450,000 from £84,620,000 to £83,170,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

| | *Change* | *Voted* | *New DEL Non-voted* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Resource | -1,450 | 78,097 | 2,653 | 80,750 |
| Capital | | 833 | 2,657 | 3,490 |
| Depreciation* | | -1,070 | - | -1,070 |
| Total | -1,450 | 77,860 | 5,310 | 83,170 |

**Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from transfers of £1,200,000 and £250,000 to the Scottish Executive and National Assembly for Wales respectively. This transfer is required to fund functions transferred from the Forestry Commission Westminster Vote (which covers activities in England and those functions which it carries out on a GB-wide basis), to Forestry Commission Scotland and Wales following the recommendations of the Forestry Devolution Review.

### Rural Delivery Review (Integrated Agency)

**The Minister for Rural Affairs and Local Environmental Quality (Alun Michael):** In my statement of 11 November 2003 on the rural delivery review, I accepted Lord Haskins' broad recommendation to bring together elements of the work done by English Nature, the Countryside Agency and Defra's rural development service into an integrated agency. It is important to me that the integrated agency should have a strong and authoritative voice commanding respect both within and outside Government. It is equally important that the advice I receive from the integrated agency is not only independent, but is seen to be independent. I have therefore decided that this new agency will be established as an executive non-departmental public body.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### Supplementary Estimates

**The Minister for Work (Mr. Desmond Browne):** Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary supplementary estimate, the Department for Work and Pensions DEL will be increased by £382,965,000 from £8,228,690,000 to £8,611,655,000 and the administration costs limits will be increased by £283,684,000 from £6,052,007,000 to £6,335,691,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

*£'000s*

| | *Change* | *Voted* | *New DEL Non-voted* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Resource | 239,021 | 7,100,263 | 1,456,179 | 8,556,442 |
| Capital | 142,674 | 170,140 | 1,202 | 171,342 |
| Depreciation* | 1,270 | -115,415 | -714 | -116,129 |
| Total | 382,965 | 7,154,988 | 1,456,667 | 8,611,655 |

*Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

i. a transfer of provision of £143,000,000 (other current) to capital for Job Centre Plus roll out expenditure;

ii. a transfer in provision of £1,125,000 (administration costs) to the Scottish Executive for the administration costs of Training for Work;

iii. a reduction in provision of £200,000 (other current) to the Welsh Assembly for costs incurred by the Adult Learning Inspectorate;

iv. a reduction in provision of £50,000 (administration costs) due to a transfer to the Department of Health for Care Direct;

v. a reduction in provision of £5,000 (administration costs) as a result of a transfer to the Ministry of Defence in connection with the Ilford Park Polish Home;

vi. an increase in provision of £93,000 (other current) as a result of a transfer from the Department for Education and Skills for Cross Departmental Working with Parents;

vii. an increase in provision of £223,000,000 (administration costs) and £148,305,000 (other current) under the End Year Flexibility Scheme;

viii. an increase in provision of £1,400,000 (administration costs) as a result of a transfer from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for the New Deal for Communities;

ix. an increase in provision of £365,000 in due to a transfer from the Cabinet Office (invest to save budget) in respect of a project to assist with the more effective administration of Free School Meals;

x. an increase in provision of £200,000 (administration costs) as a result of a transfer from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for the New Deal for Communities;

xi. an increase in provision of £243,000 (administration costs) as a result of a transfer from the Scottish Executive for the Family Resources Survey;

xii. an increase in provision of £9,795,000 (administration costs) for the Makinson Bonus scheme.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from:

a. a transfer of provision of £143,000,000 (other current) to capital for Job Centre Plus roll out expenditure;

b. an increase in non operating appropriations in aid of £326,000 due to a revised forecast

## TRANSPORT

### Supplementary Estimates

**The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Alistair Darling):** Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary supplementary estimate, the Department for Transport DEL for 2003–04 will be increased by £185,735,000 from £10,642,808,000 to £10,828,543,000 and the administration costs limits will be increased by £12,166,000 from £379,261,000 to £391,427,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

*(£'000)*

| | *Change* | *Voted* | *NEW DEL Non-voted* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Resource | 494,266 | 4,853,504 | 3,295,458 | 8,148,962 |
| Capital | 29,698 | 1,846,521 | 1,469,442 | 3,315,963 |
| Depreciation* | -338,229 | -636,382 | - | -636,382 |
| *Total* | 185,735 | 6,063,643 | 4,764,900 | 10,828,543 |

**Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The £272,789,000 increase in the voted resource element of the DEL arises from:

(i) take up of £291,284,000 (non cash) reserve claim for the Highways Agency to cover accounting changes in the valuation of road schemes when completed, depreciation of non-pavement assets and the creation of new provisions offset by changes in existing provisions;

(ii) take up of £18,376,000 end year flexibility, comprising:

(a) £12,726,000 (administration costs) for expenditure by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency;

(b) £2,487,000 (administration costs) for expenditure by the Highways Agency;

(c) £2,400,000 for the Driving Standards Agency to fund Automated Driver Licence issue; and

(d) £763,000 (administration costs) for the Department for Transport;

(iii) a net transfer of £9,606,000 from other Government Departments, comprising:

(a) £4,792,000 from the Scottish Executive being an adjustment, to transfers previously made by the Department to the Executive, to reflect ScotRail performance receipts and reductions in ScotRail access charges (£4,504,000) and a transfer in respect of consultant costs on speed cameras (£288,000);

(b) £146,000 from the Department for Trade and Industry in respect of the Low Carbon Partnership (£195,000) partially offset by a transfer to that department for the FP6 Sustainable Surface Transport programme (£49,000);

(c) £705,000 (administration costs) from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in respect of managing the Transport and Works Act (£410,000) and counselling and support services (£295,000); and

(d) a machinery of Government transfer of £3,963,000 from the office of the Deputy Prime Minister in respect of the European Regional Development Fund;

(iv) a net transfer to non-voted resource provision of £46,477,000 comprising:

(a) a transfer of £50,000,000 to cover Highways Agency cash payments against provisions;

(b) a transfer of £500,000 (administration costs) to cover Maritime and Coastguard Agency cash payments against provisions and release of provisions;

(c) partially offset by a transfer of £4,023,000 (administration costs) departmental unallocated provision to voted provision for Department for Transport;

(v) receipts of £4,289,000 (administration costs) used for Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency publicity costs (programme);

(vi) a transfer of £226,000 (administration costs) from the Department for Transport to the Vehicle Certification Agency in respect of Electronic Delivery Systems.

Within the non-voted resource element of the DEL, there has been an increase of £221,477,000 comprising:

(i) a take up of £175,000,000 (non cash) reserve claim for the Highways Agency for release of provisions adjustment; and

(ii) a net transfer from voted resource provision of £46,477,000.

As a result of the above changes to the resource element of the DEL there has been a net increase of £12,166,000 in the gross administration costs limit, from £379,261,000 to £391,427,000 and an increase of £226,000 in the Vehicle Certification Agency net administration limit from -£41,000 to £185,000.

The increase of £29,698,000 in the voted capital element of the DEL arises from:

(i) take up of £20,926,000 (non cash) reserve claim for the Highways Agency in respect of provisions for lands and major schemes claims;

(ii) a net transfer of £4,244,000 from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for various dual and shared Strategic IT and e-business projects; and

(iii) £4,528,000 machinery of government transfer from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in respect of the European Regional Development Fund.

## DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

### Sustainable Communities

**The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill):** I am today publishing for consultation a draft of planning policy statement 1 (PPS1)—"Creating Sustainable Communities" the core statement of the Government's key planning policies.

I am also publishing a paper on the Government's approach to community involvement in planning.

PPS1 is the key overarching document which sets out the Government's high level principles for planning.

Clause 39 (clause 38—the sustainable development clause—as was) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill requires regional and local plans to be drawn up with a view to contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. The clause requires that in doing so, planning authorities must have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State. PPS1 will be a key document underpinning this requirement.

PPS1 is based on three themes:

Planning for sustainable communities and sustainable development;

The new approach to planning we are promoting as part of planning culture change (the spatial planning approach); and

Community involvement in planning.

*Sustainable development*

Our legislation will make contributing to the achievement of sustainable development the key purpose of the planning system. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister should expect planning policies to pursue proactively the four aims of sustainable development—economic development; social inclusion; environmental protection; and prudent use of natural resources—in an integrated way, in line with the Government's overall strategy for sustainable development.

*Spatial Planning*

The new regional and local plans provided for in the Bill are based on the philosophy of spatial planning. Spatial planning goes beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function.

PPS1 sets out the spatial planning approach that will be adopted in the new planning system. These planning tools will reflect real geographies and real community issues, and are thus a flexible approach to planning and sustainable development.

*Community involvement*

Effective community involvement is a vital element in delivering sustainable communities. Our aim should be to develop effective community involvement processes which enable a better understanding of the sometimes difficult choices which have to be made in considering development and more ownership of the accompanying decisions.

We need of course to strike a balance between promoting effective community involvement without allowing the system to be bogged down by endless consultation exercises. I want the reformed system to emphasise community involvement as a way of helping resolve problems early in the process and secure ownership, so that when plans and proposals are put forward, there are fewer objections.

The paper makes clear that community involvement should be based on a real understanding of the community's needs, should be fit for purpose, and should be "front loaded" ie involvement early in the process.

PPS1 can only set out the key policy principles for community involvement in planning. To put these in context, the community involvement paper sets out our general philosophy on community involvement in planning, and puts this in the broader context of policy.

Copies of the two documents will be available in the Libraries of the House. They will also be available on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at (www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_planning/documents/sectionhomepage/odpm_planning_page.hcsp)

## Local Government Members (Code of Conduct)

**The Minister for Local and Regional Government (Mr. Nick Raynsford):** The Government have today published a consultation paper setting out its proposals for draft Regulations under section 66 of the Local Government Act 2000. These proposals will make provision for local government monitoring officers in England, in cases where ethical standards officers of the Standards Board for England deem it appropriate, to investigate allegations that local authority members have breached their code of conduct. The Government are consulting on this issue over the next three months, and at the same time the Standards Board for England is consulting on draft guidance for monitoring officers on how they can best undertake their duties under the proposed Regulations.

We need to ensure the highest possible ethical standards in local government. But we need a system, which is efficient and workable. This approach is a sensible, effective and proportionate way of handling allegations of misconduct at a local level.

Copies of the consultation paper are being sent to local authorities and will be available in the Libraries of both Houses, as well as being made available on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at www.odpm.gov.uk.

## Supplementary Estimates

**The Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. John Prescott):** Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary Supplementary Estimate, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Departmental Expenditure Limits for 2003–04 will change as follows:

(1) the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Main Programmes DEL will be increased by £272,415,000 from £6,914,649,000 to £7,187,064,000 and the administration costs limit will be decreased by £6,003,000 from £396,378,000 to £390,375,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

*£'000s*

| | *Change* | *New DEL Voted* | *Non-voted* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Resource | -141,377 | 2,858,504 | 2,015,267 | 4,873,771 |
| Capital | 413,792 | 1,042,127 | 1,271,166 | 2,313,293 |
| Depreciation* | -5,323 | -21,791 | -2,000 | -23,791 |
| Total | 267,092 | 3,878,840 | 3,284,433 | 7,163,273 |

*Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL, since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

(i) take up of End Year Flexibility of £286,081,000 comprising:

*(a)* £85,888,000 for the Regional Development Agencies;

*(b)* £45,000,000 for European Structural Funds;

*(c)* £11,656,000 for the Sustainable Communities Plan;

*(d)* £67,000,000 for Housing programmes expenditure;

*(e)* £37,290,000 for Fire Services (transitional funding, expenditure on fire dispute including Ministry of Defence costs and New Dimension Search and Rescue;

*(f)* £332,000 from the Invest to Save Budget for Fire Services;

*(g)* £2,293,000 for the Fire Service College;

*(h)* £6,601,000 for Ordnance Survey expenditure and capital charge on the trading fund's assets;

*(i)* £21,000 for New Ventures Fund;

*(j)* £30,000,000 non-voted for English Partnerships;

(ii) a net transfer of £12,712,000 to other government departments, comprising:

*(a)* £109,000 from The Scottish Executive for housing;

*(b)* £1,000,000 from Department for Work and Pensions for Housing;

*(c)* £1,798,000 (administration costs) from Cabinet Office to cover the rent and service charges on 26 Whitehall;

*(d)* £342,000 (administration costs) from the Office of National Statistics for work on housing, the physical environment, fire and Best Value Performance Indicators;

*(e)* £19,000 (administration costs) from Home Office for work on antisocial behaviour;

*(f)* £47,000 (administration costs) from Department for Education and Skills to Government Offices administration for work on their core agenda;

*(g)* £360,000 (administration costs) from the Home Office to Government Offices administration to cover work on the Criminal Justice Interventions and Treatment programme;

*(h)* £3,963,000 European Structural Funds provision to Department of Transport;

*(i)* £1,350,000 to Department for Education and Skills, £1,600,000 to Department for Work and Pension for Job Centre Plus and pension services, £2,155,000 to Home Office for adventure capital and capacity building funds;

*(j)* £425,000 (administration costs) to Department of Constitutional Affairs in respect of the transfer of work on devolution;

*(k)* £6,189,000 (administration costs) to Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to cover the baseline budget for Ashdown House retail rent;

*(l)* £705,000 (administration costs) to the Department for Transport to cover interdepartmental services;

(iii) An increase in receipts of £33,431,000 to offset similar increases in provision of £15,568,000 for administration costs, £5,504,000 for Government Offices administration costs, £8,743,000 for Fire services, £2,573,000 for The Planning Inspectorate Executive Agency, £510,000 for Ordnance Survey Trading Fund, £225,000 for Housing services, £306,000 for Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre Executive Agency Trading Fund and £2,000 for Planning.

(iv) A transfer of £54,471,000 from resource investment to capital within Sustainable Communities.

(v) A transfer of £376,949,000 from resource investment to capital within the Regional Development Agencies.

(vi) A transfer of £11,000,000 to resource investment from capital within the European Structural Funds. This reflects the correction of the split between capital grants to local authorities and capital grants to the private sector.

(vii) A transfer of £2,564,000 to resource investment from capital due to a classification error within Fire Services.

(viii) A transfer of £390,000 to Request for Resources 2 from Request for Resources 1.

(ix) A net transfer of £769,000 from voted to non-voted provisions comprising:

*(a)* a transfer of £4,555,000 to non-voted DEL for South East of England Development Agency work in delivering Other Growth Area and Thames Gateway projects and to support Thurrock Urban Development Corporation;

*(b)* transfers of £1,470,000 and £1,750,000 from Sustainable Communities Plan and New Ventures Fund respectively to non-voted DEL;

*(c)* a transfer of £459,000 to non-voted Housing Corporation;

*(d)* a transfer of £2,000,000 from non-voted resource investment DEL to voted capital DEL for Housing programmes;

*(e)* a transfer of £2,300,000 to voted DEL for the Thames Gateway programmes;

*(f)* a transfer of £3,165,000 to voted DEL to fund capital charge on Fire Service College assets;

(x) Provision of £4,500,000 in respect of future pension liability for non-voted Housing Corporation. This is a classification change.

(xi) Provision of £1,000,000 in respect of future pension liability for non-voted English Partnerships. This is a classification change.

(xii) As a result of the changes to Request for Resources 1, The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's administration provision has been increased by £17,642,000 from £408,920,000 to £426,562,000.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from:

(i) take up of end year flexibility of £2,708,000 comprising of:

*(a)* £2,217,000 for the Disable Facilities Grant;

*(b)* £50,000 from the Invest to Save Budget for Fire Services;

*(c)* £40,000 from the Capital Modernisation Fund for Public Space improvement programme;

*(d)* £401,000 from Sustainable Communities;

(ii) A transfer of £54,471,000 from resource investment to capital within Sustainable Communities.

(iii) A transfer of £376,949,000 from resource investment to capital within the Regional Development Agencies.

(iv) A transfer of £11,000,000 from capital to resource investment within the European Structural Funds. This reflects the correction of the split between capital grants to local authorities and capital grants to the private sector.

(v) A transfer of £2,564,000 from capital to resource investment due to a classification error within Fire Services.

(vi) A transfer of £8,772,000 to Department of Transport comprising of £4,244,000 for shared IT projects and £4,528,000 for European Structural Funds provision.

(vii) Within the capital element of the DEL there is a net transfer of £10,130,000 from voted to non-voted provision comprising of: £1,030,000 from voted to non-voted provisions in respect of the Ordnance Survey Trading Fund; a transfer of £2,000,000 from non-voted resource DEL to capital DEL for Housing programme; a transfer of £10,800,000 to non-voted DEL for English Partnership work on Pathfinder projects and a transfer of £300,000 to non voted Housing Corporation.

(2) The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Local Government DEL will be increased by £1,923,000 from £41,359,492,000 to £41,361,415,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

*£'000s*

| | *Change* | *Voted* | *New DEL Non-voted* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Resource | 870 | 40,929,679 | 97,973 | 41,027,652 |
| Capital | 1,053 | 324,710 | 9,053 | 333,763 |
| Depreciation* | -400 | -400 | 0 | -400 |
| Total | 1,523 | 41,253,989 | 107,026 | 41,361,015 |

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

(i) take up of End Year Flexibility of £550,000 comprising:

*(a)* £250,000 for Best Value Parish Councils;

*(b)* £300,000 for Valuation services;

(ii) a transfer of £390,000 from Request for Resources 1.

(iii) a transfer of £39,000 from the Office of National Statistics for Local Government research, publicity, mapping and electoral law costs.

(iv) a transfer of £109,000 of the Standards Board own spending to capital.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from:

(i) take up of End Year Flexibility of £944,000 for the Standards Board own spending.

(ii) a transfer of £109,000 of the Standards Board own spending from resource.

### Housing Bill

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Yvette Cooper):** On Friday the Government tabled amendments to the Housing Bill, which is currently being considered by the House in Committee. These amendments meet a number of the recommendations of the Park Homes Working Party and aim to deal with some of the key concerns about the existing legislation.

They amend the Mobile Homes Act 1983 to require a written statement of terms to be given to a prospective occupier 28 days before the agreement to station a park home on a site is entered into. At present Written statements may be given up to three months after the agreement has commenced.

In the event of the owner failing to produce the written statement in advance, any express terms contained in the agreement will not be enforceable at the suit of the owner. This is to encourage the site owner to produce the written statement in advance, and is not likely to hold up the process of a sale.

The amendments create a power by which the Secretary of State (in Wales the National Assembly for Wales) can add additional terms to be implied into the agreement, and repeal and vary those in the Mobile Homes Act 1983. This power might be used, for example, to give an occupier the right to quiet enjoyment of their home, whereas currently an occupier would have to go to court to have this term implied into their agreement.

Because existing agreements are of infinite duration, we need to be able to amend the statutory implied terms for existing agreements, where these are clearly inadequate. Provision has therefore been made for the first exercise of the power to have retrospective effect, i.e. to allow amendment of the implied terms operating as part of existing agreements. Future exercises of the power will be non-retrospective. Any order made under the power is subject to affirmative resolution by both Houses of Parliament, and the clause contains a consultation requirement for the Secretary of State to consult interested parties as to the proposed amendments. Representatives of both site owners and occupiers will therefore be consulted about the terms of any order to be made.

Site owners will in future have a time limit of 28 days for giving or withholding approval of a prospective purchaser. By the end of this time limit a decision must have been given in writing. If not, the occupier can apply to the court for an order giving approval to that purchaser, which if given would involve the site owner in costs.

The age of a home is removed as a relevant criterion for ending an agreement. Currently a site owner may terminate an agreement on grounds of 'age and condition' of the unit. The amendment will remove the reference to age from the 1983 Act, as the age of a unit is irrelevant. The amendment will enable courts to consider the condition of the unit and to allow time for appropriate repairs (if reasonably practicable).

The amendments increase the protection of occupiers of park homes against harassment and illegal eviction by amending the Caravan Sites Act 1968 to mirror the wording in the Protection from Eviction Act 1977, which governs the protection given to occupiers of conventional housing against eviction and harassment. The wording for the existing offence for a site owner doing "acts calculated to interfere with the peace or comfort" of the occupier which cause him to abandon his home, has been relaxed to "acts likely to interfere" with such peace or comfort, which is obviously an easier test to satisfy. A new offence has been introduced which does not require specific intent by a site owner or his agent to cause an occupier to abandon his home. This will increase the protection available to occupiers and the chances of successful prosecutions.

The remaining recommendations of the Working Party need further work to ensure that when fully implemented they will work effectively in practice. To that end, we have recently commissioned consultants to develop proposals on the implementation of the recommendations in relation to site licensing.

## HEALTH

### Supplementary Estimates

**The Secretary of State for Health (Dr. John Reid):** Subject to the necessary Supplementary Estimate, the Department of Health's element of the Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) will be increased by £262,454,000 from £65,583,213,000 to £65,845,667,000 and the Administration Cost Limit will decrease by £4,042,000 from £297,448,000 to £293,406,000. The overall DEL including the Food Standards Agency will increase by the same amount £262,454,000 from £65,722,240,000 to £65,984,694,000. The impact on resource and capital are set out in the following table.

| | *Change* £ *million* | *Voted* £ *million* | *New DEL Non-voted* £ *million* | *Total* £ *million* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Department of Health* | | | | |
| Resource DEL | 95.348 | 63,334.252 | -310.127 | 63,024.125 |
| Capital DEL | 167.106 | 653.611 | 2,167.931 | 2,821.542 |
| Total Department of Health DEL | 262.454 | 63,987.863 | 1,857.804 | 65,845.667 |
| Depreciation* | 0.078 | -352.570 | -44.369 | -396.939 |

| | Change £ million | Voted £ million | New DEL Non-voted £ million | Total £ million |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total Department of Health spending (after adjustment) | 262.532 | 63,635.293 | 1,813.435 | 65,448.728 |
| *Food Standards Agency* | | | | |
| Resources | 0 | 136.368 | 0 | 136.368 |
| Capital | 0 | 2.659 | 0 | 2.659 |
| Total Food Standard Agency DEL | 0 | 139.027 | 0 | 139.027 |
| Depreciation* | 0 | -2.004 | 0 | -2.004 |
| Total Food Standards Agency spending (after adjustment) | 0 | 137.023 | 0 | 137.023 |

**Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since the capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The change in the DEL arises from the take up of end year flexibility £260,978,000 (£1,572,000 administration costs) for capital, revenue and administration budgets as set out in Table 6 of the Public Expenditure 2002–03 Provisional Outturn White Paper Cm 5884 published in July 2003. A net transfer from the Home Office of £1,980,000 (£50,000 administration costs) mainly for training costs at special hospitals, drugs misuse pilot projects and voluntary sector care projects helping to increase volunteers in intermediate care; from the Department of Trade and Industry £1,070,000 (£70,000 administration costs) for contributions towards the human genetics commission and to support development of genetics knowledge parks to increase understanding into a range of genetic based issues including research; from the Department for Work and Pensions £10,343,000 for the NHS low income scheme and a contribution to the care direct budget; to the Scotland Executive £88,000 for their share of the reimbursement from manufacturers 3M associated with the ending of a hip replacement programme; a net transfer to the Department for Education and Skills £12,544,000 (£-1,733,000 administration costs) mainly for capital projects, machinery of government changes and NHS diploma students offset by contributions towards teenage pregnancy, children's trusts and communications budgets; a net transfer from the DHSS Northern Ireland £735,000 for out of area treatments offset by a contribution to CJD care fund; to the National Assembly for Wales £20,000 (administration costs) for prison healthcare.

The administration cost limit has reduced by £4,042,000 from £297,448,000 to £293,406,000. In addition to the changes detailed above there is a decrease of £3,981,000 for transfers to programme budgets mainly for capitalisation of software developments.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Supplementary Estimates

**The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Paul Murphy):** Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary Supplementary Estimate, the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) DEL will be increased by £28,325,000 from £1,180,916,000 to £1,209,241,000. The administration cost limit has been increased by £34,000 from £163,375,000 to £163,409,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

| | Change | New DEL | Of which: Voted | Non-voted |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Resource | 28,325 | 1,136,389 | 400,441 | 735,948 |
| Capital | 0 | 72,852 | 30,113 | 42,739 |
| Depreciation* | 10,956 | 22,209 | 27,467 | 49,676 |
| Total | 17,369 | 408,345 | 751,220 | 1,159,565 |

** Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from a change in the budgeting treatment for pension schemes (£25,000,000) and from the net effect of transfers to and from other Government Departments (£3,325,000). The increase in administration costs (£34,000) is also, as a net effect of transfers to and from other Government Departments.

### General Consumer Council

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Ian Pearson):** The General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland 2002–03 annual report and accounts were deposited in the Library of the House today.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Supplementary Estimates

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Fiona Mactaggart):** Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary supplementary estimate, the Charity Commission DEL will be increased by £83,000 from £28,198,000 to £28,281,000 and the administration costs limit will be increased by £83,000 from £27,409,000 to £ 27,492,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

*£'000s*

| | Change | Voted | New DEL Non-voted | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Resource | 83,000 | 27,492,000 | - | 27,492,000 |
| Capital | - | 1,399,000 | - | 1,399,000 |
| Depreciation* | - | -610,000 | - | -610,000 |
| Total | 83,000 | 28,281,000 | - | 28,281,000 |

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from the take-up of £83,000 End-Year Flexibility funding, of which £50,000 will fund unavoidable medical retirements, £15,000 will fund costs relating to

the replacement of the Commission's current payroll provider and £18,000 will fund the implementation of a non-pay staff benefit scheme. The change in the administration costs limit arises from the same take-up of £83,000 resource End-Year Flexibility funding.

**The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. David Blunkett):** Plans of changes to the Departmental Expenditure Limit and Administrative Cost Limit for 2003–04.

Subject to Parliamentary approval of the necessary Supplementary Estimate, the Home Office's Departmental Expenditure Limits (DEL) for 2003–04 will be increased by £238,426,000 from £12,534,970,000 to £12,773,396,000. These changes cause the administration costs limit to increase by £38,097,000 from £3,431,703,000 to £3,469,800,000. In addition to normal administration costs, the Home Office administration costs limit also includes the costs of front line Prison, and Immigration service staff. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

*£'000s*

| | *Change* | *Voted* | *New DEL Non-voted* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Resource | 226,341 | 10,357,050 | 1,569,960 | 11,927,010 |
| Capital | 27,023 | 841,847 | 241,295 | 1,083,142 |
| Depreciation* | 14,938 | -197,663 | -39,093 | -236,756 |
| Total | 238,426 | 11,001,234 | 1,772,162 | 12,773,396 |

*Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from: revised IND budget addition of £171,000,000 comprising £33,899,000 to subhead I1, £143,668,000 to subhead I2, reduction of £6,977,000 to subhead I3 and a reduction in receipts of £410,000 to subhead I5; £52,500,000 additional resources for the Recovered Assets Incentive Scheme; EYF of £2,662,000 programme expenditure to RfR1 subhead C2

ISB funds: £1,051,000 to RfR1 subhead H3 for the GuideStar UK project;

Additional resources of £7,179,000: for RfR2 subhead B1 following an adjustment to the imputed cost of capital associated with the Prisons PFI contract;

Transfers from other Government Departments total £11,719,000. This comprises:

£7,502,000 from the Department for Constitutional Affairs to RfR 1 comprising £4,850,000 to subhead ADS for meeting the needs of the Criminal justice IT delivery plan; £2,610,000 to subhead E2 for Crown courts; £24,000 to subhead H3 for strategic funding of Mediation UK and £18,000 to subhead E3 as a contribution to the group of states against corruption (GRECO).

£2,215,000 from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to RfR 1 comprising £2,000,000 to subhead B3 for capacity building in 67 neighbourhoods with high crime rates; £155,000 to subhead H3 in respect of the Adventure Capital fund; £60,000 to subhead B1 for work on local public service agreements.

£50,000 from the Office of National Statistics to RfR1 subhead K1 for work associated with the neighbourhood statistics programme.

£1,792,000 from the Department for Education and Skills to RfR 1 comprising £1,500,000 to subhead AM1; £159,000 to subhead H3 for the mentor point programme and £133,000 to subhead AM2 for Treasury solicitors fees on past litigation for approved schools.

£140,000 from Customs and Excise to RfR1 subhead A2 for funding the special projects and electro mechanical services.

£20,000 from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to RfR1 subhead E3 as a contribution to the group of states against corruption (GRECO);

Transfers to other government departments totalling £19,756,000. This comprises:

£628,000 from RfR1 to the Department for Constitutional Affairs comprising £500,000 from subhead E2 for local criminal justice boards; £68,000 from subhead H1 for staff costs involved in administering the golden jubilee awards in the Scottish and Welsh Devolved administrations and £60,000 from subhead E3 for the victims and witnesses survey.

£63,000 from RfR 2 subhead C1 to the Department for Constitutional Affairs for staff costs for prison adjudicators.

£5,950,000 from RfR1 to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office comprising £2,088,000 from subhead I1 for the European Union Residence Permit; £305,000 from subhead I1 for the Colombo biometrics pilot; £250,000 from subhead I1 for the wider biometrics scoping study;

£185,000 from subhead I1 for the East Africa biometrics project; £2,000,000 from subhead D3 and £1,000,000 from subhead C2 for contributions towards the FCO's Afghanistan drugs plan and £122,000 from subhead K2 for research into techniques for identifying and measuring opium cultivation.

£4,199,000 from RfR1 to the Crown Prosecution Service comprising £3,300,000 from subhead C2 for costs associated with the proceeds of crime act 2002; £500,000 from subhead E1 for the confidence unit and £210,000 from subhead C3 to cover cost under the recovered asset incentive fund; £189,000 from subhead B2 to support joint working and improve effective use of enforcement measures for Anti-Social Behaviour.

£3,413,000 from RfR1 to Customs and Excise comprising £1,570,000 from subhead C2 for costs associated with Project Cyclamen; £1,003,000 from subhead C3 for legal teams associated with the proceeds of crime act and £840,000 from subhead C3 for the Regional Assets recovery Teams project.

£1,980,000 from RfR1 to the Department of Health comprising £1,000,000 from subhead D3 for heroin pilots in the Drug Misuse service; £270,000 from subhead H3 for immediate care services and £150,000 from subhead H3 for "Care direct", a match funded project; £50,000 from subhead AM1 for funding of the Mental Health bill team and £510,000 from subhead AM2 for central support cost for the Community Project (£350,000); for CBT training at Ashworth Hospital (£97,000); for general training at Broadmoar and Rampton Hospital (£25,000 each) and for evaluation of the Drug Education/Young People pooled Budget (£13,000).

£1,080,000 from RfR1 to the Cabinet Office comprising of £1,050,000 from subhead C2 for drugs projects and £30,000 from subhead AM1 for cost associated with the Carter review.

£406,000 from RfR1 to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for business crime advisor and anti social behaviour unit.

£417,000 from RfR2 to the Department for Trade and Industry comprising £385,000 from subhead C2 and £32,000 from subhead C1 for the pay review body.

£288,000 from RfR1 to the Department for Education and Skills comprising £201,000 from subhead I1 for the moorfoot building agreement; £54,000 from subhead H3 for the community championship programme and £33,000 from subhead B1 for the street crime action team.

£610,000 from RfR 2 subhead A2 to the Department for Education and Skills for transferring education responsibility from HMPS.

£642,000 to the National Assembly of Wales comprising £250,000 from RfR1 subhead D3 for throughcare and aftercare; £43,000 from RfR1 subhead B1 for business crime reduction advisors and £349,000 from RfR2 subhead A1 for additional prison health care costs.

£55,000 from RfR1 subhead H3 to the Ministry of Defence for volunteering opportunities, a match funded project.

£25,000 from RfR1 subhead C3 to the Asset Recovery Agency for the Recovered Assets Incentive Fund;

Machinery of Government changes totalling £14,000 comprising:

Additional £14,000 provision for Family policy, to be transferred from RfR1 subhead H1 "Community policy" to the Department for Education and Skills;

The change in the capital element of DEL arises from:

Revised IND capital budget addition of £46,000,000;

EYF totalling £11,295,000 comprising:

£10,000,000 to RfR2 subhead A7 for building prison capacity; £654,000 capital expenditure to RfR1 subhead C7 and £641,000 to RfR1 subhead L7 for work relating to the Hoclas project;

Transfers to other government departments totalling £30,272,000. This comprises:

£22,324,000 from RfR1 to the Department for Constitutional Affairs comprising £15,800,000 from subhead E7 to meet the cost of the overall delivery plan for 2003–04; £5,000,000 from subhead E7 for the crown courts; £1,000,000 from the Departmental unallocated provision for criminal justice IT work; £264,000 from subhead E7 to support improvements in inputting Crown Court decisions into the Police National Computer and £260,000 from subhead E7 for IT interface work. £5,500,000 from RfR1 subhead I7 to the Ministry of Defence in respect of RAF Newton.

£2,047,000 from RfR1 to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office comprising £1,013,000 from subhead I7 for the new visa regime in Kingston, Jamaica; £912,000 from subhead I7 for the European Union Residence Permit and £122,000 from subhead I7 for capital expenditure on biometrics in East Africa.

£401,000 from RfR1 subhead C7 to Customs and Excise for costs associated with Project Cyclamen.

## PRIME MINISTER

### Supplementary Estimates

**The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair):** Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary Supplementary Estimate, the Security and Intelligence Agencies' DEL will be increased by £27,620,000 from £1,497,446,000 to £1,525,066,000 and the administration costs limits will be increased by £4,295,000 from £566,324,000 to £570,619,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

*£'000s*

| | *Change* | *Voted* | *New DEL Non-voted* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Resource | 13,819,000 | 1,119,106,000 | 11,750,000 | 1,130,856,000 |
| Capital | 14,402,000 | 530,411,000 | 5,000,000 | 535,411,000 |
| Depreciation* | 601,000 | 141,201,000 | - | 141,201,000 |
| Total | 27,620,000 | 1,508,316,000 | 16,750,000 | 1,525,066,000 |

*Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

1. the take up of End of Year Flexibility of £9,198,000.

2. a transfer of £7,016,000 from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to reflect funding for Conflict prevention.

3. a transfer of £85,000 from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to fund planned programme activity.

4. a transfer of £1,050,000 from the Home Office.

5. a transfer of £120,000 from the Ministry of Defence for the payment of electricity.

6. a switch of £2,000,000 to Capital.

7. a decrease of £735,000 Resource due to an increase of £735,000 in the forecast Profit on Sale of an asset. This is a non-cash item.

8. a decrease of £915,000 in other non-cash items due to new forecasts.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from:

1. the take up of End of Year Flexibility of £ 11,531,000.

2. a switch of £2,000,000 from Resource.

3. a transfer of £861,000 to the Cabinet Office.

4. An increase of £1,732,000 due to the virement of £735,000 from Resource (non-cash) to Capital (cash) from the profit of a sale of an asset and £997,000 to correct the figures given in the Winter Supplementary.

## CABINET OFFICE

### Supplementary Estimates

**The Minister for the Cabinet Office and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Mr. Douglas Alexander):** Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary supplementary estimate, the Cabinet Office DEL will be increased by £2,043,000 from £311,289,000 to £313,332,000 and the gross administration costs limits will be increased by £2,644,000 from £223,733,000 to £226,377,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

*£'000s*

| | *Change* | *Voted* | *New DEL Non-voted* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Resource | 1,182 | 277,297 | 0 | 277,297 |
| Capital | 861 | 86,189 | 0 | 86,189 |
| Depreciation* | 0 | -50,154 | 0 | -50,154 |
| Total | 2,043 | 313,332 | 0 | 277,297 |

*Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from additions from the DEL reserve of £3,500,000 for human resources restructuring, draw down of £140,000 end year flexibility on Invest to Save funding provided to the Centre for Management and Policy Studies and net transfers to other government departments of £2,458,000.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from transfers from other departments of £861,000.

## SOLICITOR-GENERAL

### Supplementary Estimates

**The Solicitor-General (Ms Harriet Harman):** Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary supplementary estimate, the Attorney-General's DEL will be increased by £19,955,000 from £568,904,000 to £588,859,000 and the administration costs limits will be increased by £9,683,000 from £429,591,000 to £439,274,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

*£'000s*

| | *Change* | *New DEL Voted* | *New DEL Non-voted* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Resource | 19,575,000 | 573,179,000 | 0 | 573,179,000 |
| Capital | 380,000 | 15,680,000 | 0 | 15,680,000 |
| Depreciation* | 0 | -4,573,000 | 0 | -4,573,000 |
| Total | 19,955,000 | 584,286,000 | 0 | 584,286,000 |

*Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.

The Crown Prosecution Service's element of the Attorney-General's DEL will be increased by £16,574,000 from £511,661,000 to £528,235,000 and the Administration Costs Limit will be increased by £7,683,000 from £401,574,000 to £409,257,000.

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

Administration costs changes resulting from the take up of DEL End-Year Flexibility of £5,000,000, as set out in the Public Expenditure Outturn White Paper (Cm 5884); a transfer of £543,000 from the Department of Constitutional Affairs to support Effective Trial Management pilots; a transfer of £500,000 from the Home Office to support Local Criminal Boards in increasing local confidence in the Criminal Justice System; a transfer of £40,000 from the Department of Constitutional Affairs to fund Local Criminal Justice Board support; and an internal transfer of £1,600,000 from programme expenditure to administration costs to support the increased deployment of Higher Court Advocates in the Crown Court; and

Programme expenditure changes in respect of the take-up of DEL End-Year Flexibility of £6,792,000, as set out in the Public Expenditure Outturn White Paper (Cm 5884); a transfer of £3,300,000 from the Home Office to support the joint delivery of government targets for recovering Proceeds of Crime; a transfer of £210,000 from the Home Office Recovered Assets Incentivisation Fund to fund a Scoping Study and Framework Agreement for the Appointment of Receivers; a transfer of £189,000 from the Home Office to support joint working and improve effective use of enforcement measures for Anti-Social Behaviour; a internal transfer of £1,600,000 programme expenditure to administration costs to support the increased deployment Higher Court Advocates in the Crown Court; and a transfer of £7,000,000 from non-voted Departmental Unallocated Provision to voted programme expenditure in resource DEL.

The Serious Fraud Office's DEL will be increased by £3,000,000 from £28,850,000 to £31,850,000 and the Administration Costs Limit will be increased by £2,000,000 from £18,475,000 to £20,475,000.

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from a part claim on the DEL Reserve of £1,000,000 in respect of additional costs relating to two blockbuster cases; the take-up of End-Year Flexibility of £1,000,000 administration costs and £1,000,000 resource programme costs.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from the take-up of end year flexibility of £380,000 capital relating to the increase in IT expenditure.

The Treasury Solicitor's Departmental DEL will be increased by £1,000 from £13,093,000 to £13,094,000. A £1,000 token increase arises from additional demand for legal services provided to other Government Departments.

There is no increase in the Treasury Solicitors Administration Cost Limit and no claims on the DEL Re serve or End-Year Flexibility have been made.

## DEFENCE

### Nimrod MRA4

**The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Geoffrey Hoon):** We announced, in February last year, that agreement had been reached with BAE SYSTEMS on the way ahead for the Nimrod MRA4 programme and undertook to report significant developments to the House. We are pleased to announce that, following detailed negotiations, a contract amendment, formally embodying the Agreement, was signed on 23 February 2004.

Signature of the contract amendment demonstrates the positive relationship between the MOD and the Company and the joint commitment to deliver this important military capability within the terms of our agreement. This contract amendment, however, although important, is not an end in itself. The work over the past year in putting the Agreement into effect has set the programme on a much sounder footing for the future. Risks and challenges remain however, and we are working hard, with the Company, to assure the long-term stability of the programme.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Supplementary Estimates

**The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Ms Patricia Hewitt):** Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary supplementary estimate, the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets DEL will be decreased by £799,000 from £1,531,000 to £732,000 and the administration costs limits will remain unchanged at

£1,398,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

*£'000s*

| | *Change* | *Voted* | *New DEL Non-voted* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Resource | 1,000 | 682,000 | - | 682,000 |
| Capital | - | 50,000 | - | 50,000 |
| | 800,000 | | | |
| Depreciation* | - | - | - | - |
| | | 1,300,000 | | 1,300,000 |
| Total | - | - | - | 568,000 |
| | 799,000 | 568,000 | | |

*Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from additional programme costs of £1,201,000 in respect of higher than expected costs of energywatch. There is no change in the administration cost due to a compensating increase in appropriations in aid of £1,200,000.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from higher than expected receipts from the sale of capital assets.

**The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Ms Patricia Hewitt):** Subject to Parliamentary approval of the necessary Supplementary Estimate, the Department of Trade & Industry's DEL will be increased by £280,472,000 from £5,297,355,000 to £5,577,827,000 and the administration costs limits will be increased by £2,998,000 from £431,695,000 to £434,693,000.

Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital is as set out in the following table:

| | *Change* | *Voted* | *New DEL Non-voted* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Resource (£000) | 224,012 | 1,072,089 | 3,870,623 | 4,942,712 |
| Capital (£000) | 56,460 | 310,301 | 324,814 | 635,115 |
| Depreciation* (£000) | 0 | - 20,841 | - 93,159 | - 114,000 |
| Total (£000) | 280,472 | 1,361,549 | 4,102,278 | 5,463,827 |

**Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

*RfR1*

i) a transfer of £11,200,000 from the Ministry of Defence in support of dual-use Aero Engine technology programmes;

ii) a transfer of £67,000 to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in respect of the subscription to UNCLOS;

iii) a transfer of £385,000 from the Home Office in respect of the Prison Services Pay Review Body;

iv) a transfer from the Ministry of Defence of £43,000 in respect of the Armed Forces Pay Review Body and £16,000 in respect of the Senior Salaries Review Body;

v) a transfer of £58,000 from the Northern Ireland Office in respect of the Prison Services Pay Review Body;

vi) a transfer of £15,000 from the Cabinet Office in respect of the Senior Salaries Pay Review Body;

vii) a transfer of £79,000 from the Department for Education and Skills in respect of the School Teachers Pay Review Body;

viii) a transfer of £49,000 from the Department for Transport in respect of the FP6 Sustainable Surface Transport programme;

ix) a transfer of £195,000 to the Department for Transport for the Low CVP Permanent Secretariat;

x) reclassification of £24,000,000 in respect of OFCOM establishment costs from resource to capital expenditure;

xi) a virement of £9,786,000 from voted Cost of Capital to non-voted Cost of Capital in respect of Companies House and the Patent Office;

xii) transfer of £1,000,000 to the Department of Health in respect of Genetic Knowledge Parks;

xiii) utilisation of £12,200,000 from the unused balance of the Department's End-Year Flexibility entitlement in respect of Nuclear Support for the former Soviet Union;

(xiv) utilisation of £3,862,000 from the unused balance of the Department's End-Year Flexibility entitlement in respect of the Rover Task Force;

(xv) utilisation of £19,541,000 from the unused balance of the Department's End-Year Flexibility entitlement in respect of Innovation and Space;

(xvi) utilisation of £12,000,000 from the unused balance of the Department's End-Year Flexibility entitlement in respect of the Modernisation of the Post Office Network;

(xvii) utilisation of £50,000 from the Capital Modernisation Fund in respect of the Evidence Based Policy Fund study of the UK's e-business performance;

(xviii) an increase of £1,498,000 in the non-voted expenditure of Postwatch and an equivalent increase in voted receipts;

(xix) a classification change of £17,683,000 from capital to current expenditure in respect of the National Measurement System PFI deal;

(xx) an increase of £63,893,000 in the non-voted expenditure of the Regional Development Agencies and an equivalent increase in voted receipts;

(xxi) utilisation of £4,500,000 of the unused balance of the Department's End-Year Flexibility entitlement in respect of non-voted expenditure of the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority;

(xxii) utilisation of £15,260,000 of the unused balance of the Department's End-Year Flexibility entitlement for non-voted expenditure of the Competition Commission.

*RfR2*

i) utilisation of £2,930,000 from the unused balance of the Department's End-Year Flexibility entitlement for non-voted expenditure of the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council;

ii) utilisation of £461,000 from the unused balance of the Department's End-Year Flexibility entitlement for non-voted expenditure of the Medical Research Council;

iii) utilisation of £1,541,000 from the unused balance of the Department's End-Year Flexibility entitlement for non-voted expenditure of the Council for the Central Laboratory of the Research Councils;

iv) utilisation of £9,456,000 for resource and £239,000 for capital grants from the unused balance of the Department's End-Year Flexibility entitlement for non-voted expenditure of the Natural Environment Research Council;

v) utilisation of £22,569,000 from the unused balance of the Department's End-Year Flexibility entitlement for non-voted expenditure of the Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council;

(vi) a transfer of £200,000 from the Department for Education and Skills in respect of Women's Resource Centres;

vii) utilisation of £24,012,000 from the unused balance of the Department's End-Year Flexibility entitlement for the Higher Education Innovation Fund.

**Office of Deputy Prime Minister Estimate**

i) utilisation of £67,427,000 from the unused balance of the Department's End-Year Flexibility entitlement for European Regional Development Fund expenditure borne of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Estimate;

ii) utilisation of £22,000,000 from the unused balance of the Department of Work and Pension's End-Year Flexibility entitlement under the PES pool arrangement for European Development Fund expenditure borne on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Estimate.

**Also within the change to resource DEL, the changes to administration costs limit are:**

*RfR1*

i) a transfer of £32,000 from the Home Office in respect of the Prison Services Pay Review body;

ii) a transfer of £17,000 from the Department of Constitutional Affairs in respect of the Senior Salaries Pay Review body;

iii) a transfer of £105,000 from the Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs in respect of the Farm Business Advice Service;

iv) a transfer of £300,000 from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in respect of UK Trade and Investment E-business;

v) implementation of an agreed classification change of £824,000 from capital to administration in respect of UK Trade and Investment E-business;

vi) utilisation of £290,000 of Invest to Save funding in respect of Claims Handling in the Redundancy Payments Service;

vii) implementation of an agreed virement from programme to administration of £1,500,000 in respect of the Liabilities Management Authority.

*RfR2*

i) a transfer of £70,000 to the Department of Health in respect of the Human Genetics Commission.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from:

*RfR1*

i) utilisation of £14,100,000 of capital from the unused balance of the Department's End-Year Flexibility entitlement for non-voted expenditure of the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority;

ii) an increase of £21,995,000 in the non-voted capital expenditure of the Regional Development Agencies and an equivalent increase in voted receipts;

iii) reclassification of £24,000,000 in respect of OFCOM establishment costs from resource to capital expenditure;

iv) utilisation of £20,000,000 from the unused balance of the Department's End-Year Flexibility entitlement for research establishment capital in respect of the National Measurement System and the Teddington PFI deal;

v) implementation of a classification change of £824,000 from capital to current expenditure in respect of E-business;

vi) a transfer of £816,000 to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in respect of E-business;

vii) implementation of an agreed virement of £17,683,000 from capital to resource in respect of the National Measurement System Private Finance Initiative deal, and a classification change of £17,683,000 to reflect the on-balance sheet impact of the National Physical Laboratory virement.

## CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

### Supplementary Estimates

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. Christopher Leslie):** Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary Supplementary Estimate, the Department for Constitutional Affairs, Northern Ireland Court Service and National Archives: Public Records Office and Historical Manuscripts Commission Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) will be increased by £213,545,000 from £3,129,794,000 to £3,343,339,000 and the administration costs limit will be increased by £96,333,000 from £832,843,000 to £929,176,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

| | Change | New DEL Voted | New DEL Non-voted | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Resource | 166,106,000 | 1,128,447,000 | 2,112,305,000 | 3,240,752,000 |
| Capital | 49,737,000 | 167,539,000 | 11,107,000 | 178,646,000 |
| Depreciation* | -2,298,000 | -74,592,000 | -1,467,000 | -76,059,000 |
| Total | 213,545,000 | 1,221,394,000 | 2,121,945,000 | 3,343,339,000 |

**Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The change in the resource element of the Department of Constitutional Affairs DEL arises from:

**Request for Resources 1**

A transfer of £2,000 resources to the Home Office in relation to costs for Contribution to Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO); a transfer of £24,000 resources to the Home Office in relation to Strategic Grant Funding of Mediation UK; a transfer of £7,460,000 admin costs to the Home Office in relation to Criminal Justice Information Technology (CJIT) transfers; a transfer of £500,000 resources from the Home Office in relation to Criminal Justice Service Confidence Unit (CJSCU) funding for local Boards; a transfer of £60,000 resources from the Home Office in relation to Victims & Witnesses Survey; a transfer of £63,000 administration costs from Home Office in relation to staff costs for prison adjudicators; a transfer of £775,000 administration costs from the Department for Work and Pensions in relation to the State Pension Credit Act 2002; a transfer of £425,000 administration costs from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in relation to Machinery of Government changes for devolution; a transfer of £7,000 administration costs from the HM Customs in relation to Funding for Civil Penalties & for Sections 17/18 FA 2003 Missing Traders Intra-Community (MTIC); a transfer of £17,000 administration costs to the Department of Trade & Industry being contribution to the apportionment of the fees for Senior Salaries Review Body (SSRB) members; an increase of £24,000 administration costs in relation to receipts from the Office for National Statistics; a transfer of £543,000 administration costs to the Crown Prosecution Service in relation to costs for Effective Trial Management Programme (ETMP) Officers; a transfer of £40,000 administration costs to the Crown Prosecution service in relation to Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) Funding Suffolk; a transfer of £12,300,000 resources to the Northern Ireland Court Service in relation to funding the Legal Services Commission in Northern Ireland; a transfer of £87,000,000 administration costs from HM Treasury in relation to the Libra Reserve claim; a transfer of £43,300,000 administration costs, £60,700,000 resource costs from HM Treasury in relation to the Single Asylum Fund; an increase of £2,667,000 resources in relation to Machinery of Government; a reclassification of £5,572,000 from admin resource to programme resource in relation to CUT transfers (Crown); a reclassification of £115,000 from admin resource to programme resource in relation to an Invest to Save (ISB) Award; a reclassification of £23,598,000 resources from admin resource to capital DEL;

**Request for Resources 3**

£21,000 in relation to timing adjustments for the Wales Office.

*The following transfers do not form part of the Department of Constitutional Affairs DEL, but impact on the separate DEL in relation to the spending of the National Assembly for Wales:*

The take up of end year flexibility of £180,000,000 for the National Assembly for Wales;

Net transfers from Other Government Departments to the National Assembly for Wales of £2,311,000 as follows:

£200,000 from the Department of Works and Pensions for the Adult Learning Inspectorate; £43,000 from the Home Office for Wales Business Crime Reduction; £50,000 from the Northern Ireland Office for Out of Area Treatments; £20,000 from the Department of Health for a Prison Health Co-ordinator; £349,000 from the Home Office for Prison Service Health Care; £250,000 from the Home Office for Through-care and Aftercare; £34,000 from the Home Office for Golden Jubilee Awards; £1,158,000 from the Department of Works and Pensions for Pension Credit Passports; £250,000 from the Forestry Commission, which is the final settlement associated with the transfer of responsibility for forestry to the Assembly; £43,000 to the Scotland Office for Out of Area Treatments.

The change in the resource element of the Northern Ireland Court Service DEL arises from:

a Public Expenditure Survey (PES) transfer from the Department for Constitutional Affairs of £12,300,000 in respect of the funding of publicly funded legal services in Northern Ireland and the virement of £185,000 from capital to meet a corresponding increase in "other current" expenditure.

The change of £2,063,000 in the resource element of the National Archives DEL arises from the funding of electronic service delivery developments, which relate to the Government's 2005 target.

The change in the capital element of the Department of Constitutional Affairs DEL arises from:

**Request for Resources 1**

a transfer of £22,324,000 capital from the Home Office in relation to CUT transfers; a transfer of £4,000,000 capital from HM Treasury in relation to the Single Asylum Fund; a reclassification of £23,598,000 from admin resources to capital DEL.

The change in the capital element of the Northern Ireland Court Service DEL arises from:

the virement of £185,000 from capital to "other current" to meet a corresponding increase in "other current" expenditure.

The increase in non-voted expenditure arises from the resource consumption requirements of the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission, a Non Departmental Public Body, which was established on 1 November 2003.

## Mental Incapacity Bill

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. David Lammy):** The Government has today published its response to the Joint Committee on the Draft Mental Incapacity Bill report which was published on 17 November 2003 (HL189–1 and HC 1083–1). Copies of the response have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses (Command Paper 6121).

The Government would like to thank the Committee for publishing such a comprehensive report in a short period of time, and in obtaining such a wide range of evidence on the Bill. We are pleased that the Committee

agrees this new statutory framework is needed and that it endorses the principles and general direction of the draft Bill.

The Committee suggested that the Bill, being about how to maximise mental capacity, should be renamed the Mental Capacity Bill and we agree with this recommendation.

The Bill will reform the law in order to improve and clarify the decision making process for those aged 16 and over who are unable to make decisions for themselves. It will also offer, to people who have capacity, the choice to decide how they are cared for in the future by introducing new ways to plan ahead for a time when they might lose capacity.

Over 2 million adults in England and Wales are currently affected by a lack of capacity. Many more care for someone who may need help with decision making. With increasing ageing most of us will face the risk of losing mental capacity at some point in our lives. The Bill therefore has the potential to help a high proportion of the population.

The Department of Constitutional Affairs is working closely with the Department of Health on a revised Bill. We plan to introduce the revised Bill later in this Parliamentary session. We will also have a draft outline of the codes of practice for Parliament to see at Committee stage.

## TREASURY

### Supplementary Estimates

**The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Ruth Kelly):** Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary Supplementary Estimate the Government Actuary's Department DEL will be increased by £642,000 from £983,000 to £1,625,000 and the administration costs limit will be increased by £838,000 from £2,145,000 to £2,983,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are set out in the following table:

| | *Change* | Voted | New DEL Non-voted | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Resource | £642,000 | £1,625,000 | - | £1,625,000 |
| Capital | 0 | £1,538.000 | - | £1,538,000 |
| Depreciation* | £196,000 | -£180,000 | - | -£180,000 |
| Total | £838,000 | £2,983,000 | - | £2,983,000 |

**Depreciation which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets and would lead to double counting.*

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

(i) an increase of £477,000 to reflect the benefit it has received on a reduced rent currently in the first full five years of tenancy by spreading the value of the rent reduction over the 20 years of the lease,

(ii) a claim on the DEL reserve of £165,000 to cover a sub-letting void for the property Finlaison House,

(iii) a reduction in expenditure and associated receipts to reflect changes to GAD's 2003–04 recruitment plans.

There is no change to the capital element of the DEL.

### Inland Revenue

**The Paymaster General (Dawn Primarolo):** Subject to Parliamentary approval of the necessary Supplementary Estimate, the Inland Revenue net administration costs limit will be increased by £4,638,000 from £3,034,649,000 to £3,039,287,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital is as set out in the following table:

*£000's*

| | *Change* | *Voted* | *New DEL Non-voted* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Resource | 4,638 | 2,684,502 | 340,440 | 3,024,942 |
| Capital | -4,638 | 202,743 | - | 202,743 |
| Depreciation* | - | -158,564 | - | -158,564 |
| Total | - | 2,693,681 | 340,440 | 3,069,121 |

**Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The change in the resource and capital element of the DEL arises from the transfer of £4,638,000 from capital to resource.

**The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Ruth Kelly):** Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary supplementary estimate, National Savings and Investments DEL will be increased by £10,000,000 from £170,154,000 to £180,154,000 and the administration costs limits will be increased by £9,500,000 from £172,068,000 to £181,568,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

*£'000s*

| | *Change* | *Voted* | *New DEL Non-voted* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Resource | 9,500 | 172,068 | | 181,568 |
| Capital | 0 | 1,300 | | 1,300 |
| Depreciation* | 0 | -2,714 | | -2,714 |
| Total | 9,500 | 170,654 | | 180,154 |

**Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from end year flexibility being drawn down to support expenditure on major project commitments. Such projects include the implementation of the new savings product and continued research on customer needs. Other projects include compliance with the Banking Code/Customer Code, Electronic Data Records Management, and others starting this financial year, which will carry forward the modernisation process of National Savings and Investments.

There is no change in the capital element of the DEL.

**The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Ruth Kelly):** Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary Supplementary Estimate, HM Treasury DEL will be increased by £9,067,000 from £209,836,000 to £218,903,000 and the administration costs limits will be increased by £6,800,000 from £139,588,000 to

£146,388,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

| | | New DEL | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Change* | *Voted* | *Non-voted* | *Total* |
| Resource | 9,067,000 | 187,799,000 | 31,104,000 | 218,903,000 |
| Capital | 0 | 7,668,000 | 0 | 7,668,000 |
| Depreciation* | 0 | -9,055,000 | 0 | -9,055,000 |
| Total | 9,067,000 | 186,412,000 | 31,104,000 | 217,516,000 |

**Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.*

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

an increase in total Treasury administrative costs of £6,800,000 resulting from:

a partial draw down of eyf of £6,050,000 for the central Treasury;

a draw down of £250,000 from the Invest to Save Budget (ISB) to administer the ISB;

a partial draw down of eyf of £500,000 for the Debt Management Office (DMO);

an increase in AinA of £2,500,000 from secondments and the Lambert review of business-university collaboration, with matching spend;

an increase in AinA of £2,200,000 from receipts for fees and charges made by the Public Works Loan Board and the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt, with matching spend;

a draw down of £131,000 programme from the Evidence Based Policy Fund to finance three projects on—team based incentives (£64,000), research into benefit savings at the local authority level (£45,000), productivity and public sector performance (£22,000);

an increase in programme AinA of £450,000 from increased revenue for the Office of Paymaster General (OPG), with matching expenditure;

an increase in DMO programme AinA of £350,000 for receipts from recovery of the auction costs of the National Loans Fund, with matching spend;

a partial draw down of programme eyf of £2,136,000 for the Office of Government Commerce (OGC);

a decrease in OGC programme AinA of £1,101,000, with matching reduction in expenditure.

**The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (John Healey):** Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary supplementary estimate, the HM Customs and Excise DEL will be increased by £7,046,000, from £1,291,195,000 to £1,298,241,000 and the administration costs limits will be decreased by £2,235,000, from £1,132,722,000 to £1,130,487,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

*£'000s*

| | | New DEL | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Change* | *Voted* | *Non-voted* | *Total* |
| Resource | 7,461,000 | 1,215,820,000 | - | 1,215,820,000 |
| Capital | -415,000 | 81,421,000 | 1,000,000 | 82,421,000 |
| Depreciation* | 6,852,000 | -46,128,000 | - | -46,128,000 |
| Total | 13,898,000 | 1,251,113,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,252,113,000 |

*Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

administration costs changes resulting from a claim on the reserve of £5,000,000 to allow for the extension of the VAT strategy programme; a transfer of £805,000 to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office; virement of £6,430,000 from administration costs to programme expenditure; and

programme expenditure changes in respect of a transfer of £1,570,000 from the Home Office to cover additional costs of anti-terrorism work; a transfer of £1,003,000 from the Home Office from the Recovered Assets Incentivisation Fund to cover the costs of a new litigation team; a transfer of £840,000 from the Home Office from the Recovered Assets Incentivisation Fund to cover the costs of new operational asset recovery teams; a transfer of £140,000 to the Home Office in respect of two special projects and Electro Mechanical services; a transfer of £7,000 to the Department for Constitutional Affairs to meet additional penalty costs.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from:

capital expenditure changes in respect of a transfer of £401,000 from the Home Office to cover additional costs of anti-terrorism work; and a transfer of £816,000 to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

As a result of the specified resource DEL changes mentioned in the above paragraph, the administration costs limit has decreased by £2,235,000 from £1,132,722,000 to £1,130,487,000.

**The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Ruth Kelly):** Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary supplementary estimate, the Office for National Statistics DEL will be increased by £1,845,000 from £145,514,000 to £147,359,000 and the administration costs limit will be increased by £2,295,000 from £139,823,000 to £142,118,000. Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

*£'000s*

| | | New DEL | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Change* | *Voted* | *Non-voted* | *Total* |
| Resource | 1,845 | 142,026 | - | 142,026 |
| Capital | 0 | 19,170 | - | 19,170 |
| Depreciation* | - | -13,837 | - | -13,837 |
| Total | 1,845 | 147,359 | - | 147,359 |

*Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from the draw down of £2,750,000 administration costs end year flexibility as set out in the Public Expenditure Outturn White Paper (Cm 5884). This is partially offset

by a transfer of £455,000 in total to other government departments in relation to work to develop the Neighbourhood Statistics programme. The transfers comprise £381,000 to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, £24,000 to the Department for Constitutional Affairs and £50,000 to the Home Office. The change also takes account of Treasury's revised budgeting and accounting treatment for income from competitively, or commercially, let research contracts funded from the EU Budget. The effect is to reduce the "Other Current" Budget, which forms part of Resource DEL, by £450,000 to £550,000. The Administration costs limit will be increased by £2,295,000 from £139,823,000 to £142,118,000.

# Written Ministerial Statements

*Wednesday 25 February 2004*

## HOME OFFICE

### Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act

**The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. David Blunkett):** In advance of debate in the House later today, I am laying before Parliament, and making publicly available, a discussion paper "Counter-Terrorism Powers: Reconciling Security and Liberty in an Open Society". This paper also contains the Government's response to the Report of Lord Newton and his Committee into the operation of the ATCSA and in particular Part IV of that Act which concerns the detention pending deportation of foreign nationals suspected of terrorism. Alongside that as further background for the debate, I am also publishing the following update on resilience and civil contingency matters.

Update on resilience and civil contingencies matters:

> In March last year I placed before the House a written statement, *Official Report*, Vol. 400, Part 354, column 72WS, setting out improvements in contingency planning that had taken place and announcing the next steps in improving our resilience, including progress in delivering Civil Contingencies legislation. Almost 12 months on, we have made considerable progress and have in place plans to cover a wide range of both civil emergencies and terrorist attacks. Such plans include the purchase of equipment, the identification and training of personnel, the preparation of policy guidance and crisis management arrangements, liaison with other nations, and exercises. There has been excellent co-operation across Government and the wider public service and I would like to place on record my thanks, particular to local authorities and the emergency services for their continuing hard work.

Review of progress at time of last update:

> Since the outbreak of the foot and mouth disease and the September 11 atrocity, we have been planning for larger-scale challenges and at the time of my last update to the House, substantial progress had already been made. A horizon scanning capability had been established within the Cabinet Office to anticipate and prepare for the potential impact of any large-scale incident, and this complemented the work of the Joint Intelligence Committee in providing assessments on domestic and overseas terrorist threats. Guidance had been published on decontamination of people following a Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear (CBRN) incident for use by the emergency services and other responders, and a UK national stockpile of countermeasures had been established before the end of 2001 including antibiotics, antidotes, and respiratory support equipment in strategic locations around the UK.

In London, the London Resilience Forum had been established to drive forward the resilience agenda bringing together representatives from the emergency services, local government, military, transport, utilities, health sector and business. Substantial progress had been made, and plans for a range of contingencies now exist including new pan-London command and control arrangements and a well-developed programme of exercises.

Update of progress in the last 12 months to the present:

*Organisation:*

The programme of work to enhance the key generic resilience capabilities, co-ordinated within the civil contingencies secretariat in the Cabinet Office, remains the core framework through which the Government are seeking to build resilience across all parts of the United Kingdom. This centrally led programme constitutes an efficient and effective way of harnessing the expertise and resources that already exist within Government without duplicating or creating new structures. The programme has expanded in the past twelve months and now comprises seventeen separate workstreams.

Central response
Regional response
Local response
Essential services—DoH
Essential services—DEFRA
Essential services—HMT
Essential services—DFT
Essential services—DTI
CBRN Resilience
Assessment of risk and consequence
Mass casualties
Treatment of infectious diseases (human)
Treatment of infectious diseases (animal & plant)
Mass evacuation
Warning and informing
Mass fatalities
Site clearance

Work is progressing well on all fronts although inevitably some areas are more advanced than others not least because of the necessity to keep our plans under constant review to enable us to respond effectively to new threats and challenges. I and ministerial colleagues receive regular updates and reports on the progress of these workstreams and ensure that attention is focused where most required. We have also worked closely with the Devolved Administrations and clear responsibilities have been established so that the Devolved Administrations are able to undertake their own resilience preparations whilst ensuring that UK—wide resilience can be ensured.

*Preparedness of the Emergency Services:*

Under the New Dimension programme, 4,400 personal protective suits have been delivered, enabling fire fighters to decontaminate safely and effect rescues. Purpose-built decontamination vehicles are now coming into operation around the country and fire fighters are being trained in their use. The rolling training programme for police has seen over 5,000 officers trained and equipped in CBRN response and we are on target to have increased this to 5 per cent. of the police service by June.

Every acute hospital and ambulance service now has a stock of personal protective suits, and is equipped with mobile decontamination units, to allow safe working and decontamination of patients. Some 3,200 protective

suits were provided for hospitals and 4,300 for the ambulance service. Of the 360 mobile decontamination units procured, 200 have gone to hospitals and 160 to the ambulance service. These units offer shelter, power and water management systems to NHS personnel who are decontaminating patients. In addition, a central stockpile of protective suits has been established and agreement reached with the Fire Service for support in the event of a need for mass decontamination.

Since late 2002, senior ambulance staff have been participating in Joint Emergency Service CBRN Incident Commander Courses. All ambulance services in the UK will have received this training by April 2004. A cadre of instructors has also been trained to enable the local training of decontamination teams. Courses are being held regionally and about 180 trainers have successfully completed it to date. By early summer this figure will have increased to around 300.

Considerable investment has been made across Government in providing equipment for the emergency services and will continue to be made in areas such as developing the urban search and rescue capability within the Fire Service, and improving first responders' ability to detect and monitor CBRN substances. The Office of Government Commerce now has a dedicated CBRN procurement team in place to ensure economies of scale, assist with equipment interoperability issues, and streamline procedures for our partners and contractors.

*Strengthening Regional Resilience:*

One of the capabilities added to the programme since last March focuses on developing new regional resilience arrangements to co-ordinate both planning for and responding to disruptive events. Since April 2003, Regional Resilience Teams have been operational in each of the Government Offices in the nine English regions. These teams have taken the lead in managing key relationships with local responders, communications between regional partners, and between the regions and government. Regional Resilience Forums, comprising representatives from key partners and agencies, now meet regularly in all the English regions.

*Health:*

The Department of Health, together with the NHS and other key stakeholders, has developed a national strategy for major incident planning at an operational level, with a supporting framework for the NHS. The document "Handling Major Incidents—An Operational Doctrine" was published on 7 January 2004 and builds on current guidance by setting out general principles to help the NHS develop its existing emergency plans to respond to new potential threats. Revised smallpox guidelines were published in December 03 and can be found on the Department of Health website: http://www.doh.gsi.gov.uk/smallpox/keydocs.htm

*Civil Contingencies Legislation:*

In January this year we introduced the Civil Contingencies Bill into Parliament. The Bill, and the accompanying non-legislative measures, will deliver a single framework for civil protection in the UK to meet the disruptive challenges of the 21st century. The Bill is separated into two substantive parts: local arrangements for civil protection (Part 1) and emergency powers (Part 2). Both parts of the Bill replace existing outdated legislation, notably the Emergency Powers Act 1920 and the Civil Defence Act 1948. The Bill has now completed its report stage.

Key stakeholders have been involved in the policy development process, including the Local Government Association, the Emergency Planning Society, the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers' Association and the Ambulance Service Association, They have played an important role in helping to shape the legislative proposals.

A major public consultation of the Bill's proposals was carried out last summer. Around one half of local authorities and emergency services responded. The consultation exercise was supported by events held in each of the English regions and the Devolved Administrations, attended by over 1,000 civil protection practitioners. This was supplemented by attendance at national conferences and local events. The Government continue to consult widely as the Bill passes through Parliament. Regular bulletins on progress are sent to all civil protection professionals and a programme of outreach visits is eliciting views directly from individual local areas. The feedback has been very positive.

*Civil Contingencies Reaction Forces:*

Civil Contingency Reaction Forces (CCRFs) achieved full operating capability on target by 31 December. Fourteen CCRFs are now available to support the civil authorities as required providing both general and specialist support. Possible ways in which CCRFs might be used include assistance with evacuation, providing temporary accommodation and feeding facilities, and general logistical support. A programme of exercises between local CCRFs and the emergency services began in 2003 to test working together in an emergency.

*Co-ordinated Exercise Programme:*

Central to our work to develop resilience capabilities is a co-ordinated approach to exercises designed to test our responses to a range of major incidents including natural disasters and accidents. Over the last year we have brought together Government Departments, regional and local authorities, the Devolved Administrations, and agencies, to create a focused cross-government exercise programme. This exercise programme tests the emerging capabilities and highlights areas for further development. Training exercises are also an important part of counter-terrorism, as they ensure we are prepared to respond to any kind of terrorist attack. Three large-scale live counter-terrorist exercises are held each year, involving participants from central Government, police, agencies and the military. In addition, twelve table-top or workshop exercises are held annually, carried out across the UK and involving the police, lead Government Departments, and emergency recovery agencies. The live exercise held at Bank Tube station in September last year was a good example of a multi-agency exercise designed to ensure that plans and procedures we have developed will be effective on the day. UK also took part in an international table-top exercise called Global

Mercury last autumn to test international communications between health agencies in the event of a smallpox outbreak.

The current exercise programme includes the joint UK/US exercise in the Metropolitan Police Service area, mentioned to the House on 3 July. We will continue to carry out a range of exercises throughout the country, in particular, to validate emerging regional plans, and ensure civil emergency and counter-terrorist exercises are utilised to test our capability both to respond to and manage the consequences of a CBRN incident.

*Exercise Counter Balance:*

Under the CBRN Resilience Programme, the Home Office, in conjunction with the Emergency Planning Society, Regional Resilience Teams and Devolved Administrations has continued Exercise Counter Balance, a programme of CBRN training seminars originally run in 2002. The seminars continue to be delivered throughout the UK at local level and feature a combination of presentations, discussion groups and table-top exercises based around the response to a range of CBRN scenarios. The seminars provide the opportunity for local authorities, in particular, to give feedback on the revised CBRN guidance to local authorities published in August 2003. Eight of the twelve planned seminars have been delivered to date with the remainder due by May 2004. Participants have included representatives from Fire and Rescue Services, Government Agencies, Health Services, Local Authorities, the Armed Forces, Police Services, the utilities and the voluntary sector.

*Communications:*

Communication is a vital element in ensuring that we have the ability to respond to a crisis effectively and rapidly. Over the last year we have made considerable efforts to engage with those upon whom we will rely in the event of an incident. This has enabled us to make the best use of expertise not only from within central government but also from other organisations and sectors such as the business community and the voluntary sector. Examples of communication include working with the emergency services to develop the first responder role; engaging with health workers so staff are aware of what is required and trained to respond appropriately; and liaising with key contractors to ensure the necessary capacity and flexibility is available to deliver essential services. During a crisis, the media's ability to deliver factual information and advice will be essential. Thus News Co-ordination Centre facilities have been set up and there is close liaison with the media and press officers over emergency media arrangements both nationally and around the country.

In London, the London Resilience Team hold regular meetings with the business community including senior representatives from umbrella organisations such as the Oxford Street Traders' Association, the British Bankers Association, and London Chamber of Commerce. Last summer, the National Association of Counter Terrorist Security Officers (NACSO), together with London First and the British Continuity Institute, published a booklet and CD-Rom entitled "Expect the Unexpected" providing continuity planning advice for business. This has been distributed to 44, 000 London businesses.

The British public, regrettably, are used to living with the threat of terrorism and have in the past demonstrated commendable resilience and common sense in dealing with it. We are, however, conscious that the new scale of potential attacks on our society pose new challenges. While it is necessary for us to limit the flow of information on our resilience planning for understandable reasons of security, we have made large amounts of information available on our government websites www.ukresilience.info/ and http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/terrorism. We plan over the next few months to be issuing further advice and guidance for the public.

## HEALTH

### "Securing Good Health for the Whole Population"

**The Secretary of State for Health (Dr. John Reid):** Derek Wanless has today published his report, "Securing Good Health for the Whole Population", which has been commissioned jointly by the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and me. Copies have been placed in the Library.

The report makes recommendations to the Government on implementing cost-effective approaches to improving population health, prevention and reducing health inequalities, and advises on whether current action is consistent with the fully engaged scenario which was outlined in the first Wanless Report, "Securing Our Future Health: Taking A Long-Term View" (2002).

The Government will address the report through the formal consultation on public health which will be launched next week and through the forthcoming White Paper on public health.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Weapons of Mass Destruction

**The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw):** Over the past year, there have been some significant breakthroughs in countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The United Kingdom has worked effectively with the United States in the case of Libya's programmes and in countering AQ Khan's network. We have played a leading role, with France and Germany, on the issue of Iran's nuclear programme. We have enforced UN Security Council Resolutions on Iraq. We have been active on the proliferation security initiative designed to interdict the passage of cargoes intended for use in WMD programmes. We support the six party talks in North Korea. All of this demonstrates effective multilateralism in action.

I would like to set out for the House other steps we are taking and further proposals we will be discussing with our partners to deter, check and roll back WMD programmes in countries of concern, and to prevent WMD equipment and expertise falling into the hands of terrorists.

*Proliferation security initiative*

The proliferation security initiative has developed well since it was launched in May 2003. Some 60 countries have indicated their support for it and their intention to apply its principles. There is more that we can do to extend its possibilities:

we are working in the International Maritime Organisation to secure amendment to the Suppression of Unlawful Acts at Sea Convention, which will make it an internationally recognised offence to transport WMD, their delivery systems and related materials on commercial vessels. It is already an offence under the Chicago Convention of the International Civil Aviation Organisation to transport WMD on civil aircraft.

agreements have been concluded in the past providing for the boarding of vessels which may be carrying drugs. We now plan to negotiate similar agreements with the main commercial flag states allowing for the boarding of vessels which may be carrying cargoes which could be used in WMD programmes. Shipping of the 10 largest commercial flag states covers some 70% of maritime trade. So with a relatively small number of such agreements, a large proportion of the world's shipping would be covered. The options available to the proliferator and rogue supplier would be reduced.

we will consider with our partners whether new penalties should be introduced to deter air or shipping lines from seeking to transport such cargoes. Might the vessels and planes of any companies found to have engaged in such transport be denied landing or port rights around the world? Should we consider an international register of companies and individuals convicted of proliferation offences?

we support President Bush's call to use Interpol and all other means to help law enforcement agencies work against the traffickers.

within the EU, we see a case for Customs experts considering how to tighten regulations and practices, and how better to exchange information in order to prevent the trafficking of WMD.

in the UK, we have begun work on the screening of traffic for the illicit movement of radioactive materials. This will eventually cover all air, sea and Channel Tunnel traffic—passengers, parcels, vehicles, freight and containers.

*Global Partnership*

Eighteen months ago, the Kananaskis G8 Summit established a Global Partnership against the spread of weapons and materials of mass destruction. Under this initiative G8 leaders decided to support specific cooperation projects, initially in Russia, to assist the destruction of chemical weapons, the dismantlement of decommissioned nuclear submarines, the disposition of fissile materials and the employment of former weapons scientists. The United Kingdom announced that it would make up to $750 million available over 10 years for this work. The first report of work undertaken by the UK was published in December.

Since Kananaskis, we have had the Iraq conflict and Libya's decision to dismantle its WMD programmes. Work is under way to develop a programme for the employment of former weapons scientists in Iraq. The UK has offered to help with a similar programme in Libya. We would like to see the Global Partnership expanded so that it is fully global in its geographical extent, and for the number of donor states to be expanded so that the target of $20 billion can become a floor rather than a ceiling.

*The United Nations and Counter Proliferation*

An anomaly in the field of counter proliferation has been the lack of discussion since 1992 of proliferation in an overall sense by the UN Security Council. Following a proposal by President Bush last September, work is now under way on a resolution which will call on states to adopt tough national legislation to criminalise the possession, manufacture or trafficking of WMD, in particular for terrorist purposes; to develop effective export controls where these do not exist; and to maintain effective physical protection of sensitive materials. I hope the Council will pass this soon.

We also believe that the Council should also consider establishing an appropriate follow-up mechanism, perhaps a counter proliferation committee, just as the Council's Counter Terrorism Committee was established in 2001.

*The European Union*

The European Security Strategy, adopted by the European Council in December, highlights the importance of work against WMD. The month before its adoption, the EU agreed that agreements with other countries should include a non-proliferation clause. We are working with our EU partners and the Commission to see this introduced as new agreements arise or existing ones are renewed.

*Non proliferation treaty and International Atomic Energy Agency*

The non proliferation treaty obliges states party to enter into safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency to verify that nuclear activities are and remain legitimate. Article IV of the treaty confirms states' rights to develop and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

But states which fail to comply with their safeguards obligations inevitably lose the confidence of the international community. The bargain which is at the heart of the treaty is then called into question. We should consider whether such states should not forfeit the right to develop the nuclear fuel cycle, particularly the enrichment and reprocessing capabilities which are of such proliferation sensitivity. That does not mean that they would be deprived of the possibility of constructing and running civil nuclear power stations. These could still operate with fuel supplied by countries honouring their safeguards obligations. The fuel would be subject to agency monitoring while in the receiving country, and would be returned to the country of supply when spent. This would prevent a seemingly civil programme masking a weapons programme.

Experience in recent years has shown the need for more wide-ranging agency inspections of national nuclear industries. The agency's additional protocol provides the basis for carrying out such inspections. It is important that all members of the international community adopt one. Suppliers of nuclear technology should increasingly see this as a key commitment when they judge export licence applications.

The agency has done well to meet a growing verification workload within the constraints of its budget, but we should not ask it forever to do more

within the same resources. We may need seriously to consider further strengthening of its Safeguards Division.

*Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention*

The Government set out in a Green Paper in April 2002 ideas on how to verify compliance with the Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention. We continue to believe that we need a mechanism, possibly under the authority of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for investigating instances of alleged use and suspect biological weapons facilities. We will be putting forward proposals to follow this up at the next meeting of states party of the Convention in Geneva in July.

*Conclusion*

Countering proliferation remains as important today as it ever was. The part our intelligence services play in it is vital. We and they can be proud of what we have achieved over the past year. But we cannot let up. There is much work still to do. The proposals I have outlined are designed to assist that.

### Spring Supplementary Estimate

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Bill Rammell):** Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary supplementary estimate, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Departmental expenditure limit (DEL) will be increased by £60,035,000 from £1,708,768,000 to £1,768,784,000 and the administration costs limit will be increased by £34,778,000 from £795,600,000 to £830,378,000.

Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

| | | *New DEL* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Change* | *Voted* | *Non-voted* | *Total* |
| Resource | 46,596 | 1,524,729 | 173,527 | 1,698,256 |
| Capital | 13,439 | 64,728 | 5,800 | 70,528 |
| Depreciation* | -25,000 | -124,194 | -6,800 | -130,994 |
| Total | 35,035 | 1,465,263 | 172,527 | 1,637,790 |

The change in the resource element of the DEL arises from:

A public expenditure survey (PES) transfer from the Home Office of £2,088,000 for European residence permits.

A PES transfer from the Home Office of £740,000 for biometrics trials in connection with the issue of UK visas.

An increase of £4,171,000 to fund increased contributions to international organisations subscriptions. A decrease of £2,783,000 in respect of an adjustment for overseas price movements.

A PES transfer from the Cabinet Office of £500,000 in respect of Coalition Information Centre (CIC) costs.

A PES transfer to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) of £300,000 in respect of the E-business programme.

PES transfers from the DTI and Department for Transport totalling £134,000 (£67,000 each) in respect of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

An increase of £5,725,000 in respect of increases in providing consular and visa services overseas.

An increase of £27,149,000 in respect of increased Iraq related security costs.

A PES transfer from HM Customs & Excise (HMC&E) of £806,000 and from the Home Office of £1,000,000 and £2,000,000 in respect of the FCO Afghanistan Drugs Plan and an additional £122,000 from the Home Office to continue research techniques for identifying and measuring opium cultivation.

A PES Transfer to the Home Office of £20,000 as a contribution to the Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO).

A PES transfer from the Department for International Development (DFID) of £10,150,000 in respect of the remainder required to fund planned programme activity to the end of the financial year.

Take up of end- year flexibility (EYF) of £18,215,000 from a combination of underspends on the 2002-03 conflict prevention departmental unallocated provision (DUP) and DFID and FCO conflict pool (CP) underspends.

A PES transfer to DFID and the Ministry of Defence (MoD) of £11,000,000 and £2,000,000 respectively for the remainder required to fund planned programme activity to the end of the financial year.

PES transfers to the Security and Intelligence Agencies (SIA) of £7,016,000 and £85,000 to reflect funding revisions for CP.

PES transfers to the MoD of £1,800,000 and £1,200,000 to reflect funding revisions for CP.

The change in the capital element of the DEL arises from:

An increase of £9,000 in respect of an adjustment for overseas price movements.

An increase of £9,751,000 in respect of increased Iraq related security costs.

A PES transfer from the Home Office of £1,013,000 in respect of the setting up of a new visa regime in Kingston.

A PES transfer from the Home Office of £912,000 for European residence permits.

A PES transfer from the Home Office of £122,000 for biometrics trials in connection with the issue of UK visas.

A PES transfer from HMC&E of £816,000 in respect of the FCO Afghanistan Drugs plan.

A PES transfer from the DTI of £816,000 in respect of the E-business programme.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Directors' Remuneration, Contracts, Performance and Severance

**The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Ms Patricia Hewitt):** My Department published a consultation document on 3 June 2003 seeking views on the extent to which further measures might be required to enable shareholders to ensure that any compensation paid reflects performance when directors' contracts are terminated.

This statement explains how the Government intend to proceed in the light of the responses to the consultation document, including that from the Trade and Industry Committee "Rewards for Failure" HC 914 16 September 2003. I am grateful to the Committee and to all those who commented. A summary of the responses is today being placed on the DTI website at http://www.dti.gov.uk/cld/published.htm and in the Libraries of both Houses. My Department are today also replying to the Trade and Industry Committee Report.

This consultation generated a large response from a wide range of parties: institutional investors, companies, trades unions, accountants, remuneration advisers and many representative organisations. This demonstrates the high level of interest in this issue and

the concern, which I share, about cases where poor company performance is accompanied by excessive remuneration.

That is why, before publishing the consultation document, the Government have already taken significant action, through the Directors Remuneration Report Regulations, introduced in 2002, requiring quoted companies to produce a detailed annual directors' remuneration report and to submit it to shareholders for approval at the Annual General Meeting. These Regulations give the UK a corporate governance framework for Directors pay which leads the world in terms of transparency and accountability. They have had an immediate impact in terms of increasing the focus on directors' remuneration by shareholders and promoting constructive dialogue between them and companies about remuneration strategy and practices.

The full impact of the 2002 Regulations, however, cannot be measured after one year alone. For this reason, my Department will be commissioning a detailed assessment of compliance with the Regulations in the course of this year's AGM season, and an assessment of changes in remuneration practices.

The challenge for remuneration committees and their advisers is to produce rewards packages, which tie pay and performance targets to the creation of long-term value for shareholders and are transparent to shareholders. All can agree that directors deserve high rewards for good performance but companies need to think creatively about the design of remuneration packages with those objectives in mind. Shareholders must be vigilant to ensure that situations where directors enjoy rich rewards whilst companies perform poorly and shareholders and employees suffer are challenged. The improved design of all aspects of Directors remuneration packages will play an important part in creating an environment where good businesses can prosper: businesses which produce goods and services of high quality; are honest and fair in their dealings with consumers, employees and suppliers and careful with their reputation; and thereby create sustainable long term value for their shareholders.

Building on the Regulations, the consultation document set out a range of options for tackling the problem of excessive compensation payments made to directors who leave companies, which have performed poorly. The great majority of respondents considered that this was an area where the focus should be on promoting the take up and implementation of best practice. In particular, the responses demonstrated a good deal of support for reducing notice periods and the use of mechanisms such as phased payments and liquidated damages in order to reduce the problem of rewards for failure when contracts are terminated.

I have therefore been very pleased to see the further development in recent months of guidance on directors' contracts, both by the Association of British Insurers and National Association of Pension Funds, and separately by the Confederation of British Industry. I welcome their contributions and commend them to remuneration committees and their advisers. Shareholders too have an important role to play in holding boards to account for their policies in line with the code on activism agreed by the Institutional Shareholders' Committee.

I have considered very carefully the question of whether to introduce further legislation in this area and have concluded that this is not necessary at this stage. I agree with the conclusions of the Trade and Industry Committee report and the comments of its Chairman that "the recent examples of increased activism by institutional investors, and the promotion of best practice have the potential to remedy the situation. The Government should wait to see the effect of these developments before it considers legislative remedies".

I have specifically ruled out legislation of the type introduced by the hon. Member for Tunbridge Wells (Archie Norman) in his Company Directors Performance and Compensation Bill. The overwhelming view of the respondents to the consultation was that this would be wholly unworkable in practice for a number of reasons: It would interfere with the operation of existing contracts; create a large degree of unnecessary uncertainty and complexity in the negotiation of new contracts; would be incapable of taking account of the wide range of recruitment circumstances; act as a deterrent to the recruitment of good quality directors; and could potentially lead to lengthy litigation which would be costly to shareholders.

I will be paying close attention to developments over the next 12 months. I am clear that the best way forward is through the application and development of best practice in negotiating contracts, which deal with performance issues effectively. But if the monitoring which I am commissioning demonstrates that further changes to the Companies Act are required, I will not hesitate to take appropriate action in the context of wider company law reform.

## DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

### Review of the Planning Enforcement System in England

**The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill):** I yesterday tabled an amendment to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill that is currently being considered by the House of Lords as a result of the "Review of the Planning Enforcement System in England".

The responses to the review supported our belief that the existing system of planning enforcement is basically sound, and does not need to be re-invented. That is not to say that there is no scope for improvements. We received a wide range of ideas and proposals on how to make planning enforcement more effective and better able to play its part in ensuring that people have confidence in the planning system as a whole. We will be publishing our full conclusions on the review later in the year.

One particular proposal for new powers in the review generated a large amount of support. This was for a provision that would enable local planning authorities (LPAs) to issue a "temporary stop notice" at the start of unauthorised development, before an enforcement notice is served. Having carefully considered these views and the opportunity presented by this Bill to make such

changes—to give LPAs the opportunity to speed up the process of enforcement—I have decided to introduce an amendment to this effect.

The amendment is intended to enable local planning authorities to issue a temporary stop notice immediately upon the commencement of a breach of planning control. The proposed amendment differs from stop notices currently provided for in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 because it is not necessary to serve an enforcement notice at the same time and the proposed temporary stop notice will only have effect for 28 days at most. Local authorities will be able to stop breaches of planning control before the effects become too great and will have a period of time to consider whether further enforcement action is appropriate, such as service of an enforcement notice with a related stop notice.

## E-Government

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Phil Hope):** The Government announced on 12 February that £220 million of e-Government funding is being allocated to support further local authorities in England to e-enable their priority services by 2005. An additional £28 million is to be allocated to specific projects focusing on the national roll out of the National Projects and the take-up of e-services.

This money should assist all local authorities to deliver our shared target of e-enabling all priority services by end of 2005. We are beginning to see the results of the various projects across the country and this funding gives local authorities the support they need to deliver further improved e-services for the people in their area. Local authorities have been developing and improving their services using IT to give their customers the modern services they want and need. This support will help them to continue to improve and increase the use their customers make of them.

All local authorities will receive £500K over the next two years (£350k in 04/05 and £150k in 05/06 subject to submitting satisfactory Implementing Electronic Government progress reports). In addition to these flat rate payments, there will be extra non-financial help available to councils to help them meet the target.

Copies of the press notice announcing this funding are available on the Office's website at www.odpm.gov.uk.

# Written Ministerial Statements

*Thursday 26 February 2004*

## INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Commission for Africa

**The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn):** The Prime Minister is today launching a new initiative—the Commission for Africa—to take a fresh look at the challenges Africa faces. The Commission aims to generate increased support for the G8 Africa Action Plan and the New Partnership for African Development (NePAD).

The Commission will conclude its work and report next spring. The Commission will set out the facts on Africa and its assessment of policy on Africa (both within Africa and internationally): where it has worked; where it has failed; where more could be done; and where more support is needed from the international community

The commissioners will be politicians and opinion formers, drawn from developed countries and Africa. Gordon Brown, Hilary Benn, Prime Minister Meles of Ethiopia, K.Y. Amoako (Head of the UN Economic Commission for Africa), Trevor Manuel (South African Minister of Finance), Michel Calmness's (President Chirac's Africa Personal Representative) and Sir Bob Geldof are already confirmed as commissioners. The Prime Minister will chair meetings of the Commission and will agree the final report. The International Development Secretary will oversee the ongoing work of the Commission on the Prime Minister's behalf.

The commissioners, supported by a secretariat, will consult a wide range of experts and thinkers on each issue. The process will be open with public seminars and meetings to discuss the themes and issues. We hope that many organisations will contribute to this work. Each commissioner will host meetings, hold debates and call for papers on the theme he/she is leading. The full Commission will meet once or twice before the report is finalised to discuss and agree its overall direction.

Over the next 12 months the commissioners will take forward discussions on the key challenges to Africa's development. The themes of the report—and commissioners' responsibilities—will be decided at the first meeting of the Commission in April, but are likely to include some or all of the following: the economy (including development finance, economic integration and trade); education; conflict resolution and peacebuilding; health; the environment; HIV/AIDS; governance; and culture.

The Commissioners' work will help inform the UK's agenda for Africa during its G8 and EU presidencies next year.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### Framework for Sustainable Development (Government Estate)

**The Minister for the Environment (Mr. Elliot Morley):** The Government is publishing the fifth part of the *"Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate (Framework)"* on energy today. This will be available from the sustainable development in Government website. Copies of the website, on CD-Rom, will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

The energy section of the framework breaks new ground: it sets a Government-wide commitment to reduce carbon on the Government estate that will make an important contribution to the UK's Kyoto target, and will help to deliver our Energy White Paper commitments. The framework will now require all estate management contracts to take account of measures and opportunities for reducing carbon emissions and collecting energy data.

Our ongoing work on the framework defines a set of cross-Government targets for sustainable development, and outlines the mechanisms by which Departments will be expected to achieve them. These challenging targets give a clear indication of the Government's continued determination to take a lead in the practical implementation and achievement of sustainable development.

The framework for sustainable development on the Government estate can be viewed at www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/sdig/improving/index.htm.

## CABINET OFFICE

### Civil Defence Grant

**The Minister for the Cabinet Office and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Mr. Douglas Alexander):** The aggregate of civil defence grants to be made for the financial year 2004–05 is £19,038,000. Some £100,000 will be retained as discretionary grant for special projects and special events deemed of benefit to the wider civil protection community in England and Wales. The remaining £18,938,000 will be allocated to individual authorities as set out below.

| *Local Authority* | *Grant Allocation 2004–05 (£)* |
|---|---|
| Anglesey/Ynys Mon | 61,342 |
| Barking & Dagenham | 75,969 |
| Barnet | 80,694 |
| Barnsley | 76,076 |
| Bath & North East Somerset | 90,011 |
| Bedfordshire | 136,511 |
| Bexley | 78,758 |
| Birmingham | 187,380 |
| Blackburn with Darwen | 70,658 |
| Blackpool | 66,662 |
| Blaenau Gwent | 63,083 |
| Bolton | 82,674 |
| Bournemouth | 70,122 |
| Bracknell Forest | 63,899 |
| Bradford | 125,756 |
| Brent | 86,592 |
| Bridgend | 68,323 |
| Brighton & Hove | 81,172 |
| Bristol | 98,486 |

| *Local Authority* | *Grant Allocation 2004–05 (£)* |
|---|---|
| Bromley | 84,980 |
| Buckinghamshire | 200,557 |
| Bury | 71,195 |
| Caerphilly | 73,088 |
| Calderdale | 74,574 |
| Cambridgeshire | 163,057 |
| Camden | 84,175 |
| Cardiff | 87,322 |
| Carmarthenshire | 73,858 |
| Ceredigion | 64,143 |
| Cheshire | 189,969 |
| Conwy | 64,811 |
| Cornwall | 189,279 |
| Corporation of London | 60,145 |
| Coventry | 77,776 |
| Croydon | 90,666 |
| Cumbria | 216,116 |
| Darlington | 63,899 |
| Denbighshire | 71,434 |
| Derby | 76,503 |
| Derbyshire | 220,459 |
| Devon | 217,294 |
| Doncaster | 85,516 |
| Dorset | 175,886 |
| Dudley | 82,908 |
| Durham | 213,601 |
| Ealing | 90,344 |
| East Riding of Yorkshire | 72,166 |
| East Sussex | 208,288 |
| Enfield | 88,198 |
| Essex | 315,112 |
| Flintshire | 77,741 |
| Gateshead | 79,140 |
| Gloucestershire | 189,960 |
| Greater Manchester FCDA | 64,060 |
| Greenwich | 86,482 |
| Gwynedd | 67,698 |
| Hackney | 88,145 |
| Halton | 68,137 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 76,719 |
| Hampshire | 298,996 |
| Haringey | 85,624 |
| Harrow | 65,726 |
| Hartlepool | 64,650 |
| Havering | 77,685 |
| Herefordshire | 70,229 |
| Hertfordshire | 310,886 |
| Hillingdon | 81,386 |
| Hounslow | 80,742 |
| Hull (Kingston upon Hull) | 72,265 |
| Isle of Wight | 72,230 |
| Isles of Scilly | 53,708 |
| Islington | 83,424 |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 74,788 |
| Kent | 339,586 |
| Kingston upon Thames | 67,654 |
| Kirklees | 95,431 |
| Knowsley | 74,359 |
| Lambeth | 87,789 |
| Lancashire | 315,233 |
| Leeds | 172,987 |
| Leicester | 88,896 |
| Leicestershire | 192,957 |
| Lewisham | 83,978 |
| Lincolnshire | 212,793 |
| Liverpool | 97,648 |
| London FEPA | 151,825 |
| Luton | 59,894 |
| Manchester | 147,667 |
| Medway | 81,547 |
| Merseyside FCDA | 73,332 |
| Merthyr Tydfil | 60,998 |
| Merton | 72,053 |
| Middlesbrough | 71,355 |

| *Local Authority* | *Grant Allocation 2004–05 (£)* |
|---|---|
| Milton Keynes | 81,404 |
| Monmouthshire | 62,154 |
| Neath Port Talbot | 70,259 |
| Newcastle Upon Tyne | 102,823 |
| Newham | 88,226 |
| Newport | 68,616 |
| Norfolk | 276,813 |
| North East Lincolnshire | 71,624 |
| North Lincolnshire | 69,532 |
| North Somerset | 71,248 |
| North Tyneside | 74,091 |
| North Yorkshire | 244,523 |
| Northamptonshire | 239,260 |
| Northumberland | 188,122 |
| Nottingham | 86,321 |
| Nottinghamshire | 210,927 |
| Oldham | 79,294 |
| Oxfordshire | 202,459 |
| Pembrokeshire | 66,735 |
| Peterborough | 72,214 |
| Plymouth | 81,708 |
| Poole | 66,635 |
| Portsmouth | 74,467 |
| Powys | 85,886 |
| Reading | 67,386 |
| Redbridge | 82,566 |
| Redcar and Cleveland | 69,693 |
| Rhondda Cynon Taff | 82,319 |
| Richmond upon Thames | 69,424 |
| Rochdale | 77,310 |
| Rotherham | 81,654 |
| Rutland | 56,443 |
| Salford | 72,386 |
| Sandwell | 88,413 |
| Sefton | 84,015 |
| Sheffield | 96,386 |
| Shropshire | 153,834 |
| Slough | 68,566 |
| Solihull | 73,716 |
| Somerset | 164,359 |
| South Gloucestershire | 76,183 |
| South Tyneside | 71,516 |
| South Yorkshire FCDA | 84,356 |
| Southampton | 77,470 |
| Southend | 71,966 |
| Southwark | 77,343 |
| St Helens | 73,333 |
| Staffordshire | 226,842 |
| Stockport | 79,992 |
| Stockton-on-Tees | 73,877 |
| Stoke-on-Trent | 74,413 |
| Suffolk | 221,786 |
| Sunderland | 101,107 |
| Surrey | 297,388 |
| Sutton | 73,126 |
| Swansea | 78,933 |
| Swindon | 71,355 |
| Tameside | 77,310 |
| Telford and Wrekin | 72,385 |
| Thurrock | 68,666 |
| Torbay | 67,440 |
| Torfaen | 64,876 |
| Tower Hamlets | 93,509 |
| Trafford | 75,754 |
| Tyne & Wear FCDA | 34,892 |
| Vale of Glamorgan | 72,385 |
| Wakefield | 86,667 |
| Walsall | 83,639 |
| Waltham Forest | 83,532 |
| Wandsworth | 79,155 |
| Warrington | 72,804 |
| Warwickshire | 181,722 |
| West Berkshire | 67,815 |
| West Midlands FCDA | 60,386 |

| *Local Authority* | *Grant Allocation 2004–05 (£)* |
|---|---|
| West Sussex | 225,386 |
| West Yorkshire FCDA | 61,593 |
| Westminster | 86,804 |
| Wigan | 84,497 |
| Wiltshire | 194,786 |
| Windsor and Maidenhead | 66,796 |
| Wirral | 89,861 |
| Wokingham | 66,525 |
| Wolverhampton | 82,030 |
| Worcestershire | 186,835 |
| Wrexham | 72,926 |
| York | 72,220 |

To determine the individual allocations the following formula was adopted:

Each authority received £53,000. Each county council received £12,000 in respect of each shire district within the authority's boundaries. These flat-rate payments accounted for approximately 65 per cent. of the aggregate grant, in recognition of the fact that every authority, regardless of size and population, would incur similar unavoidable costs in conducting the basic civil protection function.

The remaining 35 per cent. of the aggregate grant was distributed according to the Bellwin threshold, using population size as a proxy for the scale of civil protection that authorities need to undertake.

This formula is retained by agreement with the Local Government Association.

## PRIME MINISTER

### COE/WEU (Information Bulletin)

**The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair):** I have placed in the Library today the latest Information Bulletin on the activities of the United Kingdom Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Assembly of Western European Union covering the period November to October 2003.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Independent Monitoring Commission (Abduction Incident)

**The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Paul Murphy):** On Friday 20 February the Police Service of Northern Ireland made a number of arrests in connection with an alleged assault and abduction. The case is sub judice.

Four people now face serious charges, including grievous bodily harm, possession of articles likely to be of use to terrorists and unlawful imprisonment. The PSNI are following a number of very definite evidential lines, including video material and the items, clothing and other forensic material recovered at the scene. The Chief Constable of the PSNI has made it clear to me that he is satisfied that there was Provisional IRA involvement in the incident.

These events are a matter of serious concern. As far as the overall situation is concerned, my assessment of the various paramilitary organisations' ceasefires, in the light of information I have received, remains unchanged. But all the indications are that there has been a serious breach of the requirement set out by the British and Irish Governments in paragraph 13 of the joint declaration for an end to all forms of paramilitary activity.

Such behaviour is wholly unacceptable. As the Government has repeatedly made clear, parties cannot be half-in, half-out of the democratic process. All paramilitary activity must stop.

These developments have inevitably had a serious impact on this week's discussions with the Northern Ireland political parties within the review of the operation of the Belfast agreement. At those meetings, we listened carefully to the views of the parties and, in particular, to their concerns about the implications of these events for the establishment of the trust and confidence required to achieve a successful outcome to the review and to restore devolved Government in Northern Ireland.

Both Governments are now asking the Independent Monitoring Commission, which was established in January, to examine Friday's incident in the context of the preparation of its first report on paramilitary activity. We have also asked the Commission to bring that report forward from July to May. The report is expected to take account of all paramilitary incidents and activities within its remit since the Commission's establishment. The Commission is obliged by law not to do anything in carrying out its functions that might have a prejudicial effect on any legal proceedings.

Both the British and Irish Governments are very clear that the achievement of a sustainable basis for political progress in Northern Ireland requires a full and permanent cessation of all paramilitary activity. As part of the wider agenda of the review, it is vital that we intensify engagement with the parties on this core issue, and we envisage that next week there will be a significant focus on it.

### Prison Service

**The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Jane Kennedy):** On 8 September 2003, the Secretary of State formally accepted the recommendations of the Steele Review of Safety at Maghaberry Prison. The review recommended that prisoners with paramilitary affiliations should be accommodated separately from each other, and from the rest of the prison population, on a voluntary basis.

One aspect of implementation has been the development of a prisoner compact, which makes clear the routine and facilities available to separated prisoners and what will be required of them in return. These proposals were issued for public consultation in December.

The Government have considered the representations made and, have made some adjustments to the compact where these do not reduce the ability of prison staff to maintain good order. The revised compact is published today and I have placed copies in the Libraries of both Houses. This is the compact that will set the parameters of the regime in the separated facilities.

As I have made clear on numerous occasions, no-one wants a return to the conditions that pertained at Maze where staff were threatened, intimidated and subjected to brutal attacks and where prisoners could threaten and intimidate other prisoners with impunity.

Many have voiced their concerns that separation could ultimately lead us back to a Maze style regime. I am determined that that should not happen. I firmly believe that the additional security measures which have been incorporated at Maghaberry, taken together with this Compact, will ensure that it does not.

Another of the Steele Review's recommendations was that we should consider the appointment of a prison ombudsman. We will be bringing forward proposals for public consultation shortly.

The publication of the compact now clears the way for full implementation of Steele's recommendations. Most of the physical work required in Maghaberry has now been completed and staff training is well underway. The Prison Service aims to achieve full implementation by the middle of March.

### Police and Criminal Evidence Review

**The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Jane Kennedy):** A review of the Police & Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 and the accompanying codes of practice is being undertaken by officials in the Northern Ireland Office.

The review, which aims to bring the existing PACE legislation and the codes of practice in Northern Ireland into line with that in England and Wales, will adopt much of the new or amended legislation and revisions to the codes of practice introduced by the Home Office as a result of their fundamental review of PACE in 2002.

It is my intention to issue a draft Police & Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order and associated codes of practice for consultation in autumn 2004 with the aim of them becoming operational by summer 2005.

## DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

### 2012 Olympic Games

**The Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. John Prescott):** London's bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games is focused on the Olympic Park in the Lower Lea Valley. The London Development Agency submitted an outline planning application for the Park and four ancillary applications to the Joint Planning Authorities Team (representing Newham, Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest London Boroughs) on 30 January 2004. Decisions on these, and any subsequent applications, are matters for the local authorities concerned. However, it is possible that decisions in relation to these applications could fall to be determined by me as First Secretary of State (either on appeal or if applications were to be called in). I and other Ministers in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister have other policy responsibilities, including the delivery of development and regeneration in the Thames Gateway and the role that the London Olympics bid might play in achieving these objectives. In order to ensure that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's "Guidance on Propriety Issues in the Handling of Planning Casework" is followed, I have decided that any planning decisions arising for the First Secretary of State in respect of development related to the Olympics bid will be dealt with by my hon. Friend the Member for Pontefract and Castleford (Yvette Cooper). She will not be involved in any other matters relating to the Olympics bid.

# Written Ministerial Statements

*Friday 27 February 2004*

## EDUCATION AND SKILLS

### Schools (Surplus Places)

**The Minister for School Standards (Mr. David Miliband):** We are today publishing data on surplus places in primary and secondary schools in England.

The survey returns indicate that there were 482,078 surplus primary places in January 2003. This is 11 per cent. of the total capacity of 4,450,723, and an increase in surplus of 33,041 places since 2001 when the last survey was conducted. This reflects the recent and continuing fall in numbers of primary aged children. In the secondary sector there were 231,391 surplus places, representing 7 per cent. of the total capacity of 3,455,993, and a fall in surplus of 19,342 places since 2001.

Dealing effectively and sensitively with falling rolls presents a real challenge to individual schools and to local education authorities (LEAs). While it is for individual LEAs to consider the scope for removing surplus places, the Department encourages them, when planning, to concentrate on those schools with 25 per cent. or more surplus (and at least 30 surplus places) which are also performing badly.

In some cases it is sensible to propose the closure or amalgamation of schools. In others, surplus places can provide opportunities for extended schools providing a range of other services alongside schooling and for wider community use of school premises.

Recognising the scale of the challenge faced by many LEAs with falling primary rolls, the Department proposes to establish a working group with our partner organisations to explore the options and opportunities available to schools and communities.

The table attached sets out the numbers of primary and secondary surplus places by local authority area as at January 2003. The table also highlights the number of schools which had surplus of 25 per cent. or more, and at least 30 surplus places. The number of schools in this category has decreased by 25, from 2,441 in January 2001 to 2,416.

The number of LEAs having high levels of surplus places (20 per cent. of schools with 25 per cent. or more surplus and at least 30 surplus places) fell from 22 in 2001 to 19 in 2003.

*Surplus Places 1 January 2003*

| | *Primary* | | | | *Secondary* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Actual Surplus*[2] | | *Schools with surplus of 25 per cent. or more*[3] | | *Actual Surplus* | | *Schools with surplus of 25 per cent. or more*[3] | |
| *LEA Name* | *Number of places* | *Surplus as a per cent. of total places* | *Number* | *Per cent.* | *Number of places* | *Surplus as a per cent. of total places* | *Number* | *Per cent.* |
| Barking & Dagenham | 1,342 | 8 | | | 604 | 5 | | |
| Barnet | 2,520 | 10 | 9 | 10 | 960 | 4 | 2 | 10 |
| Barnsley | 1,175 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 805 | 6 | 1 | 7 |
| Bath & NE Somerset | 1,520 | 11 | 7 | 10 | 843 | 6 | 2 | 15 |
| Bedfordshire | 3,265 | 12 | 18 | 12 | 3,060 | 8 | 9 | 14 |
| Bexley | 1,779 | 8 | 7 | 11 | 812 | 4 | | |
| Birmingham | 7,162 | 7 | 25 | 8 | 2,998 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| Blackburn | 1,048 | 7 | 4 | 7 | 795 | 8 | 1 | 11 |
| Blackpool | 719 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 335 | 4 | | |
| Bolton | 1,690 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 373 | 2 | | |
| Bournemouth | 1,182 | 10 | 5 | 18 | 490 | 5 | 1 | 10 |
| Bracknell Forest | 972 | 10 | 2 | 6 | 895 | 13 | 1 | 17 |
| Bradford | 7,150 | 14 | 29 | 18 | 2,992 | 8 | 2 | 7 |
| Brent | 2,950 | 13 | 10 | 17 | 1,185 | 7 | 2 | 14 |
| Brighton & Hove | 1,790 | 10 | 5 | 9 | 889 | 7 | 2 | 20 |
| Bristol | 3,880 | 13 | 23 | 19 | 2,039 | 11 | 1 | 5 |
| Bromley | 1,559 | 6 | 8 | 10 | 480 | 2 | | |
| Buckinghamshire | 4,332 | 10 | 22 | 12 | 1,257 | 4 | 1 | 3 |
| Bury | 1,102 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 253 | 2 | | |
| Calderdale | 1,891 | 10 | 6 | 7 | 497 | 3 | | |
| Cambridgeshire | 5,819 | 12 | 26 | 13 | 3,236 | 9 | 2 | 10 |
| Camden | 1,077 | 10 | 2 | 5 | 84 | 1 | | |
| Cheshire | 7,505 | 12 | 40 | 14 | 2,837 | 6 | 7 | 16 |
| Cornwall | 4,154 | 10 | 20 | 8 | 1,376 | 4 | | |
| Corporation of London | 6 | 3 | | | | | | |
| Coventry | 2,935 | 10 | 8 | 9 | 1,542 | 7 | 2 | 11 |
| Croydon | 2,414 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 1,923 | 10 | 1 | 5 |
| Cumbria | 3,450 | 8 | 18 | 6 | 4,207 | 11 | 6 | 14 |
| Darlington | 849 | 9 | 3 | 9 | 548 | 8 | | |
| Derby City of | 2,356 | 10 | 11 | 14 | 755 | 5 | 1 | 8 |
| Derbyshire | 6,504 | 10 | 40 | 11 | 3,117 | 6 | 3 | 6 |
| Devon | 5,291 | 9 | 32 | 10 | 1,523 | 4 | | |
| Doncaster | 3,152 | 14 | 15 | 14 | 1,712 | 7 | | |

*Surplus Places 1 January 2003*

| | *Primary* | | | | *Secondary* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Actual Surplus*[2] | | *Schools with surplus of 25 per cent. or more*[3] | | *Actual Surplus* | | *Schools with surplus of 25 per cent. or more*[3] | |
| *LEA Name* | *Number of places* | *Surplus as a per cent. of total places* | *Number* | *Per cent.* | *Number of places* | *Surplus as a per cent. of total places* | *Number* | *Per cent.* |
| Dorset | 3,185 | 11 | 24 | 17 | 1,731 | 5 | 2 | 5 |
| Dudley | 2,687 | 9 | 6 | 7 | 595 | 3 | 1 | 5 |
| Durham | 8,552 | 18 | 69 | 28 | 4,079 | 11 | 4 | 8 |
| Ealing | 2,523 | 10 | 6 | 9 | 666 | 4 | 1 | 8 |
| East Riding of Yorkshire | 2,606 | 9 | 16 | 12 | 1,011 | 4 | | |
| East Sussex | 2,791 | 7 | 11 | 7 | 1,670 | 6 | 2 | 7 |
| Enfield | 995 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 2,326 | 10 | 1 | 6 |
| Essex | 13,462 | 11 | 48 | 10 | 6,003 | 6 | 4 | 5 |
| Gateshead | 2,710 | 15 | 16 | 21 | 972 | 8 | | |
| Gloucestershire | 4,794 | 10 | 27 | 11 | 2,737 | 6 | 2 | 5 |
| Greenwich | 2,289 | 11 | 7 | 11 | 1,905 | 12 | 2 | 13 |
| Hackney | 1,947 | 117 | 7 | 13 | 931 | 11 | 1 | 11 |
| Halton | 1,258 | 11 | 7 | 13 | 383 | 4 | 2 | 25 |
| Hammersmith & Fulham | 1,254 | 13 | 6 | 17 | 1,369 | 18 | 2 | 22 |
| Hampshire | 10,414 | 10 | 39 | 9 | 5,001 | 7 | 5 | 7 |
| Haringey | 1,616 | 8 | 4 | 6 | 698 | 6 | | |
| Harrow | 2,832 | 13 | 6 | 11 | 283 | 3 | | |
| Hartlepool | 837 | 9 | 3 | 10 | 629 | 9 | | |
| Havering | 1,155 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 974 | 6 | 1 | 6 |
| Herefordshire | 1,421 | 10 | 6 | 7 | 495 | 5 | | |
| Hertfordshire | 13,231 | 13 | 67 | 16 | 9,832 | 11 | 11 | 13 |
| Hillingdon | 2,528 | 11 | 6 | 9 | 1,133 | 6 | 2 | 12 |
| Hounslow | 2,174 | 11 | 6 | 10 | 441 | 3 | | |
| Isle of Wight | 1,012 | 12 | 1 | 2 | 1,543 | 11 | | |
| Isles of Scilly | 265 | | | | | | | |
| Islington | 1,760 | 12 | 7 | 15 | 589 | 7 | 1 | 11 |
| Kensington & Chelsea | 617 | 9 | | | 202 | 5 | | |
| Kent | 9,455 | 8 | 36 | 8 | 6,915 | 7 | 12 | 12 |
| Kingston upon Hull City of | 3,913 | 15 | 7 | 9 | 1,070 | 6 | 1 | 7 |
| Kingston upon Thames | 768 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 619 | 7 | 1 | 10 |
| Kirklees | 3,948 | 11 | 15 | 10 | 2,989 | 10 | 4 | 13 |
| Knowsley | 3,595 | 20 | 19 | 32 | 1,768 | 15 | 2 | 18 |
| Lambeth | 1,826 | 9 | 5 | 8 | 762 | 10 | | |
| Lancashire | 12,466 | 12 | 67 | 14 | 4,816 | 6 | 4 | 5 |
| Leeds | 8,487 | 13 | 42 | 17 | 3,647 | 7 | 8 | 19 |
| Leicester City | 4,120 | 14 | 16 | 19 | 744 | 4 | | |
| Leicestershire | 5,629 | 10 | 26 | 12 | 1,816 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| Lewisham | 2,343 | 11 | 6 | 9 | 711 | 6 | | |
| Lincolnshire | 6,844 | 11 | 42 | 15 | 3,533 | 7 | 7 | 11 |
| Liverpool | 5,906 | 14 | 24 | 17 | 2,286 | 6 | 2 | 6 |
| Luton | 1,756 | 9 | 5 | 8 | 344 | 3 | | |
| Manchester | 5,690 | 14 | 23 | 17 | 1,614 | 6 | 2 | 9 |
| Medway Towns | 2,574 | 10 | 12 | 13 | 1,649 | 8 | 1 | 5 |
| Merton | 2,836 | 19 | 8 | 19 | 870 | 9 | | |
| Middlesbrough | 2,245 | 15 | 11 | 24 | 797 | 10 | 1 | 13 |
| Milton Keynes | 3,266 | 13 | 17 | 20 | 1,542 | 11 | 2 | 18 |
| Newcastle Upon Tyne | 2,280 | 11 | 9 | 13 | 1,427 | 7 | 1 | 6 |
| Newham | 1,729 | 6 | 4 | 6 | 1,326 | 7 | 1 | 7 |
| Norfolk | 8,197 | 11 | 42 | 11 | 2,939 | 6 | 4 | 8 |
| North East Lincolnshire | 1,865 | 12 | 6 | 10 | 931 | 7 | 1 | 8 |
| North Lincolnshire | 1,101 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 1,167 | 10 | 1 | 7 |
| North Somerset | 782 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 250 | 2 | | |
| North Tyneside | 2,726 | 15 | 11 | 20 | 826 | 6 | | |
| North Yorkshire | 6,229 | 12 | 34 | 10 | 3,417 | 8 | 3 | 6 |
| Northamptonshire | 5,847 | 10 | 30 | 11 | 4,598 | 8 | 6 | 10 |
| Northumberland | 2,550 | 13 | 11 | 8 | 2,465 | 8 | 4 | 7 |
| Nottingham City of | 3,940 | 15 | 20 | 20 | 1,540 | 10 | 5 | 26 |
| Nottinghamshire | 6,121 | 9 | 29 | 9 | 3,670 | 7 | 3 | 6 |
| Oldham | 2,332 | 10 | 6 | 6 | 888 | 5 | 1 | 7 |
| Oxfordshire | 6,813 | 14 | 36 | 16 | 2,341 | 6 | 5 | 11 |
| Peterborough | 2,756 | 15 | 11 | 20 | 1,898 | 13 | 3 | 23 |
| Plymouth City of | 3,017 | 13 | 12 | 15 | 863 | 5 | 2 | 12 |
| Poole | 726 | 6 | | | 205 | 2 | | |
| Portsmouth | 2,384 | 14 | 13 | 25 | 802 | 7 | | |
| Reading | 1,751 | 16 | 7 | 18 | 854 | 12 | 2 | 29 |
| Redbridge | 1,091 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 1,245 | 6 | 1 | 6 |
| Redcar & Cleveland | 1,762 | 13 | 9 | 18 | 1,204 | 11 | 2 | 18 |
| Richmond upon Thames | 732 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 359 | 5 | | |
| Rochdale | 2,818 | 13 | 18 | 24 | 1,224 | 8 | 1 | 7 |

*Surplus Places 1 January 2003*

| | Primary | | | | Secondary | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Actual Surplus[2] | | Schools with surplus of 25 per cent. or more[3] | | Actual Surplus | | Schools with surplus of 25 per cent. or more[3] | |
| *LEA Name* | *Number of places* | *Surplus as a per cent. of total places* | *Number* | *Per cent.* | *Number of places* | *Surplus as a per cent. of total places* | *Number* | *Per cent.* |
| Rotherham | 1,988 | 8 | 5 | 5 | 1,312 | 6 | 1 | 6 |
| Rutland | 608 | 19 | 5 | 29 | 345 | 13 | 1 | 33 |
| Salford | 3,097 | 14 | 19 | 23 | 2,154 | 15 | 3 | 21 |
| Sandwell | 4,096 | 13 | 19 | 19 | 1,917 | 9 | 1 | 6 |
| Sefton | 3,344 | 13 | 16 | 18 | 874 | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| Sheffield | 4,587 | 10 | 16 | 11 | 700 | 2 | | |
| Shropshire | 3,787 | 15 | 22 | 15 | 573 | 3 | | |
| Slough | 1,564 | 13 | 5 | 17 | 309 | 4 | 1 | 9 |
| Solihull | 1,162 | 6 | 4 | 6 | 164 | 1 | | |
| Somerset | 4,936 | 12 | 28 | 13 | 2,550 | 7 | 4 | 10 |
| South Gloucestershire | 2,942 | 11 | 10 | 10 | 1,462 | 8 | 1 | 7 |
| South Tyneside | 1,853 | 13 | 11 | 20 | 1,461 | 12 | 2 | 20 |
| Southampton | 1,776 | 10 | 7 | 11 | 1,478 | 11 | 2 | 14 |
| Southend | 723 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 638 | 5 | 1 | 8 |
| Southwark | 2,737 | 11 | 5 | 7 | 686 | 6 | 1 | 8 |
| St Helens | 1,402 | 9 | 4 | 7 | 298 | 2 | | |
| Staffordshire | 8,256 | 11 | 47 | 15 | 2,602 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Stockport | 2,302 | 9 | 11 | 11 | 794 | 5 | | |
| Stockton on Tees | 1,947 | 11 | 3 | 5 | 839 | 6 | | |
| Stoke on Trent | 3,663 | 16 | 15 | 19 | 487 | 3 | 1 | 6 |
| Suffolk | 5,688 | 11 | 25 | 10 | 4,957 | 8 | 6 | 8 |
| Sunderland | 3,844 | 14 | 13 | 15 | 2,146 | 10 | 4 | 17 |
| Surrey | 8,501 | 10 | 42 | 13 | 3,706 | 6 | 6 | 11 |
| Sutton | 915 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 598 | 4 | | |
| Swindon | 2,146 | 11 | 7 | 11 | 877 | 7 | 1 | 10 |
| Tameside | 1,824 | 9 | 6 | 8 | 808 | 5 | 2 | 11 |
| Telford and the Wrekin | 1,542 | 10 | 4 | 6 | 854 | 8 | 1 | 8 |
| Thurrock | 2,271 | 15 | 7 | 15 | 760 | 9 | 1 | 9 |
| Torbay | 807 | 8 | 3 | 9 | 145 | 2 | | |
| Tower Hamlets | 2,013 | 9 | 4 | 6 | 1,424 | 9 | 2 | 13 |
| Trafford | 1,187 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 993 | 6 | 2 | 11 |
| Wakefield | 3,846 | 12 | 15 | 12 | 614 | 3 | | |
| Walsall | 3,334 | 12 | 12 | 13 | 998 | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| Waltham Forest | 1,272 | 6 | 5 | 8 | 980 | 7 | 2 | 12 |
| Wandsworth | 2,025 | 12 | 9 | 16 | 679 | 6 | 1 | 11 |
| Warrington | 1,857 | 10 | 9 | 13 | 395 | 3 | | |
| Warwickshire | 4,263 | 10 | 20 | 10 | 2,652 | 7 | 2 | 5 |
| West Berkshire | 1,328 | 10 | 8 | 12 | 330 | 3 | | |
| West Sussex | 7,348 | 11 | 30 | 12 | 3,804 | 8 | 3 | 8 |
| Westminster | 1,122 | 11 | 3 | 8 | 840 | 9 | | |
| Wigan | 2,676 | 9 | 12 | 11 | 1,441 | 7 | 2 | 10 |
| Wiltshire | 6,877 | 16 | 47 | 21 | 3,974 | 12 | 8 | 24 |
| Windsor & Maidenhead | 670 | 8 | 5 | 11 | 524 | 5 | 1 | 8 |
| Wirral | 3,735 | 13 | 17 | 17 | 1,472 | 6 | | |
| Wokingham | 1,304 | 10 | 7 | 13 | 316 | 3 | | |
| Wolverhampton | 3,436 | 14 | 18 | 22 | 1,713 | 9 | 4 | 22 |
| Worcestershire | 4,616 | 11 | 26 | 13 | 2,589 | 6 | 5 | 7 |
| York | 2,455 | 16 | 12 | 22 | 608 | 6 | 1 | 9 |
| TOTAL | 482,078 | 11 | 2,146 | 12 | 231,391 | 7 | 270 | 8 |

Note 1: Primary figures show surplus after taking account of summer entry.
Note 2: Actual surplus is defined as the difference between capacity and number on roll for all schools where capacity exceeds number on roll.
Note 3: Schools with less than 30 surplus places are not included.
Note 4: Blanks denote no surplus.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Passport and Records Agency

**The Minister for Citizenship and Immigration (Beverley Hughes):** The Passport and Records Agency Accounts 2002–03 have been published today and I am pleased to say that copies of the report have been placed in the Library of the House.

## TREASURY

### Financial Services and Markets Act

**The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Ruth Kelly):** I announced the start of the two year review of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 in a written statement to Parliament on 4 November 2003, *Official Report*, (Col 28WS). In that statement I said that the Government intended to issue during February a public

consultation document on changes to the boundary of financial services regulation. A consultation document was issued today. Copies have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### Draft Disability Discrimination Bill

**The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Andrew Smith):** When I published the draft Disability Discrimination Bill on 3 December 2003, (Cm 6058), I emphasised a priority to meet our 2001 manifesto commitment in the lifetime of this Parliament—on extending rights of disabled people and removing barriers to their participation in society. I also announced our intention to publish a further clause which would protect disabled local councillors from discrimination by the local authority of which they are a member. This meets the commitment in *"Towards Inclusion"*, the Government's response to the recommendations of the disability rights taskforce.

I am pleased to announce that I have today laid before Parliament the draft clause which becomes clause 15 of the draft Disability Discrimination Bill (Cm 6126, Draft Disability Discrimination Bill—Clause 15: relationships between locally-electable authorities and their members). Alongside the clause are published explanatory notes, prepared by my Department, to assist the Joint Scrutiny Committee of Parliament which is considering the draft Bill. The draft clause and notes are also available on http:// www.disability.gov.uk.

## DEFENCE

### Free Packet Service (Gulf)

**The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram):** On 17 April 2003, with the generous support of the Royal Mail Group, the Ministry of Defence introduced a free postal service to enable families to post packets up to 2kg free of charge to BFPO addresses in the Gulf. The provision of a free packet service recognised the difficult conditions personnel were operating in and that it was not possible to provide the full spectrum of welfare support normally available to personnel on operations. Whilst southern Iraq is not yet a benign environment, the level of welfare support and the facilities available on Operation TELIC are now comparable to those provided in other operational theatres.

It has therefore been decided that from 8 April 2004 with the handover of 20 Armoured Brigade to 1 Mechanised Brigade this free service will cease. This date should allow for any Easter gifts to be sent under the free service.

In common with other operations, personnel in Iraq are provided with free forces air letters and their electronic counterparts ("Blueys" and "eblueys") in addition to free Internet access and free 20 minute phone calls each week. Families may also send packets up to 2kg in weight to personnel in the Gulf at a concessionary rate—the equivalent of the UK inland First Class postal rate. The NAAFI/Expeditionary Forces Institute also sells through its outlets in theatre many of the small consumable items that families were previously sending to personnel and this has led to a significant decline in the demand for the free packet service.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Council of the European Union

**The Minister for Europe (Mr Denis MacShane):** The forthcoming business in the Council of the European Union is as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *March* | | |
| 1–2 | Cork | ASEM Finance Deputies' Meeting |
| 2 | Brussels | Environment Council |
| 3 | Brussels | COREPER 1 |
| 3 | Brussels | COREPER 2 |
| 4–6 | Co. Clare | Youth Ministerial Conference |
| 4–5 | Brussels | Employment, Social Policy, Health & Consumer Affairs (Ministerial Informal) |
| 8 | Brussels | Meeting of Eurogroup |
| 8–9 | Ankara | EU Ministerial Troika with Turkey |
| 8–9 | Brussels | Transport, Telecom & Energy Council |
| 9 | Brussels | ECOFIN |
| 10 | Brussels | COREPER 2 |
| 10 | Brussels | COREPER 1 |
| 11 | Dublin | EU/Russia Ministerial Meeting (Troika) |
| 12 | Brussels | COREPER 1 |
| 17 | Brussels | COREPER 1 |
| 18 | Brussels | COREPER 2 |
| 18 | Ottawa | EU Canada Summit (Troika) |
| 18–19 | Dublin | OECD Ministers Conference |
| 19 | Brussels | COREPER 1 |
| 22 | Brussels | Agriculture & Fisheries Council |
| 22–23 | Brussels | General Affairs & External Relations (GAERC) |
| 24 | Brussels | COREPER 1 |
| 24 | Brussels | COREPER 2 |
| 24–25 | Brussels | Meeting of the Economic and Financial Committee |
| 25–26 | Brussels | EUROPEAN COUNCIL |
| 30 | Dublin | EU/Ukraine Ministerial Meeting (Troika) |
| 30 | Brussels | Justice & Home Affairs (Ministerial Informal) |
| 31 | Brussels | COREPER 1 |
| *April* | | |
| 2 | Punchestown | Meeting of Eurogroup |
| 2–3 | Punchestown | ECOFIN |
| 7–8 | Co. Wicklow | Ministerial Conference on Communicating Europe |
| 16–17 | Tullamore | GYMNICH |
| 17 | Co. Kildare | ASEM Foreign Ministers Meeting |
| 26–27 | Brussels | General Affairs & External Relations (GAERC) |
| 26–27 | Brussels | Agriculture & Fisheries Council |
| 27 | Luxembourg | EU/Russia Permanent Partnership Council (Troika?) |
| 29–30 | Brussels | Meeting of the Economic and Financial Committee |
| 29–30 | Brussels | Justice & Home Affairs (Ministerial Informal) |
| *May* | | |
| 6–7 | Dublin | EuroMed Foreign Ministers |
| 7 | Limerick | Meeting of Ministers with responsibility for Equality |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 9–11 | Killarney | Agriculture Informal Ministerial Meeting |
| 10 | Brussels | Meeting of Eurogroup |
| 11 | Brussels | ECOFIN |
| 11–12 | Cork | Health Ministers Consultative Meeting |
| 14–16 | Waterford | Informal Meeting of EU Environment Ministers |
| 17–18 | Brussels | General Affairs & External Relations (GAERC) |
| 19–20 | Offaly | Informal Budget Committee |
| 21 | Moscow | EU/Russia Summit (Troika) |
| 23–25 | Brussels | Agriculture & Fisheries Council |
| 24–25 | Brussels | Meeting of the Economic and Financial Committee |
| 24–25 | Brussels | Agriculture & Fisheries Council |
| 25–27 | Co. Galway | Conference on Islands and Territorial cohesion—Meeting New Challenges |
| 27–28 | Brussels | Education, Youth & Culture Council |
| 27–31 | Dublin | Ministers and Directors General of Public Administration |
| 28 | Guadalajara | EU-Latin America/Caribbean Summit |

*June*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1–2 | Luxembourg | Health Council |
| 1 | Dublin | Development Ministers' Meeting |
| 1 | Luxembourg | Meeting of Eurogroup |
| 2 | Luxembourg | ECOFIN |
| 8 | Luxembourg | Justice & Home Affairs Council Meeting |
| 10–11 | Luxembourg | Transport, Telecom & Energy Council |
| 14–15 | Luxembourg | General Affairs & External Relations (GAERC) |
| 17–18 | Brussels | EUROPEAN COUNCIL |
| 21–22 | Luxembourg | Agriculture & Fisheries Council |
| 21–22 | Brussels | Meeting of the Economic and Financial Committee |
| 28–29 | Luxembourg | Council Meeting of EU Environment Ministers |

*July*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Brussels | Coreper 2 |
| 2–3 | Maastricht | Competitiveness (Informal) |
| 7 | Brussels | Coreper 1 |
| 7–8 | Brussels | Coreper 2 |
| 8 | tbc | EU-Ukraine Summit |
| 8–10 | Maastricht | Social Policy (Informal) |
| 9–10 | Amsterdam | Transport (Informal) |
| 12–13 | Brussels | General Affairs & External Relations (GAERC) |
| 12–14 | Rotterdam | Informal Ministerial Education Youth and Culture |
| 14 | Brussels | Coreper 1 |
| 15 | Brussels | Coreper 2 |
| 16–18 | Maastricht | Environment (Informal) |
| 19 | Brussels | JHA Council |
| 19 | Brussels | Agricultural and Fisheries Council |
| 22 | Brussels | Coreper 2 |
| 23 | Brussels | Coreper 1 |

*August*

*No meetings planned*

# Written Ministerial Statements

*Monday 1 March 2004*

## DEFENCE

### Reserve Forces Call-out Order

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin):** A new call-out order has been made under Section 56 of the Reserve forces Act 1996 so that reservists may continue to be called out to support operations in Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The order will take effect from 1 March 2004, the date the previous order expires. There are no plans to call-out reservists compulsorily under this order as it is expected that the small numbers needed will be met through volunteers for service in those countries.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Falkland Islands

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Bill Rammell):** I made a statement to this House on airlinks between the Falklands and Argentina, *Official Report*, 19 January 2004, 51WS. I would like to report on developments since then.

I travelled to Argentina on 16–17 February on a pre-planned bilateral visit. I held talks on a wide range of international, regional and bilateral issues. The question of airlinks featured in my talks with the Argentine Foreign Minister, Dr Rafael Bielsa. The talks were frank and constructive and we made some progress. Some proposals were discussed which we each agreed to look at further. These proposals primarily focused on temporary arrangements for charter flights for 2004. I made it clear that any arrangements would need to be acceptable to the Falkland Islanders.

Regrettably, shortly following my visit, an article appeared in an Argentine newspaper, giving details of my talks and wrongly asserting that a deal on airlinks had been agreed. As I have indicated, this was not the case.

I spoke subsequently to Falkland Councillors. They concluded that the proposals for temporary arrangements did not meet their concerns. However, they agreed that we should continue to discuss the issue with the Argentine Government with a view to securing a permanent solution to the question of charter flights rather than having further temporary arrangements.

We are now taking this forward with the Argentine Government, with the full agreement of Councillors. I will keep the House informed of progress.

## INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Afghanistan

**The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn):** Afghanistan remains a high priority for the Government. A lot has been achieved during the past two years. Around 3 million refugees have been helped to return to Afghanistan. Improvements have been made in education, with more than 4 million children back at school. Some 37 per cent. of pupils are now girls, up from 5 per cent. in 2001. Some 12 million children have been immunised against polio and 16 million against measles since 2002, saving 30,000 lives. Women are increasingly taking part in politics and the new constitution guarantees women 25 per cent. of seats at the new parliament and equal rights and duties before the law. But there are still challenges ahead.

As part of the UK's continuing commitment to Afghanistan I will be announcing, at the donor conference taking place in Berlin on 31 March and 1 April, an increase in our assistance to at least £500 million over five years. This represents an increase of 150 per cent. on our original commitment for the reconstruction of Afghanistan made in Tokyo in January 2002 to provide £200 million over these five years (the financial years 2002/03–2006/07). So far we have provided £110.5 million of this. This new pledge will include at least £75 million a year for reconstruction, plus assistance for counter-narcotics and conflict prevention.

One of the major challenges Afghanistan faces is security, particularly in the south and east of the country, and the need to tackle the drugs trade. The UK is working to support the Afghan police and helping to build a new Afghan National Army. We are also assisting with the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants. Our new financial commitment will help to address all these issues.

# Written Ministerial Statements

*Tuesday 2 March 2004*

## HEALTH DEPARTMENT

### Health Care Practitioners

**The Minister of State, Department of Health (Mr. John Hutton):** In the interest of public safety, we have today published two consultation papers on the statutory regulation of healthcare practitioners. The papers seek views on the extension of regulation to a wider range of healthcare staff and on proposals for the statutory regulation of herbal medicine and acupuncture practitioners.

A related consultation paper on the reform of the regulation of unlicensed herbal remedies made up to meet the needs of individual patients has also been published today by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency.

Copies of the three consultation papers have been placed in the Library.

### NHS Pharmaceutical Services

**The Minister of State, Department of Health (Ms Rosie Winterton):** I have today placed in the Library copies of the executive summary of the report of the advisory group on the reform of the NHS (Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 1992. It is also available on the Department's website at:

http://www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/pharmacyregulationconsultation/advisorygroup.htm

The Government are considering the group's advice carefully and will make further announcements as soon as possible. We will publish the report in full when we publish changes to the Regulations later this year.

I have also placed in the Library copies of the summary of responses, which was published on Monday 1 March, to the consultation on "A Vision for Pharmacy in the New NHS". It is available on the Department's website at:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/consultations/responsestoconsultations/fs/en

## CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

### Lord Chancellor (Ecclesiastical Functions)

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. Christopher Leslie):** I should like to make a statement on the Government's approach to certain functions of the Lord Chancellor in the light of responses to the consultation document "Constitutional Reform: Reforming the office of Lord Chancellor". A summary of the responses was published on 26 January. Last week my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs, Lord Falconer of Thoroton, introduced a Constitutional Reform Bill into Parliament. The Bill provides for the abolition of the office of Lord Chancellor, as well as for the establishment of a Judicial Appointments Commission, and the creation of a Supreme Court, and will, where necessary, make statutory provision to give effect to our approach.

#### Ecclesiastical Patronage

Since the fourteenth century, the Lord Chancellor, on behalf of the Crown, has exercised patronage in relation to a number of parishes and Cathedral Canonries. This patronage is administered with other Crown patronage through a combined office.

With the abolition of the office of Lord Chancellor, the Government propose that the Lord Chancellor's patronage should revert to the Crown. Legislation is not required to achieve this. This reversion to the Crown will ensure administrative consistency and take full advantage of existing mechanisms and expertise. Respondents to the consultation and others have made clear how much they value the role of the Crown in a mixed pattern of patronage.

#### Other Ecclesiastical Functions

The Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs, who has Ministerial responsibilities in relation to the Church, will assume the Lord Chancellor's role as Church Commissioner. Similarly, the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs will take the Lord Chancellor's role in relation to certain ecclesiastical judicial or legal appointments. Where these appointments concern a serving judge in the secular courts he will first consult the Lord Chief Justice. Relevant provisions will be included in the Constitutional Reform Bill.

#### Visitatorial Jurisdiction

The Sovereign is visitor at certain charitable institutions where no other visitor is named. By convention, the Sovereign's visitatorial jurisdiction is usually delegated to the Lord Chancellor. In addition, the Lord Chancellor holds the title of visitor to a number of organisations in his own right. In these cases the Lord Chancellor's visitatorial functions will revert to the Sovereign with the abolition of his office.

For the future, proposals in the Higher Education Bill will remove the jurisdiction of the visitor over student complaints, the majority of visitorship issues. For other visitorship responsibilities we propose that the Secretary of State advise the Sovereign on a case-by-case basis and where appropriate appoint a suitably qualified person, such as a serving or retired judge, to undertake the function on behalf of the Queen. This change will not require primary legislation.

#### Charitable and other institutions

The Lord Chancellor has a specific role in respect to a number of institutions and schools where he is mentioned in their governing documents. Unless specific action is taken, that absence of the office of Lord Chancellor could cause problems for some of these institutions. Some academic institutions will be affected by the change of visitor. In consultation, some of these institutions have indicated that they wish to amend their governing instruments to reflect the abolition of that office.

To assist such organisations, I am proposing to take a power in the Constitutional Reform Bill to be able to amend Charters, Orders in Council or other instruments as a consequence of the abolition of the office of Lord Chancellor.

GREAT SEAL

The Great Seal is used to signify the Royal Will and authenticate acts of the Sovereign or the Government acting in the name of the Monarch. As I made clear in the consultation document "Reforming the office of Lord Chancellor", his responsibilities in relation to the Great Seal are to transfer to the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs, who is (after the Prime Minister) the principal source of advice on matters relating to the Crown, and who will have a specific duty to defend and uphold the independence of the judiciary.

Appointments to the senior judiciary are made under the Great Seal. It is an important part of safeguarding the independence of the judiciary, and the new partnership with the executive, that the custody of the Great Seal can only be changed with a clear decision by Parliament through primary legislation. Provisions in the Bill make clear that custody of the Great Seal can only be moved away from the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs by primary legislation.

# Written Ministerial Statements

*Wednesday 3 March 2004*

## CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### S4C

**The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (Tessa Jowell):** Following a request from the S4C Authority, I have commissioned an independent review of S4C, to be carried out by Roger Laughton, Head of Bournemouth university media school. Mr. Laughton will be assisted by Meurig Royles as Welsh language assessor to the review.

The terms of reference for the review are: 1) to assess, in light of the Communication Act's reaffirmation of S4C's status and remit, *(a)* the efficiency with which S4C utilises the resources made available to deliver its statutory responsibilities, *(b)* the extent to which other sources of funding, including efficiency savings, could make a greater contribution alongside that which S4C receives as grant-in-aid, and *(c)* the extent to which S4C's latest strategic plan provides an effective basis on which to plan for the future; 2) to examine the particular implications for S4C of the Government's proposal on the future of digital broadcasting.

The review will include: *(a)* consultation with a wide range of interests, including organisations representative of those sectors where the role of S4C is of particular significance; and *(b)* consideration, to the extent that the reviewer judges appropriate, of the outcome of and evidence generated by S4C's recent internal review process.

In addition to the consultation outlined above, there will be an opportunity for members of the public to make representations to the review team, via a website set up by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

The Government remain committed to the provision by S4C of a high-quality, diverse Welsh language television service forming a key part of the public service broadcasting landscape. I was, therefore, pleased to agree to the S4C Authority's request for a review which could address some of the important challenges S4C faces as it approaches analogue switch off. The Authority has already completed its own internal review and Mr. Laughton will be able to take its conclusions into account.

Ofcom's statutory review of the fulfillment of the public service broadcasting remit will also provide an opportunity to consider S4C's contribution to that wider remit. The relationship between S4C and the BBC will in addition be considered in detail as part of BBC charter review.

I have asked Mr. Laughton to report back to me at the beginning of May.

## TREASURY

### Main Estimates and Spring Reports

**The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Paul Boateng):** Following the announcement that the Budget will take place on 17 March, HM Treasury plans to publish the 2004–05 main estimates, the supplementary budgetary information publication that accompanies the main estimates, and the public expenditure statistical analyses 2004 on Monday 19 April 2004.

### Cash Ratio Deposits

**The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Paul Boateng):** Cash ratio deposits are non-interest bearing assets deposited with the Bank of England by banks and building societies. They are used by the bank to finance its unremunerated activities, in particular its sterling liquidity operations and its efforts to secure price stability and the stability of the financial system in general, from which these institutions are key beneficiaries. The cash ratio deposit scheme was placed on a statutory basis when the Bank of England Act became law in 1998. In February 2003, the Paymaster General announced by written statement a review of the operation of the statutory scheme in its first five years.

My written statement of 18 September 2003 set out the review's conclusions, one of which was that the minimum threshold for making deposits should be raised from £400 million to £500 million, freeing 18 institutions from the scheme and benefiting all remaining contributing institutions by reducing the level of their deposits by £150,000 each. This proposal would require a change to secondary legislation under the Bank of England Act 1998. HM Treasury has therefore consulted publicly about this change and invited views on the review's other recommendations.

The Government's response to this consultation exercise was published yesterday. Given the general support among respondents for the proposal set out above, I am today laying before Parliament a draft statutory instrument designed to increase the threshold for making deposits under the CRD scheme from £400 million to £500 million, scheduled to come into force on 1 June 2004.

### Tax Avoidance

**The Paymaster General (Dawn Primarolo):** Legislation to prevent tax avoidance by individuals through the creation of deficiency relief on life insurance policies is to be included in the 2004 Finance Bill. The legislation will restrict the deficiency relief available to an individual to amounts of earlier gains which formed part of that same individual's income. The change will have effect from today. It will apply to all new policies. It will also apply to all existing policies which are assigned, or become used as security for a debt, or into which policyholders choose to pay further premiums, on or after today.

A copy of today's Inland Revenue news release giving the relevant background to this measure is being deposited in the Libraries of both Houses and is also accessible on the Inland Revenue website: http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/.

## INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Afghanistan (Election Registration Funding)

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development (Mr. Gareth Thomas):** Ensuring the legitimacy of the Afghan Government within the timescale set down by the Bonn agreement is an important part of the Government's strategy for Afghanistan.

Elections are due to take place later this year and the Government has already provided £1 million from the Department for International Development (DFID) and £2 million from the joint DFID/FCO/MOD global conflict prevention pool towards the UN's programme of voter registration in Afghanistan. So far just over 1.2 million of an estimated 10.5 million electorate has been registered.

DFID will now be providing an additional £6 million to the UN to support the registration process. Combined with a US pledge of US$12 million this takes the total funding from US$48 million to US$71 million out of a total budget of around US$98 million. This will allow registration to continue while we work with other donors to fill the remainder of the shortfall, and help to ensure the success of Afghanistan's first free and fair elections.

# Written Ministerial Statements

*Thursday 4 March 2004*

## TREASURY

### Tax Law Rewrite Project

**The Paymaster General (Dawn Primarolo):** I am pleased to tell the House that the tax law rewrite project will today reach another major milestone. The Inland Revenue will publish the project's third draft Bill, on trading, property, savings and investment and miscellaneous income, for a final round of consultation. The Bill will also cover the special rules for foreign income and partnerships and the relief rules for rent-a-room and foster carers. The Bill will be ready for introduction in Parliament by the end of the year.

Earlier versions of this rewritten legislation have been extensively revised in the light of comments and suggestions from tax professionals and other interested parties. This continuous dialogue between the project team and business interests, tax practitioners, the legal profession and Inland Revenue specialists is a key feature contributing to the success of the project.

## DEFENCE

### Deepcut Barracks (Surrey Police Final Report)

**The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram):** The Chief Constable of the Surrey Police has today published his report following the completion of the police examinations into wider issues identified during police investigations into the deaths of Privates Sean Benton, Cheryl James, Geoff Gray and James Collinson at the Princess Royal Barracks Deepcut between 1995 and 2002. We welcome the conclusion of the police investigation and the report. The report makes recommendations which we are considering carefully. I intend to make a further announcement on this subject in the near future.

Each of these four deaths was an individual tragedy in its own right and we very much regret the loss of these young lives. The Police report acknowledges that we have been working energetically to ensure that lessons have been learnt and to improve the Army's care regime. It concludes by recommending that the Ministry of Defence considers a broader inquiry into how the care regime can be further improved and to provide assurance that the momentum that has developed will be sustained.

As the report highlights, one key element of the work we have undertaken has been the Army Learning Account, which is a continuous record of lessons learned and the action taken as a result. The report also refers to work undertaken by the Directorate of Operational Capability (DOC) into the care of recruits in initial training, which I published last year. This was followed some five months later by a further report assessing progress in implementing recommendations (*Official Report*, 10 February 2003, column 35WS and 16 July 2003, column 42WS refer).

We are committed to continuous improvement in the training and care regime, and will look carefully at what benefits a broader investigation might offer and what form such an investigation might take.

The Army has co-operated fully with the Surrey police throughout all their investigations, and we have been as open as possible with the families within the constraints imposed on us by the ongoing police investigation. In recognition of the degree of Parliamentary interest in the Deepcut deaths, the Chief Constable has asked that copies of his report be placed in the Libraries of both Houses. I am making the necessary arrangements to do so.

## TRANSPORT

### Digital Tachographs

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. David Jamieson):** I am announcing today that the Government will allow industry more time to introduce digital tachographs in the UK.

Most drivers of large commercial vehicles are subject to the EU drivers' hours rules. These rules are enforced using the tachograph. Under an EU Regulation the existing chart-based, or analogue, tachographs are due to replaced by digital tachographs.

The deadline for the introduction of the digital tachograph is 5 August 2004. This deadline cannot be met because no digital tachograph has yet been type approved. This is an EU-wide issue—all member states are placed in a similar position.

The Government remains committed to the introduction of digital tachographs but after informal consultation with the industry I have decided that:

> The UK will not enforce the fitting of digital tachographs to all new vehicles subject to the EU drivers' hours rules from August 2004.
>
> We will continue to work with the European Commission and other EU Member States to agree a new date for the fitting of digital tachographs to all new vehicles. This date is unlikely to be before June 2005.
>
> Between August 2004 and the new date, vehicles used within the scope of the EU drivers' hours rules must be fitted either with analogue tachographs or, when they become available, digital tachographs but the latter will not be compulsory until the new deadline.
>
> The DVLA, who will issue the four types of smart-card associated with digital tachographs, remain on-track to be able to issue cards in good time for the introduction of digital tachographs. A decision when to commence the issue of cards will be taken in the light of the availability of digital tachographs.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Oil and Gas Licensing Round

**The Minister for Energy, E-Commerce and Postal Services (Mr. Stephen Timms):** I am pleased to inform the House that I am today inviting applications for petroleum licences over a large number of blocks in the

southern, central and northern North sea and for the area west of the Shetland Islands which will form the 22nd round of offshore petroleum licensing. In parallel to this offshore round I am also inviting applications for the onshore area of the UK. This will be the 12th onshore licensing round.

In deciding which blocks to make available for licensing in the offshore area, I have considered the results of the strategic environmental assessments undertaken by my Department, the most recent on which consultation closed in December 2003. After considering the assessments and the responses to the consultation, I have decided to take a precautionary approach and not offer for licence 23 blocks or part blocks because of their proximity to existing conservation sites as highlighted by the environmental assessments. In addition, 20 blocks will not be offered for licensing in these SEA areas at the request of the Ministry of Defence.

Any licences awarded in the round will contain conditions to protect environmental interests and the interests of other sea users. In addition, activities carried out under the licences will be subject to a range of legislation which is designed to protect the marine environment, including regulations which apply the Environmental Impact Assessment and Habitats directives to offshore oil and gas activities. This will be particularly relevant to certain blocks in Quadrant 217, which contain unusual seabed features.

The licences will also contain provisions to ensure that licensees either undertake exploration work within a relatively short timescale or relinquish the licence at the earliest possible opportunity so that other companies are able to take forward exploration of the area. These requirements support PILOT initiatives to remove barriers to activity on the UKCS.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### General and Compensation Levies

**The Minister for Pensions (Malcolm Wicks):** I am pleased to announce that there will be no increase in the General Levy rates for 2004–05. Rates will remain at the 2000–01 level as set out in the table.

On 11 June 2003, the Government published—"Simplicity, Security and Choice: Working and Saving for Requirement—Action on Occupational Pensions" (Cm 5835), which sets out plans for a new, risk-focused pensions regulator, that also provides support, advice and guidance to the pensions industry.

A significant claim for compensation has been made to the Pensions Compensation Board and, in view of payments which have already been made and future expected payments, the Pensions Compensation Board believe it is necessary to use current regulations to raise a Compensation Levy in 2004–05 at 23p per member. This is only the second time they have needed to collect the Compensation Levy since its inception in 1997. I am pleased that the Pensions Compensation Board has been able to provide financial support for members of those schemes whose assets have been removed dishonestly. It is vital that the Board has adequate funds to be able to provide financial help when appropriate.

The General Levy rates for 2004–05 are as follows:

*Table 1—Occupational Pension Schemes*

| *Scheme Size (Number of Members)* | *Basis* | *Amount per Member* | *Minimum Payment Per Scheme*[1] |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 to 11 | £12 Per scheme | - | - |
| 12 to 99 | Per Member | £1.25 | - |
| 100 to 999 | Per Member | £0.90 | £125 |
| 1,000 to 4,999 | Per Member | £0.70 | £900 |
| 5,000 to 9,999 | Per Member | £0.53 | £3,500 |
| 10,000 or more | Per Member | £0.37 | £5,300 |

*Table 2—Personal Pension Schemes*

| *Scheme Size (Number of Members)* | *Basis* | *Amount per Member* | *Minimum Payment Per Scheme*[1] |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 to 11 | £5.20 Per scheme | - | - |
| 12 to 99 | Per Member | £0.50 | - |
| 100 to 999 | Per Member | £0.35 | £50 |
| 1,000 to 4,999 | Per Member | £0.30 | £350 |
| 5,000 to 9,999 | Per Member | £0.20 | £1,500 |
| 10,000 or more | Per Member | £0.15 | £2,000 |

NOTE: [1] Minimum payments ensure that schemes in the lower bands do not pay more overall than those in the higher bands.

## DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

### Regional Fire and Rescue Control Rooms

**The Minister for Local and Regional Government (Mr. Nick Raynsford):** On 11 December when the draft national framework for the "Fire and Rescue Service" was published I issued a consultation document on the proposals on regional control rooms in England. Those proposals were outlined in the White Paper, "Our Fire and Rescue Service", and detailed in the draft national framework.

A copy of my response on the issues raised in the consultation paper is available in the Libraries of both Houses. The responses broadly endorsed the proposed approach of regional control rooms on the basis of one per region and the proposed governance arrangements.

I have written to the chair of the Practitioners Forum and the chairs of authorities confirming this.

# Written Ministerial Statements

*Friday 5 March 2004*

## CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### Waterways Ireland

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Angela Smith):** Copies of the Waterways Ireland Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2001 have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

This document provides details of Waterways Ireland's activities, its performance, and its expenditure for that year.

## EDUCATION AND SKILLS

### Supplementary Estimates

**The Secretary of State for Education and Skills (Mr. Charles Clarke):** Subject to Parliamentary approval of any necessary supplementary estimate, the Department for Education and Skills DEL (including the Office for Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools (OFSTED) which has a separate estimate) will be increased by £652,759,000 from £26,142,100,000 to £26,794,859,000 and the administration costs limits will be increased by £18,245,000 from £250,660,000 to £268,905,000.

Within the DEL change, the impact on resources and capital are as set out in the following table:

| | *Resources* | | | | *Capital* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *DfES* | *Change £0* | *New DEL £0* | *Of which: Voted £0* | *Non-voted £0* | *Change £0* | *New DEL £0* | *Of which: Voted £0* | *Non-voted £0* |
| RfR 1 | 276,464 | 22,161,756 | 7,258,103 | 14,903,653 | 72,049 | 3,410,719 | 2,290,128 | 1,120,591 |
| RfR 2 | 215,797 | 695,928 | 695,928 | 0 | 2,911 | 30,536 | 30,536 | 0 |
| RfR 3 | 85,463 | 285,476 | 285,476 | 0 | 0 | 51 | 51 | 0 |
| OFSTED | 1,217 | 208,635 | 208,635 | 0 | -1,142 | 1,758 | 1,758 | 0 |
| Sub Total | 578,941 | 23,351,795 | 8,448,142 | 14,903,653 | 73,818 | 3,443,064 | 2,322,473 | 1,120,591 |
| Depreciation* | -556 | -47,544 | -11,847 | -35,697 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 578,385 | 23,304,251 | 8,436,295 | 14,867,956 | 73,818 | 3,443,064 | 2,322,473 | 1,120,591 |

*Depreciation, which forms part of resource DEL, is excluded from the total DEL since capital DEL includes capital spending and to include depreciation of those assets would lead to double counting.

Within the administration cost limits changes, the impact is set out in the following table:

| *DfES* | *Original £'000* | *Change £'000* | *Revised £'000* |
|---|---|---|---|
| DfES (RfR1) | 207,124 | 12,796 | 219,920 |
| Sure Start (RfR2) | 9,136 | 4,268 | 13,404 |
| Children's Fund (RfR3 | 4,400 | 1,181 | 5,581 |
| OFSTED | 30,000 | | 30,000 |
| Total | 250,660 | 18,245 | 268,905 |

#### Resource DEL

The change in the resource element of the DEL of £578,941,000 arises from a £220,452,000 decrease in the voted element of the resource DEL and an increase of £799,393,000 in the non-voted element of the resource DEL mainly to the Department's non-departmental public bodies.

#### Voted Resource DEL

The £220,452,000 decrease in the voted element of the resource DEL arises from a £522,929,000 decrease in RfR1; from the movement of £312,996,000 to non-Voted Resource DEL; the movement of £44,370,000 to voted capital grants and £208,000 to non-voted capital; the decrease in Voted provision as a result of receiving Voted Appropriations in Aid (A-in-A) of £259,638,000 towards the Higher Education Funding Council for England's Non-Voted expenditure; the net transfer to the Department of Health of £4,372,000 for the Teenage Pregnancy Fund and the Children's Trust; the net transfer to the Home Office of £880,000 for Prison Education; the transfer to the Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs of £500,000 for the school milk subsidy scheme; the transfer to the Department of Trade and Industry of £279,000 for the Women's Resource Centre and the School Teachers Pay Review Body; the transfer to the Department for Work and Pensions of £93,000 for the Parental involvement in Action Team; the net transfer in from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister of £1,303,000 for the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit; the take up of £95,816,000 End of Year Flexibility (EYF) provision; the take up of £761,000 for the Education in Prisons scheme and the take up of Invest to Save Budget of £100,000 for the Core Cluster Pilot project. The transfer to the Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools in England (OFSTED) of £75,000 for the project on best practice to food and nutrition in primary schools and early years, the net virement of £4,802,000 from RfR2 for Standards Fund Grants, and the net virement of £2,300,000 to RfR3 for Children's Fund Grants are departmental DEL neutral.

The £215,797,000 increase in RfR2; arises from the take up of £221,599,000 End of Year Flexibility (EYF) provision for Sure Start administrative expenditure (£468,000) and for Sure Start programmes (£221,131,000); the DEL neutral virements of £4,802,000 to RFR1 for Standards Fund Grant payments and the £1,000,000 virement to RfR3 Children's Fund for Children and Young People programmes.

The £85,463,000 increase in RfR3 arises from the take up of £82,163,000 End of Year Flexibility provision for Children's Fund administration (£1,090,000) and for programme expenditure (£81,073,000); the net DEL neutral virements of £2,300,000 from RfR1 and £1,000,000 from RfR2 for Children's Fund Current Grants.

The £1,217,000 increase in the Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools in England (OFSTED) arises from a £75,000 DEL neutral transfer from RfR1 for the whole school project on best practice to food and nutrition in primary schools and early years; the £450,000 virement to capital and the increase of £1,592,000 due to the reclassification of voted A-in-A to Non-Operating A-in-A.

ADMINISTRATION COST LIMITS

The £18,245,000 increase in the Administration Cost limit arises from a £12,796,000 increase in the Administration Cost limit for RfR1 from the take up of £14,942,000 end of year flexibility; the residual machinery of Government transfer in from the Department of Health of £1,733,000; the transfer in from the Home Office of £248,000 for shared services and residual machinery of Government changes and the transfer out of £47,000 to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for Regional Government Office core work agenda; the decrease in admin costs from an increase in admin receipts of £280,000 for matching secondment expenditure and the DEL neutral virement of £3,800,000 to RfR2 Sure Start Administrative expenditure.

The increase in the administration cost limit for RfR2 of £4,268,000 arises from the take up of £468,000 end of year flexibility and the DEL neutral virement of £3,800,000 to RfR2 Sure Start administrative expenditure.

The £1,181,000 increase in the administration cost limit for RfR3 arises from the take up of £1,090,000 end of year flexibility and the reclassification of £91,000 programme to administrative expenditure.

NON-VOTED RESOURCE DEL

The £799,393,000 increase in Non-Voted Resource DEL arises from a £312,996,000 virement of Voted Resource DEL for various non-Departmental Public Bodies (of which £202,638,000 is for the Learning Skills Council for the delivery of key programmes: Employer Training Pilots and for the Higher Education Excellence Challenge); the take up of end of year flexibility of £210,815,000 (of which £136,900,000 is to the Learning Skills Council for current grants); the £259,638,000 increase in Higher Education Funding Council for England's expenditure with matching voted Resource A-in-A for Science Research Investment Fund and Higher Education Innovation Fund programmes; the transfer in from the Department of Health of £16,745,000 to the Higher Education Funding Council for England to fund various hospital and university projects; the draw down of £872,000 provision for Adult Learning Inspectorate and the Learning Skills Council and the virement of £1,673,000 to non-voted capital.

CAPITAL DEL

The change in the capital element of the DEL of £73,818,000 arises from a £60,988,000 increase in the voted element of the capital DEL and an increase of £12,830,000 in the non-voted element of the capital DEL.

VOTED CAPITAL DEL

The £60,988,000 increase to the voted element of the Capital DEL arises from a £59,219,000 increase in RfR1 Voted Capital from a virement increase of £44,370,000 from Voted Resource DEL; from the £700,000 decrease to Non-Voted Capital for the Student Loans Company, from the Machinery of Government transfer from the Department of Health of £171,000; from the take-up of End of Year flexibility of £7,289,000 and the DEL neutral virement of £8,089,000 from RfR2 Sure Start.

The £2,911,000 increase in RfR2 Voted Capital, from the take up of £11,000,000 End of Year Flexibility (EYF) provision for Sure Start Local Authority Capital Grants and the DEL neutral virement of £8,089,000 to RfR1 for Standards Fund Capital grants to Local Authorities.

The £1,142,000 decrease in OFSTED Voted capital, from the classification of £1,592,000 Voted A-in-A receipts to Non-Operating capital receipts and the virement of £450,000 voted resource to voted capital.

NON-VOTED CAPITAL DEL

The £12,830,000 increase to the non-voted element of Capital DEL arises from the take-up of EYF of £7,457,000 (of which £3,957,000 to the Learning Skills Council for the delivery of capital programmes); the virement of £1,673,000 of NDPB resource for capital activity; the virement of £700,000 voted capital for Student Loans Company capital programmes; the virement of £208,000 from voted resource and the In-Year take up of £2,792,000.

## Teachers' Pension Scheme

**The Minister for School Standards (Mr. David Miliband):** Parliamentary approval for additional resources of £111.8 million is being sought in a spring supplementary estimate for the Teachers' Pension Scheme. Pending that approval, expenditure estimated at £30 million will be met by a repayable cash advance from the Contingencies Fund.

The Teachers' Pension Scheme Fund is managed by the Department for Education and Skills and administered under contract by Capita Business Service Ltd. The Department's funding to Capita is completed on a daily basis with the funded amount being determined by the "net cash requirement" for payments that Capita makes on behalf of the Teachers' Pension Scheme.

Cash drawn down from the Consolidated Fund is greater at the beginning of each month because income and related cash arrives too late to fund this expenditure. To enable the Department to meet its funding obligations the £30 million will be required to make up the shortfall between the funding requirement and the Spring Supplementary Estimate provision becoming available.

## INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Water Action Plan

**The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn):** I have placed in the Libraries of both Houses a copy of DFID's new Water Action Plan. It sets out how DFID will contribute to meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), through our commitments to water supply, sanitation and water resource management.

Over one billion people do not have access to safe water to drink. Over two billion lack adequate sanitation. Hundreds of millions of people live in areas where there is an overall and increasing shortage of water. Polluted ecosystems and poor water management have a detrimental effect on the health and livelihoods of poor people, and on economic growth. Water and sanitation are consistently among the top priorities of poor people in most developing countries. This does not however always result in action by Governments.

The problems are complex. The approach set out in the Water Action Plan recognises that efforts to improve water supply, sanitation or water resource management are most effective when they support developing country Governments' own plans. Against this background, DFID's Water Action Plan sets out a plan of work at international regional and national levels. This includes: making sure water and sanitation figure prominently in policy discussions with our main partner countries; providing evidence of the links between improved water management, water supply and sanitation and achieving all the MDGs, and ensuring that we are making use of this evidence in our policy dialogue; and improving the way the international system works, by focusing support on key international partnerships and networks, particularly those that can improve co-ordination in the water sector.

The next step is putting this Action Plan into operation, to ensure a coherent approach to water and sanitation issues at national, regional and international levels. This will include developing milestones against which progress can be assessed. As part of its review of progress, DFID will also establish a regular water and sanitation forum in the UK for sharing knowledge and ideas with development partners.

The Water Action Plan is also available on the DFID website: www.dfid.gov.uk.

# Written Ministerial Statements

*Monday 8 March 2004*

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Police Information Technology Organisation

**The Minister for Crime Reduction, Policing and Community Safety (Ms Hazel Blears):** I am announcing today the appointment of Chris Earnshaw to succeed Lieutenant General Sir Edmund Burton as Chair of the Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO). He will take up the appointment with immediate effect.

This is an important and high-profile post. PITO has a key role in bringing forward the Government's plans for delivering a "joined-up" criminal justice system and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the police. I would like to pay tribute to Sir Edmund Burton for his significant contribution. Mr. Earnshaw, as his successor, brings very considerable experience at senior levels in industry and a substantial Information and communications technology background. I am confident that, under his leadership, PITO will continue to deliver the key IT programmes and services on which the police service depends.

## HEALTH

### NHS Trusts

**The Secretary of State for Health (Dr. John Reid):** Pursuant to the dissolution of 16 national health service trusts since 1 August 2002 and their reconfiguration through the establishment of seven new NHS trusts, I propose to create originating capital for the new NHS trusts equal to the net assets transferred to them and therefore to remit the outstanding debt of the dissolved trusts.

Assets from some of the dissolved trusts were also transferred to primary care trusts. Public dividend capital is not required as a financing transaction for these transfers as primary care trusts are subject to a different financial regime. Net assets transferred from dissolving NHS trusts to primary care trusts are reflected in an increase to the general fund of the primary care trust.

These operations involved no overall loss to the Exchequer. Her Majesty's Treasury has today presented a minute to the House giving particulars and circumstances of the proposed remission, which it has approved in principle.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Council for Science and Technology

**The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Ms Patricia Hewitt):** My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister today appointed 16 members to the Council for Science and Technology following its recent review. The appointments represent a wide range of experience from the scientific community, business and charities. The 16 appointments are:

Professor Sir John Beringer CBE
Professor Geoffrey Boulton QBE FRS FRSE
Professor Janet Finch CBE DL AcSS
Mr Andrew Gould
Professor Wendy Hall CBE FREng
Dr Hermann Hauser FREng CBE CPhys FInstP
Dr Dieter Helm
Professor Alan Hughes
Dr Sue Ion QBE FREng
Dr Rob Margetts CBE FREng
Sir Paul Nurse FRS
Sir Keith Peters FRS PMedSci
Dr Raj Rajagopal FREng CEng FIEE FIMechE FIE FCMI
Professor Michael Sterling FREng
Professor Kathy Sykes
Dr Mark Walport FMedSci

The Council for Science and Technology is Government's top-level independent advisory body on strategic policy for science, engineering and technology. Its advice has been instrumental in helping the Government develop its present strategies for improving the excellence of the research base and putting it on a sustainable footing, for improving science education and for making effective use of science, engineering and technology. On 22 July 2003, the Government announced updated terms of reference and a new organisation for CST to reflect the needs of the UK Government and the Devolved Administrations for advice in coming years.

CST will report to the Prime Minister and the First Ministers of the Devolved Administrations. The 16 members will choose one of their number to act as co-chair alongside the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser, Sir David King.

Full details of CST's terms of reference and organisation, and biographies of the members, can be found at www.cst.gov.uk.

Decisions on appointments have been made following open competition and wide consultation with key players.

# Written Ministerial Statements

*Tuesday 9 March 2004*

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Afghanistan (International Counter Narcotics Conference)

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Bill Rammell):** The Afghan Government, United Kingdom (UK) and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) co-hosted an International Counter Narcotics Conference on Afghanistan in Kabul on 8/9 February to support implementation of the Afghan National Drug Control Strategy. I was, in the event, unable to attend, due to planes being unable to land in Kabul because of adverse weather conditions. I was represented by HM Ambassador, Rosalind Marsden. Over 300 Afghan and international delegates attended, including 18 Afghan Governors and 32 Police Chiefs as well as officials from all the key Afghan Ministries, representatives from 18 countries, the European Commission, World Bank and Asia Development Bank. President Karzai opened the conference, which was also addressed by Afghan Ministers.

The Government welcome the success of this event, which was the first time that Afghans had gathered at such a high level and in such large numbers to discuss implementation of the Afghan National Drug Control Strategy. The plenary meeting and working group sessions were all chaired by Afghans. Active participation from Afghans from the floor demonstrated increased commitment to the counter narcotics agenda from all parts of the Afghan government.

The Government fully share the view of those members of the Afghan government who spoke out forcefully against drugs and agrees with President Karzai, who stressed that the drugs trade was damaging Afghanistan's efforts to develop into a secure, stable democracy with a prosperous economy; that it was in the interests of all Afghans to fight against drugs; that Afghanistan needed the help of the international community to win the battle but the Afghan government was committed to tackling the drugs problem with its own resources also. International speakers also delivered the message that urgent action was required, including tackling corruption.

Conference participants discussed draft action plans in five areas: law enforcement, judicial reform, alternative livelihoods, public awareness and demand reduction. These action plans have been finalised and form part of a final report of the conference to be published by the UNODC and circulated in Afghanistan and beyond. They include work to:

increase interdiction activity, for example by increasing the numbers and effectiveness of the Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan and mobile detection teams

tackle corruption and involvement of officials and commanders in the drugs trade

increase resources for programmes with maximum alternative livelihoods impact and support the design and implementation of programmes to fill existing gaps, for example in pro-poor agricultural livelihoods, rural finance, off farm activities and micro/small enterprise development

The UK remains fully committed to support the Afghan Government in implementation of its National Drug Control Strategy, which will in part be secured through delivery of the agreed action plans in key areas. We have committed £70 million over three years for this purpose and will also encourage the participation of other international partners to take on specific activity.

## TRANSPORT

### GLA Transport Grant 2003–04

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Tony McNulty):** The Secretary of State for Transport has today re-determinded the GLA transport grant at £1,681,932,000 for 2003–04 following consultation with the Mayor of London, as required under section 101 of the GLA Act 1999. This represents a net reduction of £2,408,000, following lower than envisaged ring fenced expenditure by Transport for London on bus innovation projects.

## DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

### Planning Delivery Grant

**The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill):** In July 2002 my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister announced that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister would be making an additional £350 million available to local authorities over the period 2003–06 to improve the delivery of planning services. The grant is being paid out of additional resources from Spending Review 2002 for planning. We have now decided the basis on which we will distribute the Planning Delivery Grant in 2004–05 and will be informing recipients of their allocations.

The grant is performance related. Our aim is to enhance the resourcing of the planning system in a way that drives performance improvement and ensures effective delivery of our objectives for sustainable communities which we set out in the document "*Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future*". It is specifically targeted towards meeting the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Public Service Agreements (PSA) 5 and 6. PSA 5 aims to achieve a better balance between housing availability and demand. PSA 6 requires all authorities to have local development frameworks in place (in accordance with agreed Local Development Schemes) and to meet the Best Value development control targets by the end of 2006–07.

I can confirm today the amount of grant distributed in 2004–05 is £130 million. It will be paid to local planning authorities, regional planning bodies and the Greater London Authority. A small amount of the grant, £2.61 million, will be top-sliced to support a number of national initiatives directly related to improving local authority planning performance. The allocation criteria

have been broadened this year and the grant is not just about speed of decision taking. Local authorities are rewarded for both improvement towards and achievement of Best Value development control targets in the period October 2002 to September 2003. The grant also rewards authorities for having an up to date local development plan or for taking steps to introduce a new plan, or make a significant revision to an existing plan, in the period March 2002–September 2003. Grant allocations are enhanced for local authorities within the high housing demand and growth areas identified in the Communities Plan in proportion to their contribution towards delivering net additions to the housing stock. Local authorities are also awarded £5,000 for each Enterprise Area within their boundary, up to a maximum of £100,000.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has been concerned to hear allegations that authorities have been refusing applications or putting pressure on applicants to withdraw in order to qualify for increased grant. We have carried out extensive analysis and have found no consistent statistical relationship between the indicators said to represent these practices and improved performance. We remain concerned, however, to ensure that local authorities are not rewarded for providing a poor service. Where a local planning authority's performance on appeal is poor we are abating initial allocations by 10 per cent.

In 2003–04 the grant was paid without condition. In 2004–05 two conditions will be imposed on PDG payments. The conditions are designed to ensure that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has the power to act appropriately to partly withhold payment or recover part or all of grant paid where there are concerns over the accuracy or proven inaccuracies in the information on which allocations were made. We will be withholding part of the grant allocated to authorities whose Best Value Performance Indicator 109 (BVPI 109) has been qualified by the auditor until we have written to the authorities concerned to investigate the reason for the qualification and the reliability of the data on which grant was allocated. Following this we may seek to recover some or all of the monies paid to those authorities.

Grant allocations are not ring-fenced and authorities have complete discretion in the way they spend this money. Areas that authorities may consider concentrating on include: contributing to the preparation of regional planning guidance and the future regional spatial strategies; completing current reviews of existing development plans and preparing for the new system of local development frameworks; better resourcing of IT systems; assistance from consultants; outsourcing of certain planning services; increasing staffing levels; training for staff and councillors; supporting mediation services; encouraging a more diverse planning workforce; bursaries for employees to gain planning qualifications and more use of technical staff.

Regional Planning Bodies receive grant to support their work preparing regional spatial strategies and in recognition of the additional work which the strengthened regional planning function envisaged by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill, currently before Parliament, will involve. In 2004–05 this totals just under £7 million. The Greater London Authority receives grant in recognition of its plan making responsibilities and is allocated funds on its progress towards publishing the London Plan.

County Councils will receive resources from the grant in recognition of their minerals and waste plan responsibilities. They do not receive direct resources from the grant to prepare structure plans. The counties' planning functions are being changed under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill currently before Parliament. Subject to Royal Assent, County Councils will cease to have a duty to prepare structure plans but their resources will not be reduced accordingly. Therefore as this function winds down they will be able to take advantage of freed up resources. It will be important that these freed up resources, and the expertise available in county councils, are retained and used to deliver other county planning responsibilities and to undertake their function as statutory consultees in the preparation of regional spatial strategies (RSS), which are due to replace regional planning guidance under the Bill, and local development frameworks. Counties can also be engaged to conduct RSS related work on an agency basis.

Decisions have yet to be taken on the basis of the grant for 2005–06. However, the requirement to meet PSA 5 and 6 means that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will continue to link grant awards to improved planning performance so as to incentivise authorities to reach and exceed the development control handling targets and produce local development documents in a timely manner and to incentivise delivery of housing in areas of high housing demand. Authorities should be aware that they will need to continue to secure improvement in these areas. We will monitor performance in respect of both development control and plan making in order to inform future decisions on this. In 2005–06 we will be rewarding authorities for their progress in implementing e-planning. The nature of this assessment has not yet been decided. We will consult on full proposals for allocations before any final decisions are taken.

A table showing the amounts payable and letters to all Leaders of local and county planning authorities; Chief Executives of the regional planning bodies; and the Mayor of London are available in the libraries of the House. They set out the details of each recipient's grant.

### Growth Areas Fund

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Yvette Cooper):** "*Creating sustainable communities: Making it Happen: Thames Gateway and the Growth Areas*" published in July 2003 announced outline plans for a £164 million package for the three newer growth areas of Ashford, Milton Keynes-South Midlands, and London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough. Commitments were made then to fund individual schemes to a total value of £88 million, and a further £63 million was announced on 14 January this year.

My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister is announcing today a further £22 million of funding, which will support sustainable growth in the London

Stansted Cambridge Peterborough Growth Area. We are providing these resources to help site assembly and remediation of brownfield land, additional affordable housing and essential infrastructure in the growth area. The inclusion of Peterborough in the area takes into account its history of successful growth and its potential for contributing to the growth area as a whole.

A full list of the further projects that we are supporting will be made available in the House Libraries. They include over £10 million for redevelopment and to enable the more rapid delivery of at least 2,000 new homes in Peterborough. It also includes almost £500,000 to open up the River Roding in Ilford as a green space and improve the local ecological environment, and £1.8 million to kick-start a major development at Tottenham Hale, including remodelling the major transport interchange. Other projects will include over £1.2 million to unlocking and improving access to development sites in Walthamstow to provide potential for 500 new homes and jobs.

# Written Ministerial Statements

*Wednesday 10 March 2004*

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Immigration Documents

**The Minister for Citizenship and Immigration (Beverley Hughes):** During the summer of 2003 the Government consulted stakeholders about the introduction of a charge for extension of leave to remain for immigration employment documents such as work permits. Responses to the consultation were published on 7 January 2004.

I am announcing today that following the consultation a charge of £121 will be introduced for the consideration of each application from 1 April 2004 (within the range proposed in the consultation document). A new form for applications for leave to remain for immigration employment documents will also be introduced. A full Regulatory Impact Assessment has been carried out, and this is available from today in the House of Commons library.

I am also announcing an increase in the fee for Convention Travel Documents, issued to refugees; Stateless Persons' Travel Documents; and one way documents of identity. From 1 April 2004 the charge for application for these documents will increase from £28 to £42 to bring fees in line with those for the UK passports. Statutory instruments that set out the regulations for the new fees and leave to remain application form will be available from today.

### Crime Reduction and Drugs Misuse

**The Minister for Crime Reduction, Policing and Community Safety (Ms Hazel Blears):** Through the Building Safer Communities Fund I am making a total of £74 million directly available to local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in 2004–05, to assist them in delivering their crime reduction and drugs priorities in the light of local needs.

This will be the second year of the Building Safer Communities Fund, and builds on the progress made in 2003–04. I remain keen to help local Partnerships to focus on reducing crime through having one crime reduction funding stream, with an emphasis on less paperwork. This fund will continue to assist in strengthening Partnerships' capacity to deliver.

The money can again be used in a variety of ways and Partnerships are showing that they can use their programme funding to deliver a wide range of interventions. They are using it to reduce gun crime; to disrupt drugs markets through direct police work; running activities designed to divert children from getting involved in crime and drugs; paying for more CCTV cameras or targeted campaigns on particular crimes or drugs hotspots; or for warden schemes. These are just examples and the views of the community are key to inform local decisions.

I want to continue to give Partnerships the resources and flexibility to target investment where it will reduce crime and deliver real change on the ground, in accordance with local priorities. The single fund will enable local agencies on the front line to boost the work they do to tackle crime and drug abuse.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Equal Pay

**The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Ms Patricia Hewitt):** Along with other Government organisations DTI and its Agencies completed equal pay audits in 2003 and put in place action plans to address any concerns.

The Cabinet Office produced an overview of audits from across the Civil Service on 27 November 2003

(see http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/civilservice/performanceandreward/performance.html).

All DTI organisations are already taking steps to deliver on their action plans and will review equal pay as part of future pay rounds.

Action Plans and summaries have now been placed in the Libraries of the House and published on websites

(see http://www.dti.gov.uk/about_dti_documents.html).

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### Housing Benefit Reform

**The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Andrew Smith):** In October 2002, I announced a wide ranging programme of Housing Benefit reforms aimed at giving tenants choice and promoting personal responsibility. The centrepiece of those reforms is the Local Housing Allowance—a set amount allowance for housing costs based simply on household composition and location, and reflecting market rents.

We are testing this new scheme, for tenants renting accommodation in the private sector, in nine pathfinder local authorities, representing different types of housing markets, before rolling it out nationally. When we launched the policy I promised to keep colleagues updated on progress and I know there has been interest from many hon. Members in these groundbreaking reforms. I am pleased to report as of 9 February all pathfinders are up and running and implementation has gone smoothly.

Already some 19,000 tenants are enjoying the benefits of Local Housing Allowance in the Pathfinder areas, and a further 25,000 will transfer over the coming months.

For tenants in the private rented sector the local housing allowance means, for the first time, they will know in advance how much they will receive towards housing costs. This greater certainty about the amount of benefit that will be paid will help people make the move from benefits to work. Tenants will be able to choose where to live and whether to spend all, less or more than this on rent, out of their total income. These are the same choices that we all make.

It follows that to have this freedom of choice, and to exercise this personal responsibility, payments of local housing allowance are normally made to the tenant rather than the landlord.

We recognise that some tenants, who have not been used to having those choices and responsibilities, will need help and support. We also recognise that it is important to provide safeguards for landlords against tenants who default on their rent. We are providing a range of safeguards for landlords, and support and advice for tenants.

It is too early to provide any firm analysis but I am pleased to report that there are already signs of tenants exercising choice by negotiating rent, and moving to accommodation that is more appropriate to their needs, and that landlords are working with pathfinders and claims are being processed more quickly.

We will continue to closely monitor and evaluate the pathfinder stage before extending the benefits of the Local Housing Allowance nationally.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### Fisheries

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Mr. Ben Bradshaw):** Effective monitoring, control and surveillance are critical to the operation of the Common Fisheries Policy and measures to conserve fish stocks. Towards the end of last year the European Commission drew attention to shortcomings in the United Kingdom's control arrangements and compliance with the rules and regulations of the Common Fisheries Policy. Concerns have also been expressed by the National Audit Office and the Public Accounts Committee and more recently by the Cabinet Office Strategy Unit, which will report shortly on a sustainable future for the fishing industry.

With increasing emphasis on the sustainable use of naturally occurring resources, a culture of high compliance becomes ever more important. To encourage such culture and to respond to the concerns raised by the European Commission and others, the Fisheries Departments in the UK are taking a number of measures to strengthen fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance. These include:

consideration of moving away from the current system of criminal sanctions towards a potentially more responsive system of administrative penalties for breaches of fisheries regulations;

improved accountability and traceability of fish landings through the designation of fish markets and the registration of all sellers and buyers of first sale fish;

improvements in the weighing of fish before it is sold or before it leaves the port of landing for sale elsewhere;

extending the existing arrangements for designated landing ports and for the prior notification of catch to vessels below 20 metres;

the wider use of single area or single species licensing;

the fitting of tamper proof satellite position reporting terminals to all vessels over 15 metres;

the better utilisation of resources with a greater focus on land-based inspection.

Some measures are already being put into effect and others are or will be the subject of consultation with the industry. Together the measures will complement other action that is being taken at both national and Community level to safeguard fish stocks and the long-term interests of the fishing industry.

A more detailed note on the action that is being taken has been placed in the library of each House and copies are to be sent to fishermen and other stakeholders.

# Written Ministerial Statements

*Thursday 11 March 2004*

## TRANSPORT

### Light Dues

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. David Jamieson):** I am pleased to announce that for 2004–05 light dues rates will be reduced from 40p to 39p per ton and that the tonnage cap will be reduced from 40,000 tons to 35,000 tons.

The Government remain committed to a cost recovery system yet rates have been reduced significantly in the last 11 years. They were last reduced in 2002. Much of the credit for being able to sustain these charges must go to the General Lighthouse Authorities—Trinity House Lighthouse Service, the Northern Lighthouse Board and the Commissioners of Irish Lights—that continue to maintain high standards while keeping costs down.

The final report of the Economic Study of the Impact of Light Dues is nearing completion. The consultants, MDS Transmodal and DTZ Pieda have undertaken a wide-ranging review of statistical and economic evidence and interviewed a number of interests. The completion of the report has been put back to take account of suggestions and information received from industry representatives. We expect the report to be published in the next few weeks. An announcement concerning the Government's reaction to the report and proposed next steps will be made after we have fully considered the report and heard the views of stakeholders.

## CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### Television Licence Fees

**The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (Tessa Jowell):** On 11 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 11WS, the Government announced that, from 1 April 2004, the fee for a colour television licence would rise to £121 and the black and white licence fee to £40.50.1 will today lay before the House the regulations necessary to bring these new fees into force.

The new regulations also:

Incorporate the 50 per cent. licence fee concession for blind persons originally introduced by the Secretary of State's determination under section 2(2) of the Wireless Telegraphy Act 1949, dated 31 March 2000.

Incorporate provision for free television licences for persons aged 75 and over, originally introduced by the Secretary of State's direction to the BBC under section 1(2) of the Wireless Telegraphy Act 1949, dated 30 October 2000.

Define "television receiver" for the purposes of the requirement to have a TV licence under Part 4 of the Communications Act 2003.

Define "television dealer" and "television set" for the purposes of Part 1 of the Wireless Telegraphy Act 1967 (which imposes upon television dealers an obligation to notify the BBC, as the authority responsible for TV licensing, of the sale or hire of a television set).

Amend the definition of "accommodation for residential care" for England, Wales and Scotland to reflect changes in the care homes legislation; clarify the definition of certain expressions relating to this concession and provide that a group of dwellings may be within the definition of "a group of specially provided dwellings" even if one of the dwellings is occupied by a caretaker.

Clarify the operation of the easy payment schemes.

Amend the definition of "hotel", for the purposes of television licence fees for hotels, to impose a maximum stay for guests of 28 days in any consecutive period.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Offshore Licence

**The Minister for Energy, E-Commerce and Postal Services (Mr. Stephen Timms):** I am pleased to inform the House that I am today offering RWE Dea UK SNS Limited an Oil and Gas Production licence on Seaward Block 43/20c in the Southern North Sea.

The successful applicant will have a fixed period in which to decide whether or not to accept the offer

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### Water Price Limits (Periodic Review)

**The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett):** I have today issued my Principal Guidance to the Director-General of Water Services (Ofwat) on policies affecting the 2004 Periodic Review of water price limits in England. The review will produce price limits, set by Ofwat, for the years 2005–10.

This guidance is the second public contribution to the 2004 Periodic Review. My Initial Guidance was published in January 2003.

This Principal Guidance sets out my main decisions and views on a wide range of relevant policies and legal requirements which bear on price limits. It takes account of the information and advice so far to hand, including the proposals and costings put forward by companies in their draft business plans in August 2003, views on these cost estimates from Ofwat, further policy advice from Ofwat and from the other regulators, and the views of customers and other interested parties.

The main areas for decision by Government now are the drinking water and environment programmes. Previous Periodic Reviews have raised the standards of our drinking water and of water in the environment. It is our policy to continue these improvements, while taking account of the effects on customers' bills.

Companies' programmes must deliver existing commitments including our EU obligations and other statutory obligations. These will produce very significant benefits to the environment and for customers. I have also selected for inclusion in companies' final business plans and Ofwat's draft price

limits, some further programmes that go beyond what is strictly required under EU commitments, and which appear to offer good value for money.

Two existing long-term programmes to improve customers' drinking water will be completed during the 2005–10 period. One is a programme of improvements to remove contaminants at water treatment works to ensure that they can continue to provide wholesome drinking water supplies. The other is a 20-year programme to replace or reline old, corroding water mains. Work will continue to lower yet further the level of lead in drinking water.

The programme of environmental improvements to our inland and coastal waters recognises the need to build on the achievements already made and start work towards the demanding future objectives set by the EU Water Framework Directive. But it also stands in its own right and addresses a range of issues including the need to improve further the condition of water and wetland sites of special scientific interest, bring more waters up to the standards required for fresh water fish and improve bathing waters.

The whole programme must be carried out at the minimum cost to customers. The process of challenge and refining has already substantially reduced the potential programmes. This process has yet some way to go and I would expect costs to be driven down further. My Department will continue to work with the Drinking Water Inspectorate, English Nature and the Environment Agency on how they should translate the guidance into regulatory requirements. I expect those regulators to work with companies to identify how legal commitments and the other policy outcomes specified in this guidance can be delivered by pragmatic cost-effective solutions.

It is then for Ofwat to challenge the costs that companies need to deliver the requirements of the regulators and the policies in this guidance. I am confident that Ofwat will scrutinise and challenge with equal attention all aspects of companies' costs underlying their business plans, including the costs that companies assign to delivering the commitments and policies set out in this guidance.

I am also clear that achievement of future water quality standards will require significant action by a much wider range of actors than the water industry, including land managers as well as others who are responsible for diffuse water pollution. As part of this process, we will be shortly publishing an action plan outlining a full range of options for addressing diffuse pollution from agriculture.

The policies contained in this guidance are strongly informed by the interests of customers. I am concerned about the effect of water bills, especially on those least able to pay. I will be reviewing the way in which lower income households are helped with their water and sewerage charges.

My Department will work with the regulators to refine the cost benefit analysis and will also prepare and publish a regulatory impact assessment of the improvement policies in this guidance that go beyond existing commitments and the costs to customers that they imply. These processes will inform the final guidance.

In the light of companies' final business plans, the draft price limits published by Ofwat and their implications for customers' bills, as well as any further advice from the regulators and the regulatory impact assessment, I shall issue my final guidance in Autumn 2004.

## HEALTH

### Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration

**The Secretary of State for Health (Dr. John Reid):** I am responding on behalf of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to the Thirty-third Report of the Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration (DDRB) which is published today. Copies of the report are available in the Vote Office and the Library. I am grateful to the chairman and members of the Review Body for their hard work.

This year's report deals primarily with general dental practitioners, doctors and dentists in training, non-consultant career grade doctors, medical and dental consultants who have chosen not to take up new contracts, and ophthalmic medical practitioners. For consultants taking up new contracts, general medical practitioners and the salaried primary dental care services, 2004–05 will be the second year of three-year pay deals agreed as part of NHS pay reforms.

The Review Body has recommended with effect from April 2004 general increases in remuneration of 2.7 per cent. for doctors and dentists in training and non-consultant career grade doctors, 2.5 per cent. for consultants who remain on the old contract and an increase of 2.9 per cent. in gross fees for general dental practitioners. The Review Body has also recommended adjustments to some features of the pay scales for associate specialists, staff grade practitioners and specialist registrars and additional funding to support a structured change management programme for dentists and their staff.

The Review Body's pay recommendations are being accepted in full and without staging.

### Paroxetine

**The Minister of State, Department of Health (Mr. John Hutton):** Following continuing interest in both Houses about the issues surrounding the safety of Selective Serotonin Re-uptake Inhibitors (SSRIs), including Seroxat (paroxetine), this statement informs the House of further conclusions of the Committee on Safety of Medicines (CSM) based on the work of the Expert Working Group on SSRIs.

In reviewing clinical trial data on the dosage of paroxetine and prescribing data suggesting that as many as 17,000 patients were started on doses above 20mg in the last year, the Committee concluded that a reminder to prescribers was necessary in the following terms; that

(i) the starting dose of paroxetine in the treatment of depression should be 20mg, as per the current Summary of Products Characteristics (SPC);

(ii) there was no evidence from clinical trials of increased efficacy in the treatment of depressive illness above 20mg;

(iii) the adverse events that occur soon after starting therapy may be difficult to distinguish from the underlying condition. There is evidence that increasing the dose in this situation may be detrimental;

(iv) rapid upward titration may increase the risk of serious adverse events;

(v) those currently on a higher dose and responding well to treatment should remain on the same dose and be reviewed at their next regular treatment review;

(vi) patients should not stop treatment suddenly. Any cessation of treatment should proceed by a gradual downward titration.

Detailed communications to patients and prescribers are taking place today. These will include a summary of clinical trial data on which the conclusions of the CSM and its Expert Group are based. This has been placed in the Library, and is available on the MHRA web-site.

The Expert Working Group will continue its work to conclude their full review of the safety and efficacy of SSRIs and will examine what implications, if any, these latest findings have for the use of other SSRIs.

## DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

### Professional Conduct Committee

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Phil Hope):** In July 2003, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister consulted a number of professional organisations on a draft Statutory Instrument providing for the enlargement of the membership of the above Committee and amending the rules concerning its quorum. The responses to that consultation have now been analysed, and an amended Statutory Instrument was laid before Parliament yesterday.

The amendments to the draft Statutory Instrument are only minor and the effect remains that the pool of PCC members will be enlarged by seven additional persons. The Statutory Instrument will come into effect on 1 April 2004.

A number of consultees made other points concerning the Board, and one organisation requested a setting up of a Parliamentary Committee to investigate certain matters about the Board and its work. I have considered all of the representations received and have met the Chairman and other members of the Board to discuss. I have full confidence in the Board and the way it operates under the powers given in the Architects Act 1997 and have concluded that there is no need to set up such an inquiry.

# Written Ministerial Statements

*Friday 12 March 2004*

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Coroner and Death Certification Service

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Paul Goggins):** Today I am publishing and placing in the Library a paper setting out the Government's position on the arrangements we propose to introduce to replace our existing systems for the certification and investigation of deaths in England and Wales and Northern Ireland.

In June last year we published the report of the independent Fundamental Review of the Coroner Services. In July, the Third Report of the Shipman Inquiry was published following the conclusion of Phase Two of Stage Two of the Inquiry's investigation of our death certification and investigation arrangements. This discharged the Inquiry's remit to enquire into relevant issues concerning the registration of deaths, cremation certification and the coroner system as a result of the murders perpetrated by Harold Shipman.

Both reports identified similar problems with our existing arrangements. They recommended similar, but not identical solutions. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary invited Tom Luce, the chairman of the Fundamental Review, to advise him on the links between the two reports. We have now received that advice and have considered the reports further. I would like to take this opportunity of saying how very grateful the Government are to both Tom Luce and Dame Janet Smith for all the help they and their teams have given the Government as we take forward change in this important and complex area.

We intend to sweep away the existing procedures and structures. We must have a coherent system with oversight of all deaths based around full-time judicial coroners with appropriate medical expertise in close support. We must be able to ensure that families can find out how their relatives died, and that avoidable deaths can be prevented in future. Our public health strategies need to be informed by robust mortality data. Our paper now maps out the broad procedures and structures we would wish to see in place to achieve this in the future. The proposals I am publishing today take account of the requirements across all Government Departments.

The paper does not, and cannot, provide a detailed blueprint for the reformed service. It offers an outline of our proposals, which will need to be firmed up in the course of discussions with practitioners and other stakeholders. Once we have this more detailed information on practicalities and costs, and can be satisfied both on effectiveness and affordability, we propose to come forward, later this year, with a detailed White Paper and draft legislation.

### EU Association Agreements

**The Minister for Citizenship and Immigration (Beverley Hughes):** I announced in response to a Question from the right hon. Member for Haltemprice and Howden (David Davis) 8 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1245–52, that I had ordered a full investigation of how it came about that guidance was issued to staff in the Sheffield office of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate on the handling of applications under the European Union Accession agreements without my knowledge or that of senior IND management.

The investigation is being conducted by Ken Sutton, Senior Director (Asylum), who is outside the management line for the Sheffield office. Its terms of reference are:

"To investigate:

> The circumstances in which guidance has been issued to IND staff in the General Casework Section in Sheffield since September 2003 on the handling of applications made under the EC Association Agreements; on what authority this guidance was issued; and what steps, if any, were taken to seek higher authority or consult more -widely within the organisation;

To establish the facts; and

To make recommendations for addressing deficiencies in management which are revealed, to prevent any recurrence;

To make an interim report on the factual position by 18 March, and a final report by the end of March".

Mr Sutton commenced his investigation on 9 March, and has interviewed most of the staff involved. He is now piecing together the precise circumstances in which the guidance was issued. I have asked him to give me an interim report on the facts of the matter by 18 March. I have also asked Mr Sutton to report on current, longstanding and any previous exercises over the last 10 years for dealing with backlogs.

In the meantime, IND senior management has decided that management in the Sheffield general casework office needs to be significantly strengthened. An experienced senior manager is being moved in to take charge of this office with effect from Monday.

There have been questions about the number of ECAA applications. From internal management information, it is estimated that just over 19,000 applications under the ECAA route were received in 2002–03 and around 36,000 to date in 2003–04. Of these, just over 18,500 and 29,000 respectively were from people already lawfully in the country but who are simply seeking to extend their stay or change the basis on which they are here. Some 600 applications in 2002–03 and just over 7,000 to date in 2003–04 were from people overseas seeking entry clearance. The total number of decisions in these cases from September 2003 to date is around 26,000. Again, the vast majority of these individuals were already here lawfully. Of these, just over 25,000 were approved and nearly 800 were either refused or fell for other reasons.

The Department has a duty of confidentiality regarding discipline and employment and a general duty of care to staff. In accordance with our normal policy, we will not release or confirm the names of members of staff during the course of this investigation.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's Science Service

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Ian Pearson):** I am today announcing my decision to extend the role of the new Non-Departmental Public Body, which will take over responsibility for the functions of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's Science Service in 2006.

I previously announced the Government's decisions in response to the O'Hare Report on the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's arrangements for the provision of agri-food education and R&D in Northern Ireland on 31 March 2003. Within that statement, I announced that provision was to be retained within DARD to provide emergency response and surveillance. However, following further analysis and consideration of the functions and organisation of the new NDPB, it has become clear that this emergency response capability should also transfer to the new body.

I am confident that this extended role for the NDPB will enable DARD, working in close co-operation with the body, to handle any future emergencies in the animal health sector. Furthermore, I believe that the decision that I am announcing today will ensure a more coherent organisation, without duplication or overlap, better placed to provide the services required by its customers. It is estimated that around 220 staff who would have been retained within DARD, will now move to the new NDPB, bringing its total staff numbers, including those moving from the Agricultural Research Institute for Northern Ireland (ARINI) to around 850.

The decision to place ARINI in the NDPB is unaffected by this change.

## TREASURY

### Mortgage Market

**The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Gordon Brown):** Professor David Miles' report "*The UK Mortgage Market: Taking a Longer-term View, Final Report and Recommendations*", is published today. Copies are available in the Vote Office.

# Written Answers to Questions

*The following answers were received between Friday 13 February and Friday 20 February 2004*

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Mobile Phones

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been charged with offences in relation to the use of mobile phones while driving since the new measures were introduced. [148600]

**Ms Blears:** Information on the number of people charged is not collected centrally.

Prosecution data for the new offence of driving while using a hand-held mobile telephone will not be available until the autumn of 2004.

## DEFENCE

### Iraq

**Mr. Alan Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what access to legal representation is available to persons detained by United Kingdom forces in Iraq under Article 78 of the IV Geneva Convention (1949); what criteria are used to determine whether they continue to pose a threat to security; and if he will make a statement. [154539]

**Mr. Ingram:** As set out in Article 80 of Geneva Convention IV internees retain their full civil capacity. This principle is reflected in Article 113 which provides, inter alia, that the Detaining Power shall provide all reasonable facilities for the transmission of wills, powers of attorney, letters of authority, or any other documents intended for internees or despatched by them. The Detaining Power is also obliged to facilitate the execution and authentication in due legal form of such documents on behalf of internees, in particular allowing them to consult a lawyer. In accordance with these provisions the United Kingdom provides access to legal advice when requested by an internee for such matters. The UK does not specifically provide for legal advice to be available to internees.

A review is carried out after 10, 28 and thereafter every 90 days to determine whether, on the balance of probabilities, internment is necessary for reasons of security. In accordance with Article 78 of the Fourth Geneva Conventions, the review takes into account all of the evidence and intelligence available relating to an internee.

**Mr. Swayne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much was spent on quick impact projects authorised by the UK military command in the *(a)* first 100 days and *(b)* six months following the end of high intensity military operations in Iraq. [150225]

**Mr. Ingram:** $5.3 million was spent on quick impact projects authorised by the United Kingdom military command in the first six months following the end of high intensity military operations in Iraq, of which $1.1 million was spent in the first 100 days.

**Richard Ottaway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he was informed that the 45-minute assertion related to battlefield mortar shells or small calibre weaponry. [154024]

**Norman Lamb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what date he was informed that the 45-minute claim related to battlefield weapons. [154102]

**Sir John Stanley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what date he first became aware to which Iraqi weapons the 45-minute claim in the Iraq's weapons of mass destruction dossier applied. [154180]

**Mr. Hoon:** I first became aware of 'the 45-minute claim' when I read drafts of the Government's dossier and the Joint Intelligence Committee's assessment dated 9 September 2002. The Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) in their report of 9 September 2003 (cm 5972) published, at paragraph 50, the relevant passage from the assessment. This stated:

> "Intelligence also indicates that chemical and biological munitions could be with military units and ready for firing within 20 to 45 minutes."

The ISC also commented (para 57):

> "The JIC did not know precisely which munitions could be deployed from where to where and the context of the intelligence was not included in the JIC Assessment".

I became aware that this intelligence referred to battlefield weapons soon after the publication of the Government's dossier on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

**Mr. Swayne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the incidents for which Boards of Inquiry have been initiated since the commencement of military operations in Iraq; and which such Boards have reported. [154038]

**Mr. Ingram** *[holding answer 10 February 2004]:* I assume that the question is seeking information on those incidents in Iraq that occurred during recent operations there.

Boards of Inquiry have been convened to inquire into the following incidents:

*Royal Navy*

Collision of two Sea Kings from 849 Naval Air Squadron on 22 March 2003; and

Death of Marine Maddison on 30 March 2003.

Internal reports have been issued into both incidents.

*Army*

Death of Lance-Corporal Brierley on 30 March 2003;

Deaths of Lieutenant Tweedie and Lance-Corporal Shearer on 1 April 2003;

Death of Private Smith on 13 August 2003; and

a Board of Inquiry will be convened on Friday 13 February into a serious injury suffered by Lance-Corporal Stesel on 6 April 2003

No formal reports have yet been issued.

*RAF*

Patriot/Tornado GR4 incident on 23 March 2003.

No formal report has yet been issued.

Further Boards of Inquiry may be convened into other incidents when the relevant initial investigations are complete.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on embedding in the Iraq war. [155134]

**Mr. Ingram:** I assume that my hon. Friend is referring to the embedding of journalists as war correspondents with our Armed Forces during the conflict in Iraq.

I refer my hon. Friend to paragraph 10.11 on page 59 of the MOD publication "Operations in Iraq: lessons for the future" which was published on 11 December. A copy of this publication has been deposited in the Library of the House and is available for reference.

**Mr. Tyler:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to publish the Government's full response to the National Audit Office's investigation report into Operation Telic; and if he will make a statement. [150197]

**Mr. Hoon** *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* Departments do not publish full responses directly to National Audit Office reports.

In due course, the Public Accounts Committee will issue a report into Operation Telic. That report will be informed by the National Audit Office's investigation report. After the Public Accounts Committee report has been issued, the Government will issue a response (in the form of a Treasury minute) within the normal timeframe and in the normal way.

**Military Assistance (Asia)**

**Sir Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what military assistance has been provided to *(a)* Uzbekistan, *(b)* Turkmenistan, *(c)* Kazakhstan, *(d)* Kyrgyzstan, *(e)* Pakistan, *(f)* Georgia and *(g)* Azerbaijan since 2000; and if he will make a statement. [154545]

**Mr. Ingram:** All these countries are situated in a region of increasing strategic importance to the United Kingdom. The UK has small but carefully focused programmes of bilateral co-operation with most of them facilitated by our resident Defence Attachés.

The UK's military assistance to Uzbekistan has focused on training and advice to assist the Uzbekistan Ministry of Defence with its defence reform efforts. It has stressed the importance of respect for the rule of law and human rights, and has included English language training and assistance with the development of junior staff officer and NCO training. The UK also provided a modest amount of military aid to Uzbekistan in March 2002—100 combat helmets and 15 mine detectors.

The UK provides no military assistance to Turkmenistan apart from a small English language training programme.

The UK's military assistance to Kazakhstan has focused on training and advice to help enhance Kazakhstan's peacekeeping capability and support its defence reform efforts. It has included English language training and assistance with the development of NCO training.

Military assistance to Kyrgyzstan has centred on English language training and assistance with mountain patrolling techniques. The UK also provided a modest amount of military aid to Kyrgyzstan in March 2002—100 combat helmets and 15 mine detectors.

The UK has close historical ties with the armed forces of Pakistan. Over the past four years Pakistan has received military assistance in the form of places on training courses in the UK at the Royal College of Defence Studies, the Joint Services Command and Staff College, the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and other Service establishments. In Pakistan the UK has provided assistance with flight safety and military band training and has agreed to respond to Pakistani requests for emergency humanitarian escape and rescue assistance for their small submarine fleet.

UK military assistance to Georgia has focused on training and advice to help defence reform. Our efforts concentrate on advisory visits and have included English language training and assistance with the development of NCO training. Defence reform is also supported by a UK Civilian Special Defence Adviser to the Georgian Ministry of Defence and a resettlement programme which re-trains retired service personnel.

The UK's military assistance to Azerbaijan has been confined to English language training.

**Afghanistan**

**Patrick Mercer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether enhanced body armour is issued to all British troops operating in Afghanistan. [152376]

**Mr. Ingram:** Yes.

**Patrick Mercer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what personal protection clothing is issued to British troops operating in Afghanistan. [152379]

**Mr. Ingram:** All troops in Afghanistan are issued with a Kevlar helmet and Enhanced Combat Body Armour. They are also issued a S10 respiration. Sufficient Individual Protection Equipment is also held in theatre for all deployed troops.

**Patrick Mercer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what *(a)* quantity and *(b)* type of radar equipment is deployed for British troops to use in Afghanistan. [153037]

**Mr. Ingram:** I am withholding the information required in accordance with Exemption 1 of the Code of Practice on access to Government Information.

**Mr. Soames:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what plans there are for Eurocorps to take over the NATO International Security Assistance Force operation in Afghanistan; [155207]

(2) what plans there are for Eurocorps to assume command of the Kabul Multi-national Brigade. [155211]

**Mr. Ingram:** No decisions have been made on deploying Eurocorps to Afghanistan.

### Aircraft Carriers

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he will agree the *(a)* final projected costs and *(b)* demonstration and manufacturer contracting arrangements for the aircraft carrier programme. [154629]

**Mr. Ingram:** The Future Carrier (CVF) programme is currently in Stage 3 of the Assessment Phase. It is expected that a decision on the CVF programme will be made in Spring this year at the conclusion of the Assessment Phase.

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the expected *(a)* cost and *(b)* commissioning date is of the two new aircraft carriers; what estimates were made when the contract was let; and if he will make a statement on the reasons for the difference. [154630]

**Mr. Ingram:** The CVF programme is still in the Assessment Phase, which is intended to reduce risk in emerging design solutions, and balance the key parameters of performance, time and cost. The current target acquisition cost for the two carriers is around £3 billion with target in-service dates of 2012 and 2015. Estimates are being refined during the Assessment Phase, taking into account the maturing design and cost information. Agreed targets will be included in the demonstration and manufacturing contract arrangements.

**Dr. Julian Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his latest estimate is of *(a)* the cost and *(b)* the in-service dates of each of the two future aircraft carriers. [154660]

**Mr. Ingram:** The CVF programme is still in the Assessment Phase, which is intended to reduce risk in emerging design solutions and balance the key parameters of performance time and cost. The current target acquisition cost for the two carriers is around £3 billion with target in-service dates of 2012 and 2015 respectively.

### Armed Forces (Pensions and Compensation) Bill

**Mr. Dismore:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the proposals for reform of *(a)* the pension scheme and *(b)* the compensation scheme in the Armed Forces (Pensions and Compensation) Bill are (i) individually cost-neutral and (ii) cost-neutral combined; and if he will make a statement. [153875]

**Mr. Caplin:** The costs of the new Armed Forces pension and compensation schemes have been and will continue to be assessed individually. However, there are links between the two schemes, as income payments from the pension and associated early departure schemes are offset against the loss of earnings income payments in the compensation scheme. Both schemes are considered to be broadly cost-neutral when compared with current provision. Benefits will be paid against entitlement from centrally management Government funds.

**Mr. Dismore:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the estimate produced by the Royal British Legion of the likely number of cases that would fail under the provisions of the Armed Forces (Pensions and Compensation) Bill under *(a)* the proposed balance of probability test, *(b)* the proposed time limits for compensation claims and *(c)* both. [153876]

**Mr. Caplin:** I have been in correspondence with the Royal British Legion about its assessment of the combined effect on recent War Pension claims of the changes planned for the new compensation scheme to time limits and standard of proof. We do not accept the Royal British Legion's analysis, which was based on a sample which was not representative of the full spectrum of claims. Nor do we accept that data for the time lapse between leaving service and making a claim under the War Pensions Scheme (WPS) can be extrapolated to the new scheme. We expect the timing of claims under the new scheme to take account of the time limit.

No work has been undertaken to assess how the particular provisions in the new scheme for time limits and standard of proof would have affected the decisions that we have taken on claims under the War Pension Scheme. Rather, our approach has been to consider the future requirement for a compensation scheme from first principles. We have sought to design a scheme which offers fair and proportionate compensation to anyone who, within a sensible timescale, can provide reasonable evidence that they are suffering from a condition due to service. The scheme will allow claims for specified late-onset conditions outside the limit, and will provide for exceptional review and an independent appeals tribunal. An independent review of our proposals commissioned from Watson Wyatt, a firm of actuaries and consultants, has confirmed that this approach is appropriate and reasonable. Copies of this report have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses entitled "Armed Forces Compensation Scheme—A report on the proposals for a revised compensation scheme for members of the Armed Forces".

**Mr. Dismore:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on how the new tariff-based compensation scheme will *(a)* assess compensation for (i) injuries and (ii) financial losses consequent on injury and *(b)* be administered, with particular reference to appeal arrangements. [153881]

**Mr. Caplin:** The new scheme will assess compensation by matching an injury accepted as due to service to a tariff description and the corresponding fixed level award. For those injuries lying within tariff levels 1 to 11, where it is assessed that earnings capacity will be significantly affected, there will be an additional Guaranteed Income Stream, paid at graduated levels, up-rated for inflation, and based on salary at service termination. It will be paid for life.

Decisions in the scheme will be the responsibility of lay administrators, but with access to medical and legal advice. They will be evidence-based, reflecting case specific facts and contemporary generally accepted medical understanding. Adjudication guidance in the scheme will be published, with medical aspects externally validated.

The new compensation scheme will be implemented by the Veterans Agency, which has considerable experience of assessing and determining claims for injury, illness or death due to Service. There will be an internal disputes resolution procedure for claimants who are dissatisfied with the decision on their claims. Following this, claimants can appeal to the independent Pensions Appeal Tribunal (who currently support the War Pensions Scheme). For appeals on points of law, a Social Security Commissioner will provide the new second tier of independent appeal, with a final level of appeal to the Court of Appeal.

**Mr. Dismore:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what types of injury case will receive *(a)* less and *(b)* more compensation under the new scheme proposed in the Armed Forces (Pensions and Compensation) Bill; and if he will make a statement. [153882]

**Mr. Caplin:** A key principle of the new scheme is a better scaling of compensation to the level of disablement. The War Pensions Scheme provides neither awards that are reasonably proportionate to level of disablement nor significant up-front sums to help people adapt their lives to their new circumstances. However, the new Armed Forces Compensation Scheme for death, injury and ill-health due to Service provides lump sums for pain and suffering that are set out in a 15-level tariff, graduated for level of disablement, with substantial amounts payable, particularly at the higher levels. This also means that money will be available to help people adapt their lives. Where earning capacity is significantly impaired, there will also be a Guaranteed Income Stream (GIS), graduated according to level of impairment. For those with more minor conditions, which are not expected to have a significant impact on earnings capacity, a lump sum for pain and suffering is paid, but no GIS. Details of the compensation scheme, including example tariffs, have been placed in the Library of the House and can be found on the MOD internet site at: www.mod.uk/issues/pensions (A Framework Document For The Armed Forces Compensation Scheme for Injury, Illness and Death Due to Service).

### Armed Forces Personnel (Medical Services)

**Mrs. Calton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment has been made of the availability of *(a)* general practitioner services and *(b)* NHS dental services to families of armed forces personnel located in the UK. [153830]

**Mr. Caplin:** Issues of concern to Service families are monitored regularly through continuous attitude surveys and meetings with the Service family associations. We are aware that some families can find it difficult to find a GP but we are not aware of families not being able to register with a GP. Service families are in the same position as other member of local communities in relation to NHS dentists. However, the MOD is continuing to look at ways we can reduce these problems through local discussions.

### Armoured Vehicles

**Mr. Soames:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many FV432 series vehicles were deployed to the Gulf during Operation Telic. [153000]

**Mr. Ingram:** Approximately 480 FV432 and FV432 variant vehicles were deployed to the Gulf during Operation Telic.

### Aviation Noise

**Mr. Paterson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what research his Department has *(a)* published and *(b)* commissioned into helicopter noise. [153968]

**Mr. Ingram:** I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of the letter in the Library of the House.

### Civil Servants

**Dr. Cable:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many civil servants, broken down by grade, there are in the Department and the agencies for which the Department is responsible; and what the figures were in January 1997. [150254]

**Mr. Caplin:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him on 10 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1293–98W, by my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Cabinet Office.

### Civilian Staff

**Angus Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 273W, when his Department last compiled reliable data for civilians at individual defence installations; and if he will make a statement. [155188]

**Mr. Caplin:** There are no centrally held reliable data on the number of civilians at individual defence installations.

### Defence Estate Organisation

**Mr. Soames:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library a copy of the Defence Estate Organisation's Annual Report and Accounts for 1997–98. [155206]

**Mr. Caplin:** No publication exists for the period stated. The Defence Estates Organisation was not directed to produce qualified accounts during the first year as an Agency.

### Defence Fire Service

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost to the Defence Fire Service was of Operation Fresco, broken down by main budget. [155215]

**Mr. Ingram:** Information on the discrete costs incurred by the Defence Fire Service during Operation Fresco could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However the overall additional costs incurred by the Ministry of Defence during Operation Fresco are charged to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

### Defence Spending (Scotland)

**Angus Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how much of the personnel budget of the *(a)* United Kingdom Hydrographic

Office, *(b)* Defence Export Services Organisation, *(c)* Defence Medical Services Department and *(d)* Army Base Repair Organisation was spent in Scotland in financial year 2002–03 (i) in monetary terms and (ii) as a percentage of the total; what the figures were in the previous year; and if he will make a statement on the figures for each agency; [155085]

(2) pursuant to the answer of 4 December 2003, *Official Report*, columns 133–36W, how much of its total personnel budget the *(a)* Defence Estates, *(b)* Defence Geographic and Imagery Intelligence Agency, *(c)* Naval Manning Agency, *(d)* Defence Analytical Services Agency, *(e)* Defence Housing Executive, *(f)* Defence Intelligence and Security Centre, *(g)* Army Personnel Centre and *(h)* Army Training and Recruitment Agency spent in Scotland in financial year 2002–03, (i) in monetary terms and (ii) as a percentage of the total; what the figures were in the previous year; and if he will make a statement; [155190]

(3) pursuant to the answer of 4 December 2003, *Official Report*, columns 133–36W, how much of its total personnel budget the *(a)* Defence Communications Services Agency, *(b)* Defence Storage and Distribution Agency, *(c)* Veterans Agency, *(d)* Disposal Services Agency, *(e)* Pay and Personnel Agency, *(f)* Defence Aviation Repair Agency and *(g)* Meteorological Office spent in Scotland in financial year 2002–03, (i) in monetary terms and (ii) as a percentage of the total; what the figures were in the previous year; and if he will make a statement; [155191]

(4) pursuant to the answer of 4 December 2003, *Official Report*, columns 133–36W, how much of its total personnel budget the *(a)* RAF Personnel Manning Agency, *(b)* RAF Training Group Defence Agency, *(c)* Warship Support Agency, *(d)* British Forces Post Office, *(e)* Defence Vetting Agency, *(f)* Defence Medical Education and Training Agency and *(g)* Armed Forces Personnel Administration Agency spent in Scotland in financial year 2002–03, (i) in monetary terms and (ii) as a percentage of the total; what the figures were in the previous year; and if he will make a statement; [155192]

(5) how much of the personnel budget of the *(a)* Defence Evaluation and Research Agency and *(b)* Defence Secondary Care Agency was spent in Scotland in financial year 2002–03 (i) in monetary terms and (ii) as a percentage of the total; what the figures were in the previous year; and if he will make a statement on the figures for each agency; [155086]

(6) pursuant to the answer of 4 December 2003, *Official Report*, columns 133–36W, how much of its total personnel budget the *(a)* Service Children's Education, *(b)* Duke of York's Royal Military School, *(c)* Naval Recruiting and Training Agency, *(d)* Defence Procurement Agency, *(e)* Defence Transport and Movements Agency, *(f)* Medical Supplies Agency, *(g)* Defence Dental Agency and *(h)* Defence Bills Agency spent in Scotland in financial year 2002–03, (i) in monetary terms and (ii) as a percentage of the total; what the figures were in the previous year; and if he will make a statement. [155193]

**Mr. Caplin:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 4 December 2003, *Official Report*, columns 132–35W, and the answer given to him by my right hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Armed Forces on 3 December 2003, *Official Report*, columns 67–68W.

### Departmental Minutes

**Mr. Lilley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether it is his Department's policy to make notes of *(a)* meetings and *(b)* telephone conversations involving Ministers; and under what circumstances no notes would be taken. [149530]

**Mr. Caplin** *[holding answer 20 January 2004]:* The Ministry of Defence follows the central "Guidance on the Management of Private Office Papers" which makes clear that good record management procedures are necessary not least to ensure accountability and provide an audit trail. Among the records covered by the guidance are Ministers' meetings and telephone conversations.

### Environmental Impact Assessments

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what projects have received an environmental impact assessment since his policy statement on the management of safety and environmental protection in July 2000. [154695]

**Mr. Caplin:** I will write to my hon. Friend and a copy of my reply will be placed in the Library of the House.

### Equipment Programme

**Mr. Soames:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library a copy of his Department's Equipment Programme. [153032]

**Mr. Ingram:** Information on a range of major equipment projects, which together form the substantial part of the Ministry of Defence's forward equipment programme, is routinely made available, for example in support of the PAC's annual Major Projects Report and the HCDC's annual inquiry into defence procurement. This detail is set in broader context by the publication every two years of the MOD's overarching Defence Investment Strategy.

In addition, the principal output of the MOD's annual equipment planning round is a set of detailed planning assumptions and financial data about the proposed content and timing of the future equipment programme. This forms part of the internal advice to Ministers on the overall affordability of the defence programme and of individual projects at the time they come forward for approval. It therefore anticipates decisions still to be taken by Ministers. In parts it also contains information which is commercially sensitive. I am therefore withholding the information in accordance with Exemptions 2 and 13 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

### European Defence

**Mr. Soames:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans there are to set up a joint Franco-British rapid deployment force; and if he will make a statement. [155208]

**Mr. Ingram:** There are no plans to set up a joint Franco-British rapid deployment force. However, as part of the Helsinki Headline Goal, member states agreed to develop rapid response elements available and deployable at very high readiness. The British, French and German governments are proposing that EU member states create Battle Group-sized forces, deployable within 15 days, by 2007. Member states would be able to offer such formations individually—as is likely to be the case for the United Kingdom—or on a multi-national basis.

**Mr. Soames:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the progress achieved by the Helsinki Project Catalogue groups tasked with studying *(a)* air-to-air refuelling, *(b)* combat search and rescue, *(c)* strategic unmanned air vehicles, *(d)* nuclear, biological and chemical protection, *(e)* headquarters, *(f)* special operations forces, *(g)* theatre ballistic missile defence, *(h)* strategic airlift, *(i)* interoperability, *(j)* space, *(k)* intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance, *(l)* strategic sealift, *(m)* collective medical protection, *(n)* attack helicopters and *(o)* support helicopters. [155210]

**Mr. Ingram:** Progress is continuing across the 15 Project Groups established under the European Capabilities Action Plan since May 2003, although all are at different stages in their development. In strategic mobility, for example, and in conjunction with NATO, the Project Group is introducing a 'Strategic Air Lift Interim Solution' or SALIS, (in place until A-400M becomes available) and the co-ordinated use of assets by a Strategic Air Lift Co-ordination Centre, co-located with the European Airlift Co-ordination Centre at Eindhoven. There are also important qualitative outputs under development across the Project Groups, for example in systems interoperability, operational doctrine, and training. The Council Conclusions of 17 November 2003 underlined the need to disseminate Project Group objectives, timelines and reporting procedures more widely, and this information will be presented shortly as an integral part of the Single Progress Report compiled once during each Presidency. It is anticipated that a Capability Improvement Chart showing the state-of-play of the Project Groups in a clearly digestible format will accompany the Single Progress Report.

### Future Integrated Soldier Technology Programme

**John Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the effectiveness of the Future Integrated Soldier Technology programme. [154585]

**Mr. Ingram:** The Future Integrated Soldier Technology (FIST) programme has almost completed the first year of a 32 month Assessment Phase and is making good progress. The project will bring the benefits of improved technology to the soldier by providing an integrated suite of personal equipment to enhance dismounted close combat capability.

### Gulf War Illnesses

**Mr. Flook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Gulf War veterans suffering from Gulf War illnesses have been tested for *(a)* depleted uranium poisoning, *(b)* squalene antibodies and *(c)* microplasmal organisms. [155172]

**Mr. Caplin:** A voluntary programme to test for depleted uranium (DU) in the urine of veterans will begin in pilot form in March, with the full programme expected to become available during the summer. The test will be available for all eligible veterans and civilians, irrespective of their state of health. In addition, a very small number of veterans have been tested for total uranium following referral by the Gulf Veterans' Medical Assessment Programme. I understand that some veterans have been tested for exposure to DU by private arrangement.

The Ministry of Defence has not tested veterans for squalene antibodies or mycoplasmal infections, to which I believe the hon. Member is referring. I understand that some veterans have been tested for squalene antibodies by private arrangement.

### Joint Strike Fighter

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence who owns the intellectual property rights of the joint strike fighter system; and whether this is shared with UK and US companies. [154684]

**Mr. Ingram:** Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) in the Joint Strike Fighter system are owned by the contractor or sub-contractor generating them, whether UK or US companies. The IPR generated under the contracts and sub-contracts can be used by the MOD for purposes associated with that programme.

### Lieutenant Lewis Page

**Dr. Julian Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the Answer of 30 January, *Official Report*, column 574W, on Lieutenant Lewis Page, whether *(a)* authorisation was sought by Lieutenant Page and *(b)* permission which fell short of proper authorisation was given to Lieutenant Page. [154665]

**Mr. Caplin:** Lieutenant Lewis Page did not seek authorisation to publish an article in *Prospect* magazine, nor was permission of any kind given to him.

### Nuclear Weapons

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the renewal of the 1958 Agreement for Co-operation on the Uses of Atomic Energy for Mutual Defence Purposes. [154776]

**Mr. Ingram:** Discussions continue between the United Kingdom and United States Governments on the renewal of this agreement. Subject to the outcome of those discussions, we expect to lay any amendments before the House later this year in accordance with normal procedures for treaty renewals.

### Operation Artemis

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what use will be made of the armed forces for covert surveillance on upland estates as part of Operation Artemis. [154732]

**Mr. Ingram:** None. Operation Artemis was an EU led operation to help stabilise the town of Bunia in the Democratic Republic of Congo which ended in September 2003. The UK contributed 85 personnel to the Operation. Their role was to increase the capacity of the airfield in Bunia.

### Overseas Bribery

**Mr. Simon Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many allegations of overseas bribery the MOD Police has received since November 1997; how many of these allegations resulted in investigations; and what the outcome of these investigations was. [151397]

**Mr. Caplin:** There have been six allegations of bribery overseas received by the Ministry of Defence Police since 1998. Records do not go back as far as November 1997. As a result of these allegations, four investigations were conducted. One investigation at the British embassy Washington in December 1999 resulted in internal MOD discipline procedures being carried out and an employee returning to the UK. The second investigation at Rhine Garrison in September 2000 resulted in no further action being taken. There is one ongoing investigation which commenced in July 2002 at the Royal Mint Llantrisant which is soon to be brought to a close. The investigation in Sierra Leone in December 2002 resulted in no crime being found.

### Parliamentary Questions

**Harry Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he will reply to Questions with reference numbers 146471 and 146688, tabled on 5 January. [153340]

**Mr. Ingram:** I replied to my hon. Friend on 9 February 2004, (*Official Report*, columns 1173–74W)

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make it his policy to ensure that answers to parliamentary questions which are in the form of letters which are lodged in the Library are, subject to issues of confidentiality, made available to the public by posting them on the Ministry website. [153521]

**Mr. Caplin:** The office of my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House, is working with House officials to explore what might be done to improve the accessibility of subsequent correspondence.

### RAF Fairford

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what building work is under way at RAF Fairford, with particular reference to hangar capacity. [155116]

**Mr. Caplin:** The building work currently under way at RAF Fairford involves a number of general infrastructure upgrade programmes. These include a fuel complex, a 4.5km perimeter road around the south-east portion of the airfield, some airfield pavement works, the construction of a single-bay portable aircraft shelter and a two-bay aircraft maintenance hangar capable of housing a wide variety of aircraft, including the USAF B-2 aircraft.

The current operational status of RAF Fairford as a NATO designated standby base will not change and no aircraft will be permanently stationed at the base.

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to further secure the boundary fence at RAF Fairford. [155187]

**Mr. Caplin:** Every aspect of security at all RAF bases, including RAF Fairford, is under constant review and improvements are made when necessary.

### Recruitment

**Mr. Soames:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence up to what percentage of its liability the *(a)* Royal Corps of Signals, *(b)* Corps of Royal Engineers, *(c)* Infantry, *(d)* Royal Logistics Corps, *(e)* Royal Armoured Corps, *(f)* Royal Artillery, *(g)* Royal Air Force and *(h)* Royal Navy is allowed to recruit. [155204]

**Mr. Ingram:** The Army, and individual capbadges within the Army, do not recruit as a percentage of liability. The Army is resourced to approximately 94 per cent. of liability in FY 2004–05; this defines, through a process of detailed manpower forecasting, the level of recruits required each year. The Director of Manning (Army) divides the total requirement of new recruits each year by capbadge and this will be consistent with the Army Board's endorsed manning priorities. The level of funding is set to increase gradually to nearly 99 per cent. of its liability by 2008.

In the Royal Navy and the RAF, recruiting targets are set in order to provide a level of input that will sustain manpower levels in the long-term against the projected requirement. Both Services strive to recruit 100 per cent. of their manning target in any one financial year. Royal Navy recruiting targets are variable and not a fixed percentage of the requirement.

### Reserve Forces

**Mr. Swayne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many reservists who are fit for role are available for mobilisation. [R] [154877]

**Mr. Caplin:** As at 31 January 2004, the number of Volunteer Reservists who were currently fit for role and available for mobilisation was 19,810. In addition, 112,040 members of the Regular Reserve were also available for mobilisation.

### Royal Fleet Auxiliary

**Angus Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 8 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 273W, how many Royal Fleet auxiliaries are employed in Scotland. [155189]

**Mr. Caplin:** There are currently no Royal Fleet Auxiliaries permanently based on-shore in Scotland.

### Surplus Equipment

**Harry Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what sales of surplus equipment have been

approved in the last 12 months, broken down by *(a)* equipment type, *(b)* country to which it was sold and *(c)* value; what further equipment is being considered for sale to other countries; and if he will make a statement. [154456]

**Mr. Ingram:** The contracts signed by the Ministry of Defence's Disposal Services Agency (DSA) in the calendar year 2003 for equipments directly sold (in some cases still to be exported) on a Government-to-Government basis are listed as follows:

| *Equipment* | *Country* |
|---|---|
| Type 23 Frigate HMS Sheffield | Chile |
| 6 Watchman Auto Radar Displays | Finland |
| Various 105MM light gun spares | Republic of Ireland |
| Various test/training equipment | Jordan |
| 95 Scammell Commander Tank transporters | Jordan |

It is not our practice to reveal sales values and, so as to protect third party commercial confidentiality, I am therefore withholding that information in accordance with Exemption 13 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

The DSA markets most capital equipments declared surplus to requirements to overseas Governments for further use. It is currently actively marketing Landing Ships Logistics, Combat Vehicles Reconnaissance (Tracked), Sea Harrier and Sea Kings (among other primary equipments).

### Welsh Regiments

**Mr. Wiggin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many soldiers in Welsh regiments in Iraq have not been issued with flak jackets. [150358]

**Mr. Ingram:** There is sufficient Enhanced Combat Body Armour in Iraq for every member of the armed forces who requires it.

**Mr. Wiggin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many soldiers in Welsh regiments are fighting in Iraq. [150369]

**Mr. Ingram:** As at 11 February 2004, 486 soldiers were serving in Iraq with the Royal Regiment of Wales.

**Mr. Wiggin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many soldiers in Welsh regiments have been killed in Iraq, broken down by cause of death. [150370]

**Mr. Ingram:** As at 11 February 2004, three soldiers who were serving with Welsh regiments have been killed in Iraq. All these deaths were the result of operational accidents.

## LEADER OF THE HOUSE

### Parliamentary Questions

**Mr. Brady:** To ask the Leader of the House how many days on average his Office took in Session 2002–03 to give a substantive answer to a parliamentary Question for ordinary written answer; and what the greatest number of days taken to answer such a question was. [155926]

**Mr. Hain:** On average, it took my office 2.5 days to give a substantive answer to an ordinary written parliamentary question[1].

The greatest number of days to answer such a question was nine days (excluding recess days).

Performance on handling parliamentary questions is available on the Leader of the Commons website www.commonsleader.gov.uk.

[1] Questions tabled during Session 2002–03 included those to the President of the Council

## TREASURY

### National Statistics

**Andrew George:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many new cases of osteosarcoma have been diagnosed in *(a)* children, *(b)* adolescents and *(c)* adults in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available. [155079]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Andrew George dated 19 February 2004:*

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent question concerning how many new cases of osteosarcoma have been diagnosed in *(a)* children, *(b)* adolescents and *(c)* adults in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available.

Newly diagnosed cases of osteosarcoma are coded to malignant neoplasm of bone and articular cartilage. It is not possible to say exactly how many such cases are osteosarcoma, because some records do not identify the specific cell type. Of the total numbers of cases of malignant neoplasms of bone and articular cartilage, osteosarcomas represent about 50% in children and adolescents and about 25% in adults.

The numbers of registrations of newly diagnosed cases of malignant neoplasm of bone and articular cartilage in England for the age groups requested for the years 1991 to 2000 (the latest available year) are given in the table below. The age groups; children, adolescents and adults are those used in recent published studies of the incidence of cancer in England.

*Number of newly diagnosed cases of malignant neoplasm of bone and articular cartilage in England, by age group, 1991–2000*

| | *1991* | *1992* | *1993* | *1994* | *1995* | *1996* | *1997* | *1998* | *1999* | *2000* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Children (aged under 15) | 41 | 37 | 51 | 50 | 63 | 51 | 49 | 47 | 58 | 55 |
| Adolescents (aged 15–24) | 72 | 73 | 63 | 52 | 75 | 56 | 75 | 76 | 59 | 68 |
| Adults (aged 25 and over) | 254 | 252 | 228 | 249 | 277 | 296 | 276 | 252 | 305 | 312 |
| Total | 367 | 362 | 342 | 351 | 415 | 403 | 400 | 375 | 422 | 435 |

*Note:*

For the years 1991 to 1994, International Classification of Disease, Ninth Revision Code (ICD-9) code 170. For the years 1995 to 2000, International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes C40 and C41.

*Source:*

Office for National Statistics.

**Andrew George:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many patients have died in circumstances where the primary tumour was an osteosarcoma in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available. [155080]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Andrew George dated 19 February 2004:*

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent question concerning how many patients have died in circumstances where the primary tumour was an osteosarcoma in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available.

No figures are available on the number of deaths from osteosarcoma because it is defined in terms of cell type, and this information is not collected at death registration. Deaths from osteosarcoma are included in figures for malignant neoplasm of bone and articular cartilage.

The number of deaths from malignant neoplasm of bone and articular cartilage in England in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available are given in the table below.

*Number of deaths from malignant neoplasm of bone and articular cartilage in England 1993–2002*

| *Year* | *Number of deaths* |
|---|---|
| 1993 | 187 |
| 1994 | 188 |
| 1995 | 175 |
| 1996 | 214 |
| 1997 | 212 |
| 1998 | 195 |
| 1999 | 201 |
| 2000 | 202 |
| 2001 | 248 |
| 2002 | 229 |

*Note:*
For the years 1993 to 2000, International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision Code (ICD-9) code 170. For the years 2001 to 2002, International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes C40 and C41.
*Source:*
Office for National Statistics

**Mrs. Roche:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps his Department is taking to achieve the Government's targets of *(a)* ending child poverty by 2020, *(b)* halving it by 2010 and *(c)* reducing it by a quarter by 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [154363]

**Dawn Primarolo:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions gave to her on 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1590–91W.

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average weekly income was in each ward in each principal seaside town in England and Wales in the last month for which figures are available, listed in descending order with Welsh Seaside Town clusters disaggregated. [154942]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Chris Ruane, dated 19 February 2004:*

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about average weekly income in each ward in principal seaside towns. (154942)

The Office for National Statistics does not produce earnings estimates at the requested level of detail for current wards. The lowest geographic area for which these estimates are produced from the New Earnings Survey is local authority and unitary authority level. The latest available figures for average weekly earnings at this level relate to April 2003 and are published on the National Statistics website: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_labour/NES2003_Analyses_By_Region/NES2003_Analyses_By_Region.pdf

The estimates given in the New Earnings Survey are for the gross earnings of employees who are members of Pay-As-You-Earn (PAYE) schemes. They do not include income from other sources, or the earnings of individuals who are not members of such schemes.

## Civil Servants (Relocation)

**Bob Russell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many civil servants he expects will be relocated from London as a result of the assessment by Sir Michael Lyons; from which Government departments relocation of staff is being considered; when he expects the first staff to move from London; and if he will make a statement. [154701]

**Mr. Boateng:** The Independent Review of Public Sector Relocation led by Sir Michael Lyons will report its findings and recommendations in March 2004. It would be inappropriate to pre-empt his final report. Sir Michael's interim report is available on the Treasury website at www.hm-treasury.gov.uk.

**Bob Russell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which towns and cities have been assessed by Sir Michael Lyons for possible relocation of civil servants from London; which have been short-listed; how many locations will be selected; when he expects to make an announcement; and if he will make a statement. [154702]

**Mr. Boateng:** Sir Michael Lyons retained King Sturge Property Consultants to conduct an analysis of over 100 locations to better understand local property and labour markets. This information is available on the Treasury website www.hm-treasury.gov.uk and will inform Sir Michael's final report which will be published in March 2004.

## Defence Capabilities

**Mr. Soames:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1170W, on provision for defence capability, on which page of the Ministry of Defence's Report and Accounts 2002–03 the net cash requirement for Request for Resources 1: Provision for Defence Capability for financial years 2001–02 to 2002–03 can be found. [155205]

**Mr. Boateng:** Net Cash Requirement (NCR) covers the consequences of all requests for resources (RfR) together with other cash implications and, as such, is not recorded on an individual RfR basis.

The total NCR outturn figures for 2001–02 and 2002–03 can be found on page 88 of MOD's Report and Accounts 2002–03.

## Gulf War

**Dr. Cable:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much was received by the Government from overseas governments in respect of costs incurred during

the Gulf War, *(a)* in total and *(b)* from (i) Germany, (ii) Japan, (iii) Saudi Arabia, (iv) Kuwait and (v) other Gulf states. [154954]

**Mr. Boateng:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the National Audit Office Report on MOD: Of the Costs and Receipts Arising from the Gulf Conflict (2 December 1992).

### Penrose Inquiry

**Norman Lamb:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether any *(a)* Minister and *(b)* official of (i) HM Treasury and (ii) the Treasury Solicitor's Department has (A) held discussions with, (B) written to and (C) provided any part of the Penrose report into Equitable Life to anyone in the office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration; and if he will make a statement. [155067]

**Ruth Kelly:** Treasury officials have had contact with the office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration on a range of matters, but no part of the Penrose report into Equitable Life has been provided to that office.

### Property Ownership

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what estimate he has made of the number of people who work abroad and own property in the UK; [155235]

(2) if he will estimate how many people resident overseas own property in the UK but do not pay income tax. [155236]

**Ruth Kelly:** It is not possible to estimate the number of people who work or are otherwise resident abroad and own property in the UK, or the number of those who do not pay UK income tax. However there are currently around 100,000 individuals who are resident outside the UK and have notified the Inland Revenue that they are letting out UK property. All of them are subject to UK income tax on any profits they make from such letting out.

### Ministerial Travel

**Bob Russell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he last used a train in connection with his ministerial duties. [154697]

**Mr. Gordon Brown:** On 18 November 2003.

I travelled from Euston to Birmingham by train to speak at the CBI Conference, returning on the same day.

## CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

### Civil Servants

**Dr. Cable:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many civil servants, broken down by grade, there are in the Department and the agencies for which the Department is responsible; and what the figures were in January 1997. [150262]

**Mr. Lammy:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by the Minister of State for the Cabinet Office, on 10 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1294W.

### Department Branding

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much the Department and its predecessors spent on branding the Department between 1997–98 and 2003–04, broken down by *(a)* consultancy fees, *(b)* design and orders for new stationery, *(c)* website design and *(d)* other material featuring new logos. [154063]

**Mr. Lammy:** The information is provided in the following table. To date, my Department has not spent anything on rebranding for the Department for Constitutional Affairs. Our executive agency, the Public Guardianship Office, has spent £56,695 on new branding to reflect its change of name from the Public Trust Office. A contract for £25,000 has recently been let to provide a style re-design for DCA HQ stationery and publications.

### Hutton Report

**Andrew Mackinlay:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs who authorised, and for what purpose, members of the Intelligence and Security Committee to be given access to the contents of the Hutton Inquiry Report on the morning of 28 January in advance of its publication. [152520]

**Mr. Leslie:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer provided on 3 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 758W, by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, to the hon. Member for Southend West (Mr. Amess).

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs who in his office saw an embargoed copy of the Hutton Report. [152675]

**Mr. Leslie:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer provided, by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 3 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 758W.

**Jon Trickett:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what his estimate is of the total amount of staff hours spent in support of Lord Hutton's Inquiry; what the budget allocated to it was; and if he will make a statement. [153384]

### Laganside Courts Complex

**Mr. Carmichael:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what monthly payments have been made to date to Consul Services Ltd. for the Laganside courts Private Finance Initiative scheme; what abatements have been applied; and what the reasons were for each abatement. [152911]

**Mr. Leslie:** The average monthly payment is £350,000 and, to date, 22 monthly payments totalling £7,682,926.57 have been made to Consul Services Ltd. 11 abatements totalling £4,226.84 have been applied and all were in respect of water ingress.

### Legal Aid

**Nick Harvey:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the average annual percentage salary rise awarded to those employed in dealing with or administering criminal legal aid was between 1 January 1996 and 30 November 2003; and if he will make a statement. [154289]

**Mr. Lammy:** The Commission is unable to answer the question in the format requested as neither the Legal Services Commission nor the former Legal Aid Board make a distinction between staff administering civil and criminal work.

The Commission is able to provide figures on the average annual percentage salary rise—awarded with effect from 1 April—for each year since 1997, but cannot provide a figure for 1996. The figures are as follows:

| | *Percentage* |
|---|---|
| 1997 | 4 |
| 1998 | 3.5 |
| 1999 | 4 |
| 2000 | [1]4 |
| | [2]0.5 |
| 2001 | [1]4.3 |
| | [2]0.9 |
| 2002 | [1]4.3 |
| | [2]1.1 |
| 2003 | [1]3.6 |
| | [2]1.1 |

[1] Consolidated
[2] Non-consolidated

All annual salary increases are subject to a pay remit, which must be approved by the Department for Constitutional Affairs. Prior to 2003 remits also required approval of HM Treasury.

**Mr. Leslie:** A precise cost for the inquiry, which will include four members from the Department of Constitutional Affairs seconded to the inquiry team, is not yet available. We will publish the figure once it is available.

Hours spent by other staff in support of the inquiry or in general will have been part of their normal duties and at no cost to the inquiry. Records of hours spent on the inquiry are not maintained centrally.

### Departmental Staff

**Mr. Russell Brown:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what percentage of staff employed within the Department are over 55 years of age; and what *(a)* number and *(b)* percentage of staff recruited over the last 12 months are over 55 years of age. [145772]

**Mr. Lammy:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to him by the Minister of State for the Cabinet Office, on 6 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1084–86W.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Iraq

**Adam Price:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many visits by *(a)* UK and *(b)* foreign journalists to Basra have been facilitated by the Government in the last month; on which dates such visits took place; and which journalists were involved. [153903]

**Mr. Ingram** *[holding answer 9 February 2004]:* I have been asked to reply.

Information on the number of government sponsored visits by both United Kingdom and foreign journalists to Basra in the last month is shown in the following table:

| *Name* | *Nation* | *Media* | *Dates* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gareth Furby | UK | BBC London News | 9–18 January |
| John Walsh | UK | BBC London News | 9–18 January |
| Herr Rainer Hirst | Germany | ZDF TV Germany | 12–20 January |
| Herr Lukas Rosenberg | Germany | ZDF TV Germany | 12–20 January |
| Herr Lars Schwietjke | Germany | ZDF TV Germany | 12–20 January |
| Herr Christian Schubert | Germany | Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung | 15–20 January |
| M. Olivier Lucazeau | France | AFP | 15–20 January |
| Nevsal Elevi | Turkey | Milliyet | 15–20 January |
| Ms Heidi Kingstone | Canada | Johannesburg Star | 15–20 January |
| Herr Frank Herman | Germany | Rheinische Poste | 19–23 January |
| Herr Markus Ziener | Germany | Handelsblatt | 19–23 January |
| Herr Christoph Mahlzahm | Germany | Spiegel | 19–23 January |
| Herr Christoph von Marschall | Germany | Tages Spiegel | 19–23 January |
| Dr. Greg Mills | South Africa | South African Institute of International Affairs | 19–25 January |
| Andrew Redvers Collinson | UK | HTV Wales | 19–25 January |
| Richard Hooper | UK | HTV Wales | 19–25 January |
| Iolo Ap Dafydd | UK | BBC Wales | 19–25 January |
| Rhys Williams | UK | BBC Wales | 19–25 January |
| Oliver Wright | UK | Times | 24–29 January |
| Jack Hill | UK | Times | 24–29 January |
| Mme Florence Saugues | France | Paris Match | 7–12 February |
| M. Bernard Wis | France | Paris Match | 7–12 February |
| Mlle Sophie Shihab | France | Le Monde | 7–12 February |
| M. Frederic Gerschel | France | Le Parisienne | 7–12 February |

*Note:*
Those for which we have provided international air transport

This list does not include information on journalists who may have accompanied either a royal or ministerial party, details of which are not held centrally.

In addition to the sponsored visits, we have provided facilities to many journalists based in or visiting Iraq independently.

## DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

### Advertising

**Miss Kirkbride:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much has been spent on recruitment advertisements in the press, broken down by publication, by *(a)* his Department, *(b)* quangos under the Department and *(c)* non-departmental Government bodies under the Department (i) in the last year and (ii) since 1997. [145805]

**Yvette Cooper:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created on 29 May 2002.

The total cost of recruitment advertising in the press from 29 May 2002 to 31 December 2003 is £343,000.

The provision of a breakdown of costs by publication could only be provided at a disproportionate cost. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister use the most appropriate publication for recruitment advertising, be it national, regional, trade magazine or website, depending on the nature of the vacancy to be filled.

Information on costs incurred by quangos and NDPBs is not held centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

### Civil Servants

**Mr. Curry:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many civil servants were employed in his Department, broken down by *(a)* gender, *(b)* age, *(c)* Civil Service classification and *(d)* tenure since May 2002. [145991]

**Yvette Cooper:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was established on 29 May 2002.

The staffing position for the Office, as at December 2003 is shown in the following table:

| | *Headcount* |
|---|---|
| *Gender* | |
| Female | 1,048 |
| Male | 1,214 |
| Total | 2,262 |
| *Age Group* | |
| 16 to 25 | 147 |
| 26 to 35 | 591 |
| 36 to 45 | 670 |
| 46 to 55 | 607 |
| 56 plus | 247 |
| Total | 2,262 |
| *Civil Service Classification* | |
| Senior Civil Service | 148 |
| Pay Group 7 | 59 |
| Pay Group 6 | 375 |
| Pay Group 5 | 253 |
| Pay Group 4 | 529 |
| Pay Group 3 | 476 |
| Pay Group 2 | 355 |
| Pay Group 1 | 40 |
| Pay Group EM1 to 4 | 27 |
| Total | 2,262 |
| *Tenure* | |
| Casual | 66 |
| Permanent | 2,054 |
| Other (fixed-term appointment and inward secondments) | 142 |
| Total | 2,262 |

Staffing information is also available in Table C of the annual publication, "Civil Service Statistics", which covers permanent staff numbers in each Department and agencies from 1995 to 2002. Copies of the publication are available in the Libraries of both Houses. The latest edition, based on April 2002 data, was published on 24 July 2003.

Alternatively, this information is available at the following address on the Cabinet Office Statistics website: http://www.civil-service.gov.uk/statistics/css.htm

### Council Housing

**Mr. Purchase:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his oral answer of 4 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 748, what estimate he has made of the return anticipated by investors on the £8 billion private investment made in former council housing to which he referred; and what part of the £8 billion private investment and servicing charges being made in former council housing will be recouped by investors in charges *(a)* to the Exchequer and *(b)* to tenants. [154312]

**Keith Hill:** Private Finance raised by registered social landlords (RSLs) in order to purchase and improve former council housing will be obtained on a competitive basis at the market rate at the time of borrowing. The National Audit Office report "Improving social housing through transfer" published in March 2003 recorded that transfers in 2000–01, the last full year covered by the report, secured loans with margins ranging from 0.1 per cent. to 0.5 per cent. above base rates. Provision for the repayment of the loan principal and associated interest will be included with in the RSL's business plan.

### Departmental Information

**Mr. Curry:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the information or public relations campaigns conducted by his Department since May 2002. [145992]

**Yvette Cooper:** Information and public relations campaigns conducted by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister since May 2002 are as follows:

The Fire safety campaign aimed at reducing the number of deaths and serious injuries from domestic fires.

The Elected Regional Assemblies campaign—to create public awareness of, and encourage informed debate on, our policies on regional government.

The advertising and promotional campaign to inform people about and encourage the uptake of the Starter Homes scheme.

### Departmental Staff

**Mr. Russell Brown:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what percentage of staff employed within his Department are over 55 years of age; and what *(a)* number and *(b)* percentage of staff recruited over the last 12 months are over 55 years of age. [145927]

**Yvette Cooper:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Member for Paisley South on the 20 January 2004, *Official Report*, col. 1130W.

### Development Sites

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister through what mechanism he may require reserve housing development sites to be released for building. [154831]

**Keith Hill:** It is premature for my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister to consider how to require the release of reserve housing sites at this time. In general my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister has powers to modify or call-in development plans, and is responsible for deciding planning application appeals. In relation to Hampshire, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister will decide what further action, if any, is necessary following the decision of the Joint Advisory Panel on 10 March.

### Fire Service

**Gregory Barker:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he made of the cost to East Sussex Fire Authority of becoming a precepting authority. [154551]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The Government are carefully considering responses to the consultation on alternative notional amounts for Combined Fire Authorities, including that received from East Sussex Fire Authority.

**Gregory Barker:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether, under his plans for modernisation of the Fire Service, smaller fire authorities will have less scope to make savings than larger fire authorities. [154553]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The Independent Review of the Fire Service predicted that the metropolitan brigades would gain the biggest savings. However, it may be too simplistic to compare larger versus smaller authorities. That, and the profound changes to the fire and rescue service announced in the White Paper "Our Fire and Rescue Service" is why the Government recognises that revisiting the fire formula spending share formula could be an issue. A working group of officials has been set up to examine the case for change and possible alternatives. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will consider any proposals for changes to the formula in the light of the working group's conclusions.

**Gregory Barker:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to introduce a mechanism to redistribute grant to those smaller fire authorities that may have less scope to make savings under the Fire Service Modernisation agenda than larger fire authorities. [154554]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The Government recognises that revisiting the fire formula spending share formula could be an issue, given the profound changes to the fire and rescue service announced in the White Paper "Our Fire and Rescue Service". A working group of officials has been set up to examine the case for change and possible alternatives. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will consider any proposals for changes to the formula in the light of the working group's conclusions.

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he takes to ensure that the staff in fire service control rooms in Coventry have adequate levels of local knowledge. [155442]

**Mr. Raynsford:** There are no fire control rooms in Coventry.

### Give as You Earn Scheme

**John Barrett:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many and what percentage of staff in his Department contribute to a charity through the Give As You Earn scheme; how much money is donated to charity per month by staff in his Department through the scheme; and what steps he is taking to encourage greater participation in the scheme by staff in his Department. [143895]

**Yvette Cooper:** The latest available data for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's payroll are for November 2003. In this month 261 staff donated £4,962.46 to 'Give As You Earn' (GAYE) out of a total headcount of 2,385 staff. This means that the percentage of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's staff making donations in this manner currently stands at 10.95 per cent.—the target rate is 10 per cent.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister recognises the importance in continuing to raise awareness among its staff and intends carry out a promotion campaign and to integrate promotion of this scheme in our induction materials.

### Houses in Multiple Occupation

**Mr. Davey:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the fire risk in houses in multiple occupation of two storeys. [153130]

**Mr. Raynsford:** Government research published in 1997—Fire Risk in Houses in Multiple Occupation: Research Report—revealed that the risk of death from fire in HMOs of two storeys is about four times less than those of three storeys or more.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has also recently completed a study into the effectiveness of residential sprinkler systems in a range of premises, including houses in multiple occupation. A summary of that project is available from the Building Regulations area of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website. The full report of the work is available from the Building Research Establishment.

### House Building

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he assesses which reserve sites should be released to meet county level house building targets; and to what extent those borough councils that have already met their targets will be exempt from having to release reserve sites. [154820]

**Keith Hill:** It would be premature to take any decisions on where the release of the 'reserve' provision in Hampshire should take place, until after the Joint Advisory Panel have made their decision. The Strategic Planning Authorities have recently consulted upon a draft addendum to the Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Implementing Policy H4', which sets out a process for deciding the location of release. Performance against housing requirements is listed as one of the factors to be considered.

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many local authorities have been assessed as not meeting their target for house building. [154821]

**Yvette Cooper:** Information on how many local authorities have been assessed as not meeting their house building target has not been collected centrally. However, performance on house building has formed part of the assessments made at the regional and strategic level for the preparation of revised Regional Planning Guidance and structure plans in each region.

Each local planning authority will be required, under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill, to report on their performance against their local development scheme and on the impact of their policies on the ground in their Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). Local planning authorities would be required to include information on housing policy and performance. Under draft clause 25 of the Bill, if the AMR indicates that they are not performing as desired, this should trigger the authority to revise their local development scheme (and subsequently their local development documents). If they fail to do so, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister can direct the authority to do so.

### Information Technology

**Mr. Allan:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what cost savings have been made in his Department since the introduction of the Information Technology procurement Centre of Excellence; and how these were calculated. [151040]

**Yvette Cooper:** A Centre of Excellence was established within in June 2003 to integrate the essential functions which underpin the successful delivery of all types of acquisition based programmes and projects. As cost benefits will not accrue until improvements start to take effect, it is too early to measure cost savings. All Centres of Excellence are currently developing future plans and as part of this process measurement of savings will be defined.

### Local Government Finance

**Sir Paul Beresford:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total English local authority expenditure was for each year since 1992–93. [155443]

**Mr. Raynsford:** Local authority revenue expenditure for the period 1992–93 to 2003–04 is tabled as follows:

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1992–93 | 42,020 |
| 1993–94 | 41,506 |
| 1994–95 | 43,602 |
| 1995–96 | 44,827 |
| 1996–97 | 46,532 |
| 1997–98 | 47,256 |
| 1998–99 | 50,189 |
| 1999–2000 | 53,651 |
| 2000–01 | 57,329 |
| 2001–02 | 61,952 |
| 2002–03 | [1]65,919 |
| 2003–04 | [2]72,473 |

[1] provisional
[2] budget

Revenue expenditure is financed from formula grant (which includes revenue support grant, redistributed non-domestic rates, police grant), and specific grants within Aggregate External Finance (AEF).

It excludes expenditure financed by specific grants outside AEF, including mandatory rent allowances, mandatory rate rebates, mandatory student awards and, from 2002–03, grants for adult education and sixth forms which are funded by the Learning and Skills Council.

Data is taken from RS outturn form for 1992–93 to 2002–03 and RA budget form for 2003–04.

### Neighbourhood Renewal Budget

**Mr. Edward Davey:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the budget was for each project funded by Neighbourhood Renewal for *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04, broken down by (i) English region and (ii) neighbourhood renewal area. [151879]

**Yvette Cooper:** Figures on Neighbourhood Renewal funding for 2002–03 and 2003–04, broken down by English region and neighbourhood renewal area are available in the Library of the House.

### Out-of-town Retail Developments

**Mr. Michael Foster:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance he gives to local planning authorities assessing applications for out-of-town retail developments which provide enabling development for the benefit of local communities. [155038]

**Yvette Cooper:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not provide any specific guidance on this issue. Section 54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Key material considerations include national planning policy such as PPG13: Transport, on the location of development, and PPG6 on Town Centres and Retail Developments. PPG6 indicates that all out-of-centre retail development should be assessed in line with the policy. Other material considerations, as draft PPS6: Planning for Town Centres indicates, may include physical regeneration, employment, economic growth and social inclusion, but the draft guidance does not specifically refer to enabling development.

### Periodicals

**Mr. Curry:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the annual cost of periodicals that *(a)* his ministerial

office, *(b)* other ministerial offices within his Department, *(c)* non-departmental bodies, *(d)* executive agencies and *(e)* his Department have subscribed to since 1997. [146025]

**Yvette Cooper:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created on 29 May 2002. The total expenditure on periodicals, including newspapers, by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for the period from formation until 31 March 2003 was £300,072, and for 1 April until 22 December 2003 was £237,371.

This breaks down as follows:

£

| | *29 May 2002 to 31 March 2003* | *1 April to 22 December 2002* |
|---|---|---|
| *(a)* Ministerial Office | 1,262 | 1,710 |
| *(b)* Other ministerial offices in ODPM | 7,827 | 5,235 |
| *(c)* Non-departmental bodies (Rent Assessment Panels only) | 1,609 | 1,431 |
| *(d)* Executive agencies | No data available | No data available |
| *(e)* ODPM total | 300,072 | 237,371 |

Information on how much NDPBs and Agencies spend on periodicals is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. The exception to this is expenditure by Rent Assessment Panels, which is processed centrally by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

### Press/Public Relations Officers

**Mr. Curry:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* press officers and *(b)* public relations officers were employed by his Department in each year since 1997. [146026]

**Yvette Cooper:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created on 29 May 2002. The press office provides a centralised media service on behalf of ODPM*(c)* . At 1 April 2003, there were 21.8 full time equivalent press officers.

**Mr. Curry:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* press officers and *(b)* public relations officers were employed by the Audit Commission in each year since 1997. [146027]

**Yvette Cooper:** The information requested is as follows.

*(a)* The Audit Commission used an external consultancy for Press Officers until October 2001, up to that time the Commission did not directly employ Press officers. The Commission employed Press Officers from the following dates:

1 April 2002—6

1 April 2003—7

*(b)* The Audit Commission used an external consultancy for Public Relation officers until 1999. Since then this work has been handled by in-house staff and/or outside consultancies. Since 1999 the role has involved the equivalent of one full-time job. As from February 2004 the Press Officer/Public Relation Officer roles will be combined and will result in a total of seven employees.

**Mr. Curry:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* press officers and *(b)* public relations officers were employed by the Housing Corporation in each year since 1997. [146028]

**Yvette Cooper:** Since 1999, as at 1 April, the Housing Corporation has employed a Head of Communications and one full-time Communications/Media Officer.

**Mr. Curry:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* press officers and *(b)* public relations officers were employed by English Partnerships in each year since 1997. [146029]

**Yvette Cooper:** Since 1999–2000, English Partnerships have employed a total of six press officers and no public relations officers. Records for earlier periods are not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Curry:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* press officers and *(b)* public relations officers were employed by the Standards Board for England in each year since 1997. [146030]

**Yvette Cooper:** The Standards Board for England was set up in 2001. It currently employs two officers supported by an administrator who provide a service to the press in addition to other general communications duties such as organising events.

**Mr. Curry:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* press officers and *(b)* public relations officers were employed by the Boundary Commission for England in each year since 1997. [146035]

**Yvette Cooper:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created on 29 May 2002. Since then no press officers or public relation officers have been employed by the Boundary Commission for England.

**Mr. Curry:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* press officers and *(b)* public relations officers were employed by the Boundary Commission for Wales in each year since 1997. [146036]

**Yvette Cooper:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created on 29 May 2002. Since then no press officers or public relations officers have been employed by the Boundary Commission for Wales.

**Mr. Curry:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* press officers and *(b)* public relations officers were employed by the Residential Property Tribunal Service in each year since 1997. [146037]

**Yvette Cooper:** None.

**Mr. Curry:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* press officers and *(b)* public relations officers were employed by the Valuation Tribunals in each year since 1997. [146038]

**Yvette Cooper:** The Valuation Tribunals have never employed press or public relation officers.

### Procurement (Outsourcing)

**Norman Lamb:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on his Department's procurement policy with regard to offshore IT and call centre outsourcing; whether his Department is outsourcing IT and call centre jobs to offshore companies; to which countries his Department has outsourced these jobs; how much his Department has spent on this outsourcing in each of the last two years; and how much has been budgeted for this purpose for the next two years. [147578]

**Yvette Cooper:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister procures IT in line with Government procurement policy, having due regard to propriety and regularity and the need to comply with the requirements of the EU Treaty, including the principle of non-discrimination, the EC procurement directives and the UK's international obligations.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has two outsourced IT contracts, totalling £10.7 million, neither of which is with an offshore company. Of these, one is a Department for Transport contract providing joint services to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the other is the sole responsibility of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. These contracts were let with:

LogicaCMG for the provision of the corporate payroll service for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Department for Transport; and

Fujitsu for the provision of IT infrastructure and desktop services for the Government Office Network.

### Protective Suits

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many nuclear, biological, chemical protective suits are available to *(a)* emergency services and *(b)* military personnel in the London area. [155036]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The London Ambulance Service currently has 400 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) suits immediately available for use in response to CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear) incidents. The Service plans to increase the number of suits available to 1,400 during the next financial year.

The London Fire Brigade has 1,500 gas-tight suits immediately available for use in response to CBRN incidents, as well as for day-to-day operations.

The Military in London has approximately 1,000 PPE suits immediately available.

The total number of CBRN trained police officers nationally is now over 5,000. This is in line with the Association of Chief Police Officers' desired level of training to ensure that police forces nationally have the necessary resilience to deal with a CBRN incident. It would not be appropriate, on security grounds, to give more specific information regarding the CBRN response capability in each police force.

The deployment of CBRN-protective equipment to the emergency services and to the Military is not tied to geographical regions and, depending on the nature and scale of any incident, London may receive extra equipment from or supply extra equipment to other regions.

### Regional Assemblies

**Mr. Jenkin:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how the costs of local government reorganisation would be distributed if an elected regional assembly is established in *(a)* the North West, *(b)* Yorkshire and the Humber and *(c)* the North East. [155137]

**Mr. Raynsford:** It is too early to say what the costs and savings of any reorganisation will be since these will depend ultimately on the pattern of unitary authorities introduced and on the decisions that the new unitary authorities take about how to discharge their functions. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will be discussing how any costs will be funded with local government.

### Security Passes

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many security passes have been reported *(a)* lost and *(b)* stolen by staff in his Department in the last 12 months. [147977]

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many security passes have been reported *(a)* lost and *(b)* stolen by staff in his Department in the last 12 months. [151607]

**Yvette Cooper:** Two security passes have been reported stolen by staff in the HQ buildings of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister during the period January 2003 to January 2004. A further 165 replacement security passes have been issued in the same period. It is not possible to say how many of the passes were lost other than by theft. Security passes may need to be replaced for a variety of reasons including loss, theft, damage or change of name, and the Office does not record the reasons for the replacement of a security pass. Figures for GOs North East and London are not available but a further 153 passes have been replaced in the remainder GO network. Although ODPM has overall responsibility for these, the Government Offices carry out functions on behalf often Departments.

Procedures are in place to ensure that electronic passes are de-activated as soon as their loss is reported. In addition pass designs do not identify the building or organisation.

### Tenancy Deposit Scheme

**Matthew Green:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a new cost-benefit analysis of a statutory tenancy deposit scheme in England, taking account of the interest generated on deposits held in a custodial scheme. [154995]

**Yvette Cooper:** In considering proposals for dealing with tenancy deposits and in preparing a response to the consultation that concluded a year ago the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister shall be revisiting the cost-benefit analysis on which the partial regulatory impact assessment that was included in the consultation paper.

**Matthew Green:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate his Department has made of the *(a)* maximum and *(b)* minimum potential (i) benefit and (ii) cost of a tenancy deposit scheme. [154996]

**Yvette Cooper:** An analysis of the costs and benefits of providing for tenancy deposit protection was contained in a partial regulatory impact assessment included in the consultation paper published in November 2002. This suggested that against costs of £19 million there could be benefits of around £20 million. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is reviewing those estimates as the various elements of measures to safeguard deposits are assessed and we will do so against a range of assumptions.

**Matthew Green:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the organisations attending the seminar held in December to discuss the case for linking legislation for compulsory measures to protect tenancy deposits to the Law Commission's findings. [154997]

**Yvette Cooper:** The following organisations attended:

Ashton Wingate Insurance
Association of Letting and Managing Agents
Association of Residential Letting Agents
Association of Student Residential Accommodation
Association of Tenancy Relations Officers
Brent London Borough
Brent Private Tenants
Brighton and Hove BC
British Property Federation
Camden London Borough
Council of Mortgage Lenders
Croydon London Borough
Empty Homes Agency
Hastings and Rother Bond Bank
HMO Network
Independent Housing Ombudsman
Islington London Borough
Law Commission
Legal Action group
Manchester City Council
NALS Homelet
National Approved Letting Scheme
National Association of Citizens Advice Bureau
National Association of Estate Agents
National Federation of Residential Landlords
National Union of Students
Newcastle New Deal
Office of Fair Trading
Shelter
Small Landlords Association
South Norfolk DC
The Chartered Institute of Housing
The Law Society
The Rent Service
The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
Thomas Winter Insurance
Universities UK

**Matthew Green:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the estimated cost of a tenancy deposit scheme took account of the proportion of cases requiring adjudication in *(a)* the pilot schemes and *(b)* other countries. [155212]

**Yvette Cooper:** The consultation paper on tenancy deposits contained a partial regulatory impact assessment that took account of the costs involved in the pilot tenancy deposit scheme managed by the Independent Housing Ombudsman. In the subsequent final period of the pilot the proportion of cases requiring adjudication has grown. Although international experiences make a useful comparison they are unlikely to provide a robust method of estimating what might happen in this country because of cultural differences such as attitudes to litigation. The circumstances in other countries may also reflect significant differences in the housing market, not least of all in the way in which it is regulated.

*Monday 23 February 2004*

## CABINET OFFICE

### Public Services Audit

**Mr. Gibb:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office pursuant to his answers of 5 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1048W and 26 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 72W, on public services audit, whether he knows who gave the unauthorised briefing to Rosemary Bennett of *The Times* newspaper. [155294]

**Mr. Alexander:** I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 5 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1048W.

### Regulatory Reform

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the timetable is for the full implementation of the revised regulatory reform action plan. [155291]

**Mr. Alexander:** Details of the timetable for implementing measures in the Government's Regulatory Reform Action Plan are contained in the updated version of the Plan, published in December 2003.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will place in the Library a copy of the Regulatory Impact Unit business regulation team end of year report for 2003. [155318]

**Mr. Alexander:** The Business Regulation Team's end of year report for 2003 was published on 16 February 2004. Copies have been placed in the Libraries of the House and can be accessed at www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/business/endofyear.htm.

### Strategy Unit (Fisheries Report)

**Mr. Carmichael:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office pursuant to his answer of 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1136W, on the Strategy Unit Fisheries Report, when he will announce the date on which the report will be made public. [155951]

**Mr. Alexander:** The report will be published shortly. We will inform the House when the exact date for publication has been decided.

## CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### "All Our Futures"

**Mr. Peter Ainsworth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many of the detailed recommendations made by the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education in the Report, "All Our Futures", have been implemented; and if she will make a statement. [154964]

**Estelle Morris:** The National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education reported jointly to the Secretaries of State for Culture, Media and Sport and Education and Employment in 1999 via the report "All Our Futures". The report contained 59 detailed recommendations for action by a range of bodies including Government, schools and higher education institutions.

Many of the recommendations in "All Our Futures" are framed quite broadly. However, my Department has worked closely with the Department for Education and Skills, and external partners, to implement all of those which fall to DCMS.

Among the key examples are the Creative Partnerships programme, which aims to build long-term, sustainable relationships between creative professionals and schools. With £110 million of funding over four years, the programme, which began in September 2002, has enabled over 110,000 pupils to become involved in over 1,400 projects so far.

The £130 million Space for Sport and Arts (SSA) programme is funding the building of nearly 300 facilities in primary schools in the 20 per cent. most deprived wards in the country. 138 SSA projects have now been completed and 84 more have work ongoing.

To support new music making opportunities for young people, Youth Music was established in 1999 with £10 million per annum of Lottery funding. It has already reached over one million young people and their wider communities. Alongside this, the Music Standards Fund, also established in 1999, provides £60 million per annum established to protect and expand LEA music services.

Another relevant initiative is Artsmark, which seeks to recognise those schools which offer a wide range of arts provision. Nearly 2,000 schools now have awards, including one in five secondary schools nationally.

### BBC

**Mr. Simon Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what guidelines she issues to BBC Governors on their appointment relating to *(a)* party political work and *(b)* commenting on the policies of political parties other than those policies directly affecting the work of the BBC. [154222]

**Tessa Jowell:** The guidelines issued by me as Secretary of State to BBC Governors on appointment, in relation to these matters, are contained in the Cabinet Office Code of Best Practice for Board Members of Public Bodies. The BBC requires Governors, as detailed in the Board of Governors Standing Orders, to declare any activity that might affect their ability to perform their duties as Governors.

### Consultations

**Mrs. Lait:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list those individuals and organisations *(a)* to whom (i) her Department, (ii) its executive agencies and (iii) the non-departmental public bodies for which her Department is responsible sent a copy of the consultations (A) Review of lottery funding: a consultation paper on Lottery distribution policy, (B) New services: BBC public consultation final report and (C) Draft Media Ownership (Local Radio) Order 2003 and *(b)* from who each received a response in each case. [151652]

**Mr. Caborn:** The individuals and organisations to which the DCMS sent a copy of the relevant consultation and the responses in each case are shown as follows:

*(A) Review of lottery funding: a consultation paper on Lottery Distribution Policy:*

*(a)* Sport England, the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Community Fund, the New Opportunity Fund, Awards For All, Arts Council England, The Film Council, UK Sport, Local Authorities, Members of Parliament, Regional Cultural Consortiums, Lottery Monitor, National Lottery Commission, Devolved Administrations and The Millennium Commission all received copies of this Consultation. The document was also made available on the Department's website.

*(b)* A list of those individuals and, where indicated, organisations who commented on this consultation will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

*(B) New services: BBC public consultation final report:*

*(a)* 'New services: BBC public consultation final report' is not a Departmental Publication and was not sent by the Department to any individuals or organisations.

*(C) Draft Media Ownership (Local Radio) Order 2003:*

*(a)* Commercial Radio Companies Association (CRCA), the ITC and the Radio Authority received copies of the Draft Media Ownership (Local Radio) Order 2003.

*(b)* Comments were received from CRCA and the Radio Authority.

Information relating to the distribution of these documents by the Department's (ii) executive agencies and (iii) the non-departmental public bodies for which DCMS is responsible is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### Seaside Towns

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what *(a)* capital and *(b)* revenue expenditure was provided through Lottery funding in each of the past seven years for each principal seaside town in England and Wales, with figures for Welsh seaside town clusters disaggregated; and if she will make a statement. [154999]

**Estelle Morris:** The information requested is being placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

### Ministerial Interview

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport to whom she was referring when she referred to testosterone-charged men in her interview with the Daily Telegraph on 7 February. [155032]

**Tessa Jowell:** This is a point that I have made in many interviews over recent years. It refers to an unacceptable style of politics that exists on every side of the House, which frequently alienates the wider public.

### National Stud

**Mr. Don Foster:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimates her Department has made of the sale value of the National Stud; and if she will make a statement. [155912]

**Mr. Caborn:** The asset value of the National Stud is set out in the annual report of the Horserace Betting Levy Board, a copy of which is in the Libraries of both Houses. Our preference is to transfer the Stud, without consideration, to a new independent charitable trust with a broad remit which would include training for stud staff; thoroughbred breeding which genuinely and distinctively contributes to the long-term quality of British racing; and a centre displaying the British horse heritage as a whole and providing information about breeding. We will continue to assess the progress being made by the new Board of the Stud, with the support of the Levy Board, towards the point at which such a transfer could appropriately take place, with the proviso that closure of the Stud and sale of the assets remains the fall-back option.

**Mr. Don Foster:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much has been spent from public funds on the National Stud in each year from 1990; and if she will make a statement. [155938]

**Mr. Caborn:** The National Stud has received no Government funding during this period.

### National Lottery

**Dr. Murrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what return on investment has been made by the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts since its inception. [155147]

**Estelle Morris:** The total return on NESTA's investments for Fund A (NESTA's core endowment, invested on their behalf by the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt in accordance with NESTA's Financial Directions) between the financial year (FY) 1999 to FY 2003 is £40,166.

The total return on NESTA's investments for Fund B (the Endowments income, invested by NESTA, between FY 1999 and FY 2003 is £2,037.

The following table shows the breakdown for each year.

*Final Investment income per audited accounts*

*£000*

| *Income and Investment* | *1999–2000* | *2000–01* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fund A | 11,618 | 11,599 | 9,006 | 7,943 | 40,166 |
| Fund B | 161 | 591 | 656 | 630 | 2,037 |
| Total | 11,778 | 12,190 | 9,662 | 8,574 | 42,204 |

**Dr. Murrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much was allocated in grants by the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts in the last year for which figures are available; and what its operating costs were in the last year for which figures are available. [155148]

**Estelle Morris:** The amount of awards given through NESTA's Fellowship, Learning and Invention and Innovation programmes in the last financial year available (2002–03) stands at £7,271,000. Through their other programmes, including Planet Science and Future Lab as well as £157,000 support for competitions and partnerships they spent £4,613,000. Hence a total of £11,884,000 of support was given by NESTA. This does not include £4,669,000 worth of programme support. Together this amounts to £16,553,000, which is the total support NESTA gave to its programmes.

The operating costs for the last year available (2002–03) stands at £1,270,000; this includes a portion of staff salary not tied to the programme support, rent and other costs.

**Dr. Murrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the expenditure of the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts in *(a)* science, *(b)* technology and *(c)* the arts was in each year since inception. [155149]

**Estelle Morris:** The data come from NESTA's Learning, Fellowship and Invention and Innovation Awards, Science Year/Planet Science and NESTA Futurelab. Expenditure on:

*NESTA*

| *Project type* | *1999–2000 (£)* | *Percentage* | *2000–01 (£)* | *Percentage* | *2001–02 (£)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Science only | 188,689 | 10 | 690,985 | 13 | 3,605,915 |
| Technology only | 124,172 | 6 | 1,183,851 | 23 | 566,732 |
| Arts only | 377,554 | 19 | 1,324,318 | 26 | 1,870,040 |
| Science and Technology | 32,000 | 2 | 583,592 | 11 | 1,006,259 |
| Science and Arts | 200,900 | 10 | 894,879 | 17 | 306,684 |
| Technology and Arts | 1,024,747 | 53 | 368,395 | 7 | 1,054,113 |
| Science, Technology and Arts | 0 | 0 | 92,343 | 2 | 103,919 |
| Total | 1,948,062 | — | 5,138,363 | — | 8,513,662 |

*NESTA*

| *Project type* | *Percentage* | *2002–03 (£)* | *Percentage* | *Total (£)* | *Percentage* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Science only | 42 | 3,307,364 | 28 | 7,792,953 | 29 |
| Technology only | 7 | 1,474,244 | 13 | 3,348,999 | 12 |
| Arts only | 22 | 2,666,376 | 23 | 6,238,288 | 23 |
| Science and Technology | 12 | 2,930,514 | 25 | 4,552,365 | 17 |
| Science and Arts | 4 | 317,032 | 3 | 1,719,495 | 6 |
| Technology and Arts | 12 | 772,604 | 7 | 3,219,859 | 12 |
| Science, Technology and Arts | 1 | 260,752 | 2 | 457,014 | 2 |
| Total | — | 11,728,886 | — | 27,328,973 | — |

**Mr. Swire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list projects in East Devon which have received funding from the National Lottery; and what amount was received in each case. [155295]

**Estelle Morris:** The Department's Lottery Awards database, using information supplied by the distributing bodies shows that 196 Lottery awards to a total of £5,499,026 have been made to the East Devon constituency.

I am arranging for the list to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

## Royal Parks

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what *(a)* salary and *(b)* bonuses were paid to (i) the Chief Executive and (ii) the senior staff of the Royal Parks Agency in the latest year for which figures are available. [154769]

**Mr. Caborn:** The latest year for which details are available of the salary and bonuses paid to the Chief Executive and senior staff of the Royal Parks Agency is financial year 2002–03. Details are set out in the Agency's Annual Report and Accounts, copies of which have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many *(a)* animals and *(b)* birds were culled in the Royal Parks in the last two years, broken down by (i) species, (ii) culling method used and (iii) use made of the carcass. [154770]

**Mr. Caborn:** Responsibility for this question has been delegated to the Royal Parks Agency, under its Chief Executive, William Weston.

*Letter from William Weston to Mr. Norman Baker:*

I have been asked by the Secretary of State to reply to your Parliamentary Question about animals and birds culled in the Royal Parks in the past two years, and the use made of their carcasses.

A total of 149 Red deer and 287 Fallow deer were shot during the annual deer culls; their carcasses were sold as venison, and the antlers for use in the craft trade. In addition, 37 adult Canada Geese were shot and 60 Canada Geese eggs pricked to prevent hatching. The bird carcasses were destroyed.

## DEFENCE

### 45 Commando

**Mr. Weir:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to relocate 45 Commando from RM Condor. [155875]

**Mr. Ingram:** The Ministry of Defence keeps the size and location of its estate under constant review. Following on from Department-wide studies undertaken last year, the MOD is currently examining areas where rationalisation of the estate may be possible. RM Condor, Arbroath, which is the home of 45 Commando Royal Marines and 7 Battery Royal Artillery, is included in one such piece of work. A report has yet to be submitted, however, and no decisions have been taken on the future of this establishment. Any proposals arising from this—and any other study—will be subjected to full consultation.

### Airfield Support Services Project

**Mr. Grogan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to make a decision on whether to proceed with a public private partnership solution for the Airfield Support Services Project. [155790]

**Mr. Ingram:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer that I gave him on 15 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 1307.

### Astute Class Submarine

**Mr. Todd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he will place an order for long lead items for the fourth Astute Class boat; and whether he has assessed the impact on the supply chain of delay in placing such an order. [147610]

**Mr. Ingram:** The Ministry of Defence has been working closely with UK industry to assess the implications for sub component suppliers arising from delays to the Astute submarine programme. Purchase of some long lead items for the fourth boat has begun and further measures are under consideration.

### Education

**Mr. Swayne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to make changes to boarding school allowances; and if he will make a statement. [155183]

**Mr. Caplin:** Education allowances are provided to assist parents in ensuring continuity of education for their children, where it would otherwise be unacceptably disrupted by postings at home or abroad. There are no plans to change this approach.

### Commanding Officers' Advice

**Mr. Swayne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what reasons a number of commanding officers have been told that individuals who have given notice to terminate their engagement may be given the option to leave sooner. [155269]

**Mr. Caplin:** As a result of the success we have had in recent years with various measures aimed at improving recruitment and retention, in-year targets have been exceeded and measures are therefore being taken to control whole Army strength. Commanding Officers have been told that individuals who have already given notice to terminate their service before 30 September 2004 may be permitted to depart early if this is acceptable to both the individual and the unit.

### Dark Winter Anti-terrorist Exercise

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the conduct of, and lessons learned from, the Dark Winter anti-terrorist exercise. [155863]

**Mr. Ingram:** We have no record of a United Kingdom anti-terrorist exercise called Dark Winter. The United States authorities did, however, carry out an exercise with that name in 2001.

### Defence Estates Core Sites

**Mr. Djanogly:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether *(a)* RAF Brampton and *(b)* RAF Wyton have been designated as core sites within the Defence Estates Core Sites Report of March 2003. [155555]

**Mr. Caplin:** I can confirm that RAF Brampton and RAF Wyton were designated as Core Sites, although following the recent announcement by the Chief of Defence Logistics about a proposed framework of changes to the current structure of the Defence Logistics Organisation, further work is in hand to assess the feasibility of collocating additional parts of the DLO alongside or close to the existing Ministry of Defence site at Abbeywood in Bristol. This will be followed by more detailed work which will also consider whether there are alternative Defence uses for RAF Brampton and RAF Wyton.

**Mr. Djanogly:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many civil servants have been employed at *(a)* RAF Wyton and *(b)* the MOD premises at Abbeywood in each of the last five years. [155551]

**Mr. Caplin:** The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### Department Branding

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much his Department spent on branding the Department between 1997–98 and 2003–04, broken down by *(a)* consultancy fees, *(b)* design and orders for new stationery, *(c)* website design and *(d)* other material featuring new logos. [154073]

**Mr. Caplin:** The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### Departmental Property

**Mr. Weir:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he will publish his review into Ministry of Defence property. [155876]

**Mr. Caplin:** In the Estate Strategy, "In Trust and On Trust" the Department defined its mainland Great Britain sites as "core" or "non-core" sites. Initial classification work was conducted last year but it is not our intention to publish the list. This is a working document and subject to constant detailed revision as the Department undertakes further work to clarify where estate rationalisation may be possible.

### Depleted Uranium Oversight Board

**Mr. Randall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects the Depleted Uranium Oversight board *(a)* to report and *(b)* to be wound up; and when it last met. [155801]

**Mr. Caplin:** Under its terms of reference, the Depleted Uranium Oversight Board (DUOB) is required to report to the Under-Secretary of State for Defence on its progress, and additionally reports its proceedings publicly on the internet at www.duob.org.uk

The DUOB last met on 27 January 2004. The main DU testing programme is expected to begin in mid 2004. The period over which testing will continue will depend on demand. It is not possible to say at this stage when the DUOB will be in a position to summarise its findings or when it might be wound up.

### EU Defence

**Mr. Soames:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the military capabilities that have been fully implemented as specified in the *(a)* Helsinki Headline Goal Catalogue 2003, *(b)* the Helsinki Force Catalogue and *(c)* the Helsinki Progress Catalogue. [155203]

**Mr. Hoon:** There is no Helsinki Headline Goal Catalogue 2003. The Helsinki Headline Goal Catalogue first compiled in 2000, and refined in 2001 and 2002, lists 144 military capability areas required of the EU in order to conduct the Petersberg Tasks within recognised crisis management scenarios. The Helsinki Force Catalogue 2003 and Supplementary Catalogue—which together list the actual forces and capabilities offered by member, accession and third states—show that at least 118 of these capability areas have been met. The Helsinki Progress Catalogue 2003 assesses the progress made overall in the delivery of Headline and Capability Goals, and outlines when new capabilities will feed in to the Force Catalogue. Work now continues—in conjunction with the European Capabilities Action Plan—to address those shortfalls that remain. New Force and Progress Catalogues are expected later this year, and will incorporate the offers made by the ten new members of the EU.

**Mr. Soames:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what changes have been introduced in the implementation of the EU Headline Goal; and if he will make a statement. [155209]

**Mr. Hoon:** No changes have been introduced to the implementation of the Helsinki Headline Goal. However, with the evolution of the strategic environment and of technology, and following the inter-governmental conference and redefinition of the Petersberg Tasks, and with EU accession, continued progress in the European Capabilities Action Plan, the elaboration of rapid response elements, a European Security Strategy, and further work on rotation, readiness, concurrency and redundancy, a successor Headline Goal is now under discussion, with a target date of 2010. This Goal will place a new emphasis on interoperability, deployability and sustainability as its major themes. We anticipate an announcement at the European Council in June.

### Foreign Ships

**Mr. Carmichael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1178W, on foreign ships, whether European Union guidelines prevent his Department from having a bias in favour of chartering ships flying the shipping flags of European Union member states rather than those of non-EU countries; and what changes were made to the process for chartering freight-carrying commercial ships following his Department's review in 2003. [155512]

**Mr. Ingram:** MOD procurement, which reflects the Public Procurement Regulations that have their origins in the 1972 European Communities Act, is governed by the fundamental principle that there should be equal opportunity to tender for work without discrimination on the grounds of nationality. Charter of commercial shipping is, therefore, arranged using a panel of commercial shipping brokers on the global market.

The 2003 internal Defence Transport and Movements Agency review of charter arrangements for freight-carrying commercial ships led to the introduction of a Safety Management System (SMS) incorporating a greater risk-based process. The SMS has been approved by the MOD Ship Safety Management Board. The comprehensive assessment of suitability for charter covers: the flag, as per the Paris Memorandum of Understanding; the ship's age; port state inspection record; classification society; nationality of owners/operators; Marine Superintendent's assessment; and previous record of MOD usage.

### HMS Coventry/HMS London

**Dr. Julian Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the present state of negotiations is between the United Kingdom and Romania for the sale of HMS Coventry and HMS London in return for Romanian military equipment; and if he will make a statement. [154666]

**Mr. Ingram:** Following detailed negotiations, the Acquisition Agreement between the United Kingdom and Romania for the sale of ex-HMS Coventry and ex-HMS London (regenerated and updated) was signed on 19 December 2002 (and countersigned in January 2003). A 'Back to Back' contract between the MOD and BAE Systems was signed on 20 March 2003, permitting the Acquisition Agreement to become effective on 26 March 2003. Subsequently, the regeneration package has been refined and a suite of alterations and additions to the original design has been developed. The parameters of the offset programme were agreed in the negotiations leading up to the Acquisition Agreement.

The disposal of these ships is not in exchange for Romanian military equipment. The agreed price will be paid in pounds sterling. Payments will be made in accordance with an agreed schedule of milestones.

### Iraq

**Paul Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many prisoners are being held by coalition forces in Iraq. [145337]

**Mr. Ingram:** As at 15 February 2004 there are 103 individuals held by UK forces in Iraq. We are not in a position to comment on the number of individuals held by other coalition partners.

**Adam Price:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish the reports of investigations carried out by the Special Investigations Branch into civilian fatalities in Iraq allegedly caused by British forces which have concluded that no further action should be taken. [147698]

**Mr. Ingram:** Reports of investigations carried out by the Special Investigations Branch will not be published.

**Adam Price:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many suspected suicides among UK forces in Iraq have been investigated by the Royal Military Police. [148285]

**Mr. Ingram:** There have been no suspected suicides in Iraq during Operation Telic.

**Adam Price:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the process is by which the rules of engagement for UK forces in Iraq are *(a)* agreed and *(b)* amended. [148290]

**Mr. Ingram:** Rules of engagement, are drafted by operational staff taking into account the UK's obligations under national and international law and treaties such as the Geneva Protocols. Each rules of engagement profile is subject to approval by the Secretary of State for Defence, who may take farther advice from specialist advisers on any aspect. Requests for amendments are made by operational Commanders and submitted for approval by the Secretary of State in the same way.

**Adam Price:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether Coalition forces in Iraq have common rules of engagement. [148292]

**Mr. Ingram:** No. Rules of engagement remain a national responsibility governed by the domestic legislation of contributing states as well as by international law. Within that framework, however, Coalition partners liaise closely over rules of engagement, and harmonise them wherever possible.

**Mr. Llwyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many meetings with parents of Service personnel killed in the Iraq conflict he has arranged. [150063]

**Mr. Hoon:** I have had four meetings with the families of individual Service personnel who died on operations in Iraq. I have had one meeting with the families of the six Royal Military Police killed in Majar Al-Kabir. Five of the six families attended.

I also met relatives of those killed at the Operation Telic service of remembrance and reception in October 2003 and during the repatriation ceremonies I attended at Brize Norton in the spring of last year.

**Mr. Swayne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many civilian contractors were employed under UK command to repair and maintain civil infrastructure in the *(a)* first 100 days and *(b)* six months following the end of high intensity military operations in Iraq. [150227]

**Mr. Ingram:** No civilian contractors engaged in the repair and maintenance of the civil infrastructure in Iraq come under command of the United Kingdom military. However, the majority of projects being funded through the UK military's Quick Impact Project programme (more than 800 projects, valued at over $17 million) have relied, for their success, upon Iraqi contractors and sub-contractors. This is in line with our policy of supporting the use of skilled local labour and the stimulation of legitimate local economic activity wherever possible.

**Alan Simpson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his assessment was of the number of Al Hussein ballistic missiles possessed by Iraq prior to the onset of war; how this assessment differed from the assessment of the weapons inspectors; how many of the Al Hussein missiles had their long range capabilities removed prior to the onset of war; how many Al Hussein missiles were used against coalition forces during the war in Iraq; and how many Al Hussein missiles have been identified in Iraq since the war ended. [154985]

**Mr. Hoon:** The Al Hussein missile is a version of the Scud B missile modified to increase its range to 650 km.

As stated in the Government's dossier on Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction, it was assessed that Iraq had retained up to 20 Al Hussein missiles. These were either complete missiles; missiles broken down for concealment; or separate missile components capable of being reassembled. The UNMOVIC weapons inspectors assessed that it was possible that Iraq possessed a small number of Al Hussein missiles. The UNMOVIC report of March 2003 stated that the consumption of some Scud and Al Hussein missiles could not be independently verified and there were also unanswered questions about the number of indigenously produced warheads and training engines destroyed by Iraq. We have no knowledge of any Al Hussein missiles being modified to reduce their long range capabilities.

There were no Al Hussein missiles used against coalition forces during the war in Iraq and, to date, there have been no Al Hussein missiles identified in Iraq since the war ended.

### Ministerial Travel

**Bob Russell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he last used a train in connection with his ministerial duties. [155161]

**Mr. Caplin:** A Defence Minister last travelled by train on 8 January 2004.

All ministerial travel on official business is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in Travel by Ministers.

### MOD Police

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to change the MOD Police manpower in North Wiltshire; and if he will make a statement on the MOD Police in North Wiltshire. [155792]

**Mr. Caplin:** All Ministry of Defence Police Area Policing Teams (APT), including that at Corsham, are being withdrawn in April 2004 and being replaced by Divisional Support Groups which will give the Chief Constable highly trained groups of officers which can be quickly deployed to respond to a variety of operational requirements. The nearest will be at Bulford Garrison and DSDC Ashchurch.

There will continue to be an MDP complement at the Joint Support Unit Corsham.

Due to shortage of office space there will be three officers from CID Foxhill based temporarily in the offices soon to be vacated by the APT Corsham unit.

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many MOD Police are stationed at *(a)* Corsham, *(b)* Colerne, *(c)* Hullavington and *(d)* Lyneham. [155793]

**Mr. Caplin:** The number of Ministry of Defence Police (MDP) officers at the Joint Support Unit Corsham is 23. An MDP Area Policing Team of eight officers currently operates from Corsham. There are no MDP officers stationed at Colerne, Hullavington and Lyneham.

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many arrests the MoD Police in North Wiltshire made in the last 12 months of *(a)* civilians and *(b)* servicemen. [155794]

**Mr. Caplin:** The following arrests have been made by the Ministry of Defence Police based at the Area Policing Team (APT) Corsham, during the last 12 months.

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Civilians arrested by APT Corsham | 7 |
| Civilians arrested by Joint Support Unit (JSU) Corsham | 1 |
| Service personnel arrests by APT | 7 |
| Service personnel arrests by JSU Corsham | 2 |

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what changes have recently been made with regard to patrolling and other procedures by the MOD Police in North Wiltshire as a result of the heightened security state. [155795]

**Mr. Caplin:** No changes have been made to the Area Policing Team (APT) Corsham, with regard to patrolling and other procedures as a result of the heightened security state.

### Naval Vessels

**Mr. Kevan Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the Government's policy is on placing of orders for naval vessels in overseas shipyards. [153790]

**Mr. Ingram:** It remains the policy of this Government that all warships for the Royal Navy will continue to be built in the United Kingdom. This entails all fabrication and assembly of new warship hulls but excludes weapon, command and propulsion systems, which may be procured from overseas, following open competition.

### Royal Navy

**Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on progress on trials of the Royal Navy's combat support system. [155019]

**Mr. Ingram:** The trials of the Royal Navy Command Support System (RNCSS) in HMS Albion during April and November 2003 were the culmination of a series of demonstrations designed to test the effectiveness of the Royal Navy's command support capability. The trials were a success, with the 72 terminals in HMS Albion meeting the challenges presented in a number of exacting scenarios.

### Typhoon

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Typhoon aircraft he estimates will be ordered by each partner in the third tranche. [155130]

**Mr. Ingram:** Under the 4-nation memorandum of understanding, the UK has undertaken to order 88 Typhoon aircraft in the third tranche, Germany 68, Italy 46 and Spain 34.

### United States Bases/Forces

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the United States bases that have been handed back to the United Kingdom Government since 1974, indicating in each case *(a)* who paid for the restoration of the area and *(b)* what the cost was. [154761]

**Mr. Caplin:** The United States bases that have been returned to the Ministry of Defence since 1988 are listed as follows. No earlier information is available.

Records about who paid for the restoration and at what cost are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate costs.

*US bases handed back to MOD since 1988*

| *Site/Facility* | *Type* | *Service* | *Returned to MOD* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bramley | (S/S) | USAF | 1 January 1988 |
| RAF Ridgewell | (S/S) | USAF | 3 August 1989 |
| RAF Wethersfield | (SDB) | USAF | 1 October 1990 |
| RAF Chessington | (Hosp) | USAF | 18 September 1991 |
| RAF Kirknewton | (Hosp) | USAF | 26 September 1991 |
| RAF Hullavington | (S/S) | USAF | 30 September 1991 |
| RAF Lanark | (Hosp) | USN | 3 December 1991 |
| Greatworth | (Comms) | USAF | 8 February 1992 |
| Great Bromley | (Comms) | USAF | 1 May 1992 |
| Holy Loch | (S/S) | USN | 17 June 1992 |
| Broughton Moor | (NAD) | | 30 June 1992 |
| Martlesham Heath | (Comms) | USAF | 1 July 1992 |
| RAF Kemble | S/S | USAF | 31 July 1992 |
| Glen Douglas | (NAD) | | 20 September 1992 |
| RAF Greenham Common | (SDB) | USAF | 30 September 1992 |
| RAF Locking | (Hosp) | USN | 1 October 1992 |
| RAF Sculthorpe | (SDB) | USAF | 2 October 1992 |
| Cairnmore Hilloch | (Comms) | USN | 28 October 1992 |
| RAF Inverbervie | (Comms) | USN | 28 October 1992 |
| Latheron | (Comms) | USN | 28 October 1992 |
| West Murkle | (Comms) | USN | 28 October 1992 |
| Aberdeen | (Comms) | USN | 10 November 1992 |
| RAF Kinnaber | (Comms) | USN | 21 January 1993 |
| RAF Woodbridge | (MOB) | USAF | 20 August 1993 |
| RAF Burtonwood | S/S | USAF | 26 August 1993 |
| Forss | (Comms) | USN | 14 September 1993 |
| RAF Bentwaters | (MOB) | USAF | 30 September 1993 |
| Mormond Hill | (Comms) | USAF | 7 October 1993 |
| RAF Caerwent | (S/S) | USAF | 30 November 1993 |
| RAF Watton | (S/S) | USAF | 12 May 1994 |
| RAF Bicester | (S/S) | USAF | 30 June 1994 |
| RAF Little Rissington | (Hosp) | USAF | 30 June 1994 |
| RAF Upper Hayford | (MOB) | USAF | 30 Sept 1994 |
| RAF Machrihanish | (S/S) | USN | 30 June 1995 |
| RAF Brawdy | (S/S) | USN | 30 September 1995 |
| RAF Chicksands | (Comms) | USAF | 30 September 1995 |
| RAF Chilwell | (S/S) | USAF | 30 September 1995 |
| Framlingham | (S/S) | USAF | 30 September 1995 |

*US bases handed back to MOD since 1988*

| *Site/Facility* | *Type* | *Service* | *Returned to MOD* |
|---|---|---|---|
| RAF Nocton Hall | (Hosp) | USAF | 30 September 1995 |
| RAF Alconbury (Airfield) | (MOB) | USAF | 1 October 1995 |
| Oakington | (S/S) | USAF | 20 February 1996 |
| RAF Edzell | (Comms) | USN | 30 September 1997 |

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many members of the US National (Reserve) Guard are deployed on RAF bases occupied and controlled by the US Visiting Forces, *(a)* in total and *(b)* broken down by base. [155413]

**Mr. Ingram:** A total of 208 US Army National Guards are currently deployed to RAF bases made available to the US Visiting Force, and are based at the following locations:

| *Location* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| RAF Lakenheath | 84 |
| RAF Mildenhall | 84 |
| RAF Croughton | 14 |
| RAF Molesworth | 26 |
| Total | 208 |

### Nuclear Weapons

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library a copy of the latest version of the Mutual Defence Agreement on Atomic Energy Matters, as amended in 1994. [155864]

**Mr. Hoon:** Copies of the 1958 Mutual Defence Agreement with the United States and its subsequent amendments are already in the Library of the House.

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the United Kingdom *(a)* is involved and *(b)* plans to be involved, under the US-UK Mutual Defence Agreement on Atomic Energy matters, in the Hafnium-178 research at the US Air Force Research Laboratory at Kirtland in New Mexico; and what research Atomic Weapons Establishment is conducting into military uses of Hafnium-178. [155884]

**Mr. Hoon:** The United Kingdom is not involved with Hafnium-178 research in the United States under the 1958 Mutual Defence Agreement, and has no current plans to become involved. There is no current research programme into the military uses of Hafnium-178 at the Atomic Weapons Establishment.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

### Visitors Centre

**Mr. Robathan:** To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission whether he has consulted UNESCO regarding building a reception room for visitors to the Palace of Westminster. [155510]

**Sir Archy Kirkwood:** The steering group preparing the UNESCO World Heritage Site Management Plan for Westminster has been fully informed and consulted.

## TRANSPORT

### Fuel Duty Rebate

**Mr. Kidney:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will make a statement on the outcome of his consultation on the fuel duty rebate; [155178]

(2) if he will give control of fuel duty rebate to those local transport authorities that have *(a)* a statutory quality partnership and *(b)* a quality contract scheme. [155179]

**Mr. McNulty:** The April 2003 Budget announced that the Government would continue work on the review of bus subsidies as part of the wider review of the Transport 10-Year Plan. This includes consideration of Bus Service Operators' Grant (previously called fuel duty rebate). Further work will be guided by the need to ensure that local bus services better meet the needs of local people and communities and make effective use of public subsidy to deliver public aims. The review of the Transport 10-Year Plan is being taken forward in parallel with Spending Review 2004, which is expected to conclude in the summer.

### Birmingham Airport

**Mr. John Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what compensation arrangements are available to Solihull constituents whose properties are blighted by the possibility of a second runway at Birmingham airport. [155534]

**Mr. McNulty:** We have specified that the operators of airports where runway development is supported by the White Paper "The Future of Air Transport" should develop and bring forward local schemes to address the problem of generalised blight. I understand that Birmingham International Airport Ltd. hopes shortly to bring forward compensation schemes to deal with property affected by the proposals for a second runway.

### Child Poverty

**Mrs. Roche:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps his Department is taking to achieve the Government's targets of *(a)* ending child poverty by 2020, *(b)* halving it by 2010 and *(c)* reducing it by a quarter by 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [154365]

**Mr. McNulty:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions my hon. Friend the Member for Gravesham (Mr. Pond) on 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1590–91W.

### Civil Servants

**Dr. Cable:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many civil servants, broken down by grade, there are in the Department and the agencies for which the Department is responsible; and what the figures were in January 1997. [150270]

**Mr. McNulty** *[pursuant to my answer, 12 February 2004, Official Report, c. 1661W]:* I would refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Alexander) on 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1293–98W.

### Local Authority Parking Places

**John Mann:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much surplus income from parking places each local authority received in the last year for which figures are available. [154959]

**Mr. McNulty:** Separate statistics on surplus income from parking places are not collected centrally. Information is provided by local authorities down to district council level showing gross income and expenditure on all activities relating to parking. I have arranged for a table showing income and expenditure for authorities in England for 2002/03 to be placed in the Libraries of the House.

### Low-sulphur Diesel

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to encourage the use in diesel trains of low-sulphur diesel; what percentage of diesel trains use low-sulphur diesel; and if he will make a statement. [155415]

**Mr. McNulty:** The Sulphur Content of Liquid Fuels (England and Wales) Regulations 2000 set a maximum sulphur limit of 0.1 per cent. which will come into effect in 2008. Currently the maximum permissible level is 0.2 per cent. Diesel trains on the UK network operate on gas oil, which typically has a sulphur content of 0.15 per cent. The Strategic Rail Authority is planning a summit of rail industry bodies to manage a transition to low sulphur gas oil.

### Motorways

**Mr. Greg Knight:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will establish a road safety campaign to discourage heavy goods vehicles from using the third lane on motorways. [153251]

**Dr. Howells:** Heavy goods vehicles have been prohibited from using the right hand lane of motorways with three or more lanes, since 1967. This is explained in Rule 239 of the Highway Code. The evidence is that the law is appropriate, respected by drivers and effective.

### Public Transport

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the benefits of the introduction of reward cards to users of public transport. [155021]

**Mr. McNulty:** The introduction of reward or loyalty cards is a commercial matter for public service operators and the Department has made no direct assessment of their benefits. But the Department will continue to encourage all public transport operators to explore new approaches with the potential to increase patronage and provide benefits to passengers.

### Rail Services

**Mr. Swire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to reinstate railway track between Salisbury and Exeter on the Waterloo Line. [155301]

**Mr. McNulty:** There are no such plans at present. However, South West Trains will be introducing an hourly service from Waterloo to Yeovil in December. The Strategic Rail Authority has agreed with local authorities that they will then assess whether likely demand would justify extending the hourly service to Exeter and whether any infrastructure enhancements would be needed to allow this to happen.

### Road Accidents

**Mr. Chope:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many accidents resulting in death or serious injury have occurred on the hard shoulders of motorways in England in each of the last five years. [155542]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The table shows the number of accidents resulting in death or serious injury that have occurred on the hard shoulders of motorways in England for which The Highways Agency is responsible. This is shown in each of the last five years for which validated data are currently available.

| | *Number of accidents* |
|---|---|
| 1998 | 63 |
| 1999 | 38 |
| 2000 | 40 |
| 2001 | 49 |
| 2002 | 44 |
| Total | 234 |

### Road Noise

**Mrs. May:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what budget was set for noise mitigation measures on roads in each financial year since 2001–02; and what percentage of this budget was used for noise mitigation measures in each year, including 2003–04 to date. [155102]

**Mr. Darling:** A budget of £5 million was set for noise mitigation measures on roads for 2001–02, 2002–03 and 2003–04. 100 per cent. of the budget was used for noise mitigation purposes in 2001–02 and 2002–03 and we estimate that 100 per cent. of the budget will be used for noise mitigation purposes in 2003–04.

### Road Safety

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the Government's progress towards its targets of reducing the number of *(a)* road deaths and serious injuries by 40 per cent. and *(b)* child deaths and serious injuries on roads by 50 per cent. by 2010. [153020]

**Mr. Jamieson** *[holding answer 10 February 2004]:* Good progress is being made towards our casualty reduction targets for 2010 set in the Government's Road Safety Strategy. Overall deaths and serious injuries in 2002 were 17 per cent. down from their baseline, which is nearly halfway to the 40 per cent. target. Child deaths and serious injuries were 33 per cent. down, which is

two-thirds of the way to that 50 per cent. reduction target. We aim to publish the first three-year review of the Road Safety Strategy in April, analysing the progress made in detail.

### Ryanair

**Mr. Tyler:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1241W, on Ryanair Decision, when he expects to receive the full text of the European Commission's decision on the case of Ryanair at Charleroi Airport; and if he will make a statement on its implications for regional airports in the UK. [155237]

**Mr. McNulty:** The European Commission will publish its Decision on Ryanair once the parties to the case have had the opportunity to consider it. We do not know how long that will take. We will need to see the full Decision before we can make a proper assessment of the implications, if any, for UK aviation.

### Speed Management

**Mr. Baron:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much was raised in fines from speed cameras in Essex in each financial year since 1996–97, broken down by *(a)* court proceedings and *(b)* fixed penalties. [152475]

**Mr. Jamieson** *[holding answer 3 February 2004]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 27 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 243–44W. These are the latest figures available.

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when speed cameras were first introduced in Southend; and what the total number of speed cameras introduced was in each year since that date. [153808]

**Mr. Jamieson:** Fixed speed cameras were first introduced in Southend in March 1995. The number of locations introduced in each year since that date is shown in the following table:

| | *Additional locations established* |
|---|---|
| 1995 | [1]4 |
| 1996 | 0 |
| 1997 | 0 |
| 1998 | 0 |
| 1999 | 0 |
| 2000 | 0 |
| 2001 | [2]51 |
| 2002 | 0 |
| 2003 | [2]13 |

[1] Fixed camera locations.

[2] Fixed and mobile camera locations.

The increase in sites in 2001 coincides with the Essex Partnership joining the safety camera netting off scheme.

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans the Government have to commission a review of speed limits according to levels of risk on each category of road. [155809]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The Department's review of speed management policy, published in March 2000, concluded that there was no case for a general change in the present 30 mph and 70 mph limits, but indicated that we intended to update the guidance to local authorities on the setting of local speed limits. The Transport Select Committee also recommended revised guidance in their 2002 report on Road Traffic Speed policy. Copies of these documents are available in the House of Commons Library.

We plan to issue the new guidance later this year, following consultation with local authorities and other interested parties.

### Stansted

**Mrs. May:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport further to the written statement of 10 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 68WS, what supporting documentation he intends to publish in relation to increased airport capacity at Stansted. [155238]

**Mr. Darling:** Supporting documentation for the decisions in "The Future of Air Transport" White Paper at Stansted and other locations has been published and placed in the Libraries of the House.

### Vehicle Insurance/Taxation

**Mr. Laurence Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will introduce a requirement for drivers to display proof of insurance on their vehicles; and if he will make a statement. [155006]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The Government are determined to take effective action to tackle the problem of uninsured driving. With that in mind we commissioned, last August, an independent review of motor insurance with uninsured driving as a key focus. The reviewer, Professor David Greenaway of Nottingham University, is expected to report in April. The Government will be taking a close interest in his recommendations and take appropriate action on them as soon as practicable.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Iraqi Oil

**Sir Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which body is responsible for monitoring the volume and price of Iraqi oil exports; and if she will make a statement. [154549]

**Mr. Timms:** UNSCR 1483 charges the International Advisory and Monitoring Board (IAMB) with, inter alia, auditing the sale of Iraqi oil.

**Sir Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the *(a)* average spot price paid for and *(b)* volume sold of Iraqi oil on the international market in each month since June 2003; and if she will make a statement. [154550]

**Mr. Timms:** The average spot prices for sales of Iraqi crude oil each month since June 2003 are given in Table 1. Only a small volume of Iraqi oil has been sold on a spot basis.

*Table 1: Monthly average of the spot price of Iraqi oil*
*US dollars per barrel*

| | *Basrah Light*[1] | *Kirkuk*[2] |
|---|---|---|
| June 2003 | 26.1 | 24.2 |
| July 2003 | 26.5 | 26.4 |
| August 2003 | 27.5 | 28.3 |
| September 2003 | 24.8 | Not applicable |
| October 2003 | 27.4 | Not applicable |
| November 2003 | 27.3 | Not applicable |
| December 2003 | 29.3 | Not applicable |
| January 2004 | 30.1 | Not applicable |

[1] Monthly average of the daily spot price assessment of Iraqi Basrah Light crude delivered to the United States Gulf.
[2] Monthly average of the daily spot assessment of Iraqi Kirkuk crude loading at Ceyhan in Turkey. Note that Kirkuk crude has been exported since August 2003. Kirkuk prices are on a Free On Board basis, meaning that all delivery, inspection and elevation or loading costs involved in putting the crude on board a carrier have been paid.
*Source:*
Platts

### Business Internet Access

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department is taking to increase the proportion of businesses with internet access greater than 2 Mbps. [155263]

**Mr. Timms:** The Government have recognised for some time the importance of broadband for business use. Through its UK online for business programme the DTI has worked to promote the benefits that broadband can bring. The Government have also worked hard with industry to extend broadband availability and will continue to promote broadband through its package of support to business. Increasingly, this will include pointing out the added benefits that can be gained through higher-speed broadband access.

### Business Regulation

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many regulations on business have been lifted since 2000; and if she will make a statement on future lifting of regulatory burdens on businesses. [153141]

**Nigel Griffiths:** The figures for number of regulations lifted are not held centrally.

The Regulatory Reform Action Plan includes deregulatory measures and simplification of exiting compliance requirements. The original RRAP was published in February 2002 and contained 250 reforms, the update in December 2003 contained over 600.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which regulatory impact assessments have been put forward by the Better Regulation Task Force for the National Audit Office to review; and what subsequent action has been taken in each instance. [153552]

**Mr. Alexander:** I have been asked to reply.

The National Audit Office (NAO) has published the Regulatory Impact Assessments in its pilot year sample on its website at the following address: www.nao.gov.uk/publications/workinprogress/rias.htm

The NAO will shortly be publishing a Compendium Report on its findings.

**Mr. Pollard:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of trends in the amount of time businesses spend on dealing with regulation; and if she will make a statement. [153774]

**Nigel Griffiths** *[holding answer 9 February 2004]*: The World Bank's "Doing business in 2004" survey of 130 countries ranked the UK in top 10 countries with least regulations, and the New Year survey of EU Business leaders by Handelsblatt ranked the UK No. 1 for competitiveness. The OECD has found the UK has almost the lowest administration cost and fewer regulations for entrepreneurs than any other EU country, while tax burdens on small businesses are lowest in the UK. A NatWest Survey of 851 UK companies showed a welcome fall in their concerns about red tape. Government policies which have contributed to this include; the following:

the abolition of automatic fines for late VAT payment for 200,000 SMEs. In 1996–97 fines totalled £99 million;

cutting form-filling and red tape for up to 700,000 SMEs with the flat rate VAT scheme;

raising the statutory audit requirement to £5.6 million turnover to save 219,000 small businesses up to £274 million a year.

The Government continue to work to reduce the burdens on business.

### Business Support

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list each business support scheme that has been *(a)* launched and *(b)* terminated in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [153533]

**Ms Hewitt:** All DTI funded business support schemes are being replaced with a small set of more strategically focussed products. Since January 2003, the DTI has launched the following:

Small Firms Loan Guarantee

Grant for Research and Development

Grant for Investigating an Innovative Idea

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships

Advanced Metals Technologies Initiative

Supply Chain Groups

Coal Investment Aid and

Micro and Nanotechnology applied research programme

The following products are to be made available during 2004:

Collaborative R&D

Knowledge Transfer Networks

Access to Business Best Practice

Support to implement best business practice

Finance to encourage investment in specific areas of England and

Enterprise Capital Funds

It is not possible to list all the business support schemes launched in years prior to 2003.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to reduce the number of business support schemes sponsored by her Department. [153562]

**Ms Hewitt:** All DTI funded business support schemes are being replaced with a small set of more strategically focussed products. Four of these new products (Small Firms Loan Guarantee, Grant for Research and Development, Grant for Investigating an Innovative Idea and Knowledge Transfer Partnerships) have been available since spring 2003. Further products will be made available from April this year.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the business support schemes supported by her Department. [153563]

**Ms Hewitt:** I have nothing further to add to the reply I gave the hon. Member on 5 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 998W.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many United Kingdom small businesses she estimates have failed as a result of the late payment or non-payment of debt in each of the last five years. [153564]

**Nigel Griffiths:** Accurate information regarding the number of business failures specifically attributable to late or non-payment of debt is not available.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the estimated cost to United Kingdom small businesses was of the late payment or non-payment of debt in the last 12 months for which figures are available. [153565]

**Nigel Griffiths:** Accurate information regarding the cost to small businesses of late payment or non-payment of debt is not available.

### Call Centres

**Mr. Hepburn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) which call centres have relocated abroad from *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* Tyne and Wear, *(d)* the North East and *(e)* the UK in each year since 2000; and where they have relocated to; [153228]

(2) how many *(a)* call centres and *(b)* call centre-related jobs there are in (i) the Jarrow constituency, (ii) South Tyneside, (iii) Tyne and Wear, (iv) the North East and (v) the UK. [153229]

**Ms Hewitt:** The Government are well aware of the heightened interest and concerns expressed about the offshoring of UK service operations, including call centres, to countries such as India, China and Eastern Europe. My Department has commissioned research on the key factors contributing to the relative competitiveness of UK call centre operations. We are conducting this research because reliable figures on call centre employment, including jobs lost and created, do not currently exist, and there are conflicting predictions on future employment trends. However, we are still seeing growth in UK call centres; for example, in the North East region Hays Travel is creating 160 job opportunities at its call centres in Sunderland, Newcastle and Stockton.

**Jeff Ennis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* call centres and *(b)* call centre jobs there are in (i) South Yorkshire and (ii) Yorkshire and the Humber. [153720]

**Ms Hewitt:** The Government are well aware of the heightened interest and concerns expressed about the offshoring of UK service operations, including call centres, to countries such as India, China and Eastern Europe. My Department has commissioned research on the key factors contributing to the relative competitiveness of UK call centre operations. We are conducting this research because reliable figures on call centre employment, including jobs lost and created, do not currently exist, and there are conflicting predictions on future employment trends. However, we are still seeing growth in UK call centres; for example, in the Yorkshire and Humberside region Ventura is creating 300 new job opportunities at its call centre in Rotherham.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* call centres and *(b)* call centre jobs there are in (i) the North West and (ii) Lancashire. [154315]

**Ms Hewitt:** The Government are well aware of the heightened interest and concerns expressed about the offshoring of UK service operations, including call centres, to countries such as India, China and Eastern Europe. My Department has commissioned research on the key factors contributing to the relative competitiveness of UK call centre operations. We are conducing this research because reliable figures on call centre employment, including jobs lost and created, do not currently exist, and there are conflicting predictions on future employment trends. However, we are still seeing growth in UK call centres; for example, in the North West region Vertex is creating 1,000 new job opportunities at its call centres in Knowsley, Speke and Bolton.

### Child Poverty

**Mrs. Roche:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department is taking to achieve the Government's targets of *(a)* ending child poverty by 2020, *(b)* halving it by 2010 and *(c)* reducing it by a quarter by 2004–05; and if she will make a statement. [154366]

**Mr. Timms:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1590–91W.

### Climate Change

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations she has received from *(a)* business and *(b)* industry representatives on the Government's Climate Change Programme, with particular reference to the viability of the emissions targets for (i) 2010 and (ii) 2020. [154227]

**Mr. Morley:** I have been asked to reply.

The UK Climate Change Programme sets out the policy framework to ensure that the UK meets its Kyoto target, to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by

12.5 per cent. below base year levels, and moves towards its domestic goal to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide by 20 per cent. below 1990 levels by 2010.

The Climate Change Programme, published in November 2000, was developed in close consultation with business, local authorities and a wide range of public and private sector organisations. Responses from all groups identified significant business opportunities for the UK from moving to a more energy efficient, lower carbon economy and less than 5 per cent. of businesses who responded believed that the programme would damage UK's competitiveness.

Many respondents to the consultation on the draft Climate Change Programme noted the need to develop a longer term policy framework that would reduce emissions beyond 2010. The February 2003 Energy White Paper did just this, with its goal to put the UK on a path to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 60 per cent. by 2050, with real progress by 2020.

In developing the Energy White Paper, the Government held a large number of meetings and expert workshops along with a written consultation. There was concern, mostly from companies and trade associations, that competitive advantage should not be compromised by measures to address climate change. However there was also recognition of the advantages that would arise from moving towards a low carbon economy, such as through export opportunities in new renewable technology and engineering expertise, and through opportunities arising from job creation. A summary of the responses, and individual replies from businesses, to the written consultation can be found on the DTI website.

### Coke Imports (China)

**Mr. Bailey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations she has made to the European Union on the suspension of duties on coke imported from China. [144922]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** None. The anti-dumping measures currently in force relating to imports of coke originating in China are due to expire in 2005, but are currently being reviewed by the European Commission. We must wait for the outcome of that review before deciding whether any approach to the European Commission is necessary.

### Comoros Islands

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the level of bilateral trade between Britain and the Comoros Islands was in the last year for which figures are available; and what steps are being taken to establish a diplomatic presence on the Comoros Islands. [154220]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** According to figures published by HM Customs and Excise, UK imports of goods from the Comoros Islands in 2002 were worth £211,000 while UK exports were worth £743,000. Our ambassador to Madagascar is cross-accredited to Comoros. He is due to present his credentials to the Comoran Government this week.

### Company Ownership (Voting Rights)

**Harry Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what her policy is on company ownership arrangements which grant a majority voting right for a minority share holding. [154453]

**Jacqui Smith:** Differential voting structures in companies (such as multiple voting rights or non-voting shares) were considered by the independent Company Law Review sponsored by the Department of Trade and Industry, which reported in November 2000 on this issue and concluded ("Completing the Structure", paragraph 5.47):

> We propose that the law should continue to place no restriction on the freedom of companies to have separate classes of shares with different voting (or other) rights.

On the basis of the review's findings, my overall approach to such differential voting structures is that, provided they are properly disclosed to the markets and others having dealings with the company, they do enhance freedom and flexibility for companies to structure themselves according to their needs. I shall, however, continue to keep this matter under review.

The Company Law Review documents are published on the DTI website at http://www.dti.gov.uk/cld/review.htm.

### Debt Repayment

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of small businesses she estimates were forced to take legal action against late or non-payers of debt in the last year for which figures are available. [153566]

**Nigel Griffiths:** A survey by the Royal Bank of Scotland, conducted in January 2004, suggested that up to two fifths of small businesses have taken legal action against a customer for non-payment. The DTI does not make a separate estimate.

### Employment Regulation

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to extend the common commencement pilot for employment regulations to other areas of regulation. [155322]

**Nigel Griffiths:** In January, the Government gave a commitment in their recently published Action Plan for Small Business that they will consider extending the adoption of common commencement dates to other areas of domestic law, subject to the results of the current DTI pilot. Government will consult business on the priority areas and preferred dates.

### Energy Innovations

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what energy innovation breakthroughs have been made in the United Kingdom since the publication of the Energy White Paper in February 2003. [155022]

**Mr. Timms:** Technological progress tends to follow an incremental path and major breakthroughs are less common. Notable events since February 2003 in relation to energy innovation include the commissioning of the

UK's first large offshore wind farm (60MW) at North Hoyle, North Wales, the launch of the SUPERGEN sustainable energy research initiative, and the opening in the UK of the first marine energy test centre in Europe, which will help develop key tidal and wave technologies with support from DTI and others, including the Scottish Executive.

### EU Chemical Regulations

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent representations she has received on proposed EU regulation of chemicals. [153078]

**Jacqui Smith:** The Department of Trade and Industry has received representations about the proposed legislation from a wide range of stakeholders, including the UK chemical industry and NGOs. My noble Friend the Minister for Science recently joined my hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Environment, in a round-table discussion about this issue, which, in addition to industry and NGOs, also included representatives from the retail sector and trade unions.

The Government will shortly issue a public consultation paper, which will offer all interested parties a further opportunity to provide us with their views. There are also plans to hold a stakeholder conference during the consultation period.

The Government will continue to work with all interested parties to ensure the legislation is workable and delivers protection for human health and the environment. Representations from the UK and other member states have already helped to improve the proposal.

### EU Structural Funds

**Ann Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether departmental funding is used for EU matched funding. [155222]

**Jacqui Smith:** Yes, where appropriate. For example, substantial amounts of funding are made available via the Small Business Service. In addition, the department is exploring the option for co-financing structural funds with some of the new DTI business support products. Discussions on this and other aspects of match funding are taking place with a number of Regional Development Agencies and the Government Offices.

### Export Licences (Ministry of Defence)

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry for what proportion of export licences in respect of equipment for which advice is sought from the Ministry of Defence a substantive response was received from that Department within 20 working days of receipt in the last 12 months. [154977]

**Nigel Griffiths:** Since May 1997 the Government have published an Annual Report on Strategic Export Controls containing details of all goods authorised for export from the UK and to which destinations. These Annual Reports also contain information on 'performance in processing licence applications' providing a breakdown of the performance of the main Government Departments involved in the processing of SIELs (DTI, FCO, MOD, DFID) in that year. The Government's Annual Reports are available from the Libraries of the House.

### Fuel Poverty

**David Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* children and *(b)* elderly people are living in fuel poor households in the East Riding of Yorkshire. [154165]

**Nigel Griffiths:** The current published official estimates of fuel poverty are extrapolated from a sample survey of 175,000 dwellings and fuel poverty is defined as occurring when a household needs to spend more than 10 per cent. of its income including housing benefit and income support for mortgage interest on all fuels in order to maintain a satisfactory heating regime.

The available information from the English House Condition Survey indicates that in 2001 there were an estimated 238,000 households affected in the Yorkshire and Humber Region.

More detailed estimates for sub-regional areas are not available from this survey as the sample sized is not large enough to enable reliable detailed estimates at a more local level to be produced.

### Iraq

**Mr. Gardiner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 13 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 703W, on Iraq, what support the *(a)* UK, *(b)* US and *(c)* EU are giving to facilitate Iraq's ability to take responsibility for the necessary administration. [149450]

**Ms Hewitt:** The UK recognises the importance of re-establishing normal conditions for trade in Iraq. This is detailed in the UK's Country Assistance Plan.

The UK, through Her Majesty's Customs and Excise Department (HMCE), has been very active training, working with and restoring the operations of the Iraqi Customs Service. Chambers of Commerce are emerging in Baghdad, Basra, Kirkuk and in the area controlled by the Kurdish Regional Government, and are receiving support from the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) to create viable trade organisations in Iraq.

The Commission have said that they will consider re-establishing GSP preferences for the country, when such viable trade organisations and a functioning and internationally recognised political authority exist in Iraq.

### Manufacturing

**Paul Holmes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the levels of *(a)* manufacturing output and *(b)* employment in the manufacturing sector were in each region of the United Kingdom in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement on changes in the size of the manufacturing sector in the United Kingdom in the last five years. [152667]

**Jacqui Smith:** Output at regional level is measured using Gross Value Added (GVA). The latest estimates of the output of the manufacturing sector for the regions run to 2000 and are provided in Table A. Estimates of

the number of employee jobs within the manufacturing sector in each region and devolved administration of the UK run to 2002 and are provided at Table B.

Between 1998 and 2002, across the United Kingdom, the total number of manufacturing jobs fell by just under 640,000—a fall of 15.4 per cent.

During the same period, the index of output for UK manufacturing, measured at constant (2000) prices, fell by 1.8 percentage points.

*Table A: Total gross value added of the manufacturing sector by region/devolved Administration 1996 to 2000*

£ million

| | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| UK | 146,078 | 152,299 | 153,412 | 152,402 | 153,671 |
| North East | 6,772 | 6,799 | 6,660 | 6,433 | 6,427 |
| North West | 19,151 | 19,471 | 19,388 | 19,323 | 19,423 |
| Yorks and Humber | 13,621 | 14,125 | 13,948 | 13,438 | 13,322 |
| East Midlands | 13,412 | 14,155 | 14,183 | 13,952 | 14,011 |
| West Midlands | 16,517 | 17,185 | 17,161 | 16,625 | 16,565 |
| East of England | 12,714 | 13,306 | 13,429 | 13,229 | 13,333 |
| London | 12,747 | 13,335 | 13,799 | 14,297 | 14,750 |
| South East | 17,143 | 18,243 | 18,947 | 19,335 | 19,738 |
| South West | 10,461 | 11,179 | 11,497 | 11,642 | 11,872 |
| Wales | 7,797 | 8,007 | 7,941 | 7,775 | 7,826 |
| Scotland | 12,638 | 13,182 | 13,034 | 12,787 | 12,673 |
| Northern Ireland | 3,104 | 3,313 | 3,423 | 3,565 | 3,731 |

*Source:*
Regional Economic Accounts, ONS

Estimates of regional GVA are presented at current basic prices. They do not include taxes on products (such as Value Added Tax), and take no account of the impact of price inflation.

Regional GVA by industry estimates allocate the earnings of commuters to their region of residence and not the region where they work (in those cases where the two differ).

*Table B: Annex A: Employee jobs within manufacturing 1998 to 2002*

| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| UK | 4,150,449 | 4,028,762 | 3,894,620 | 3,703,061 | 3,512,244 |
| North East | 186,729 | 173,208 | 169,357 | 159,595 | 158,873 |
| North West | 529,604 | 514,114 | 499,360 | 473,257 | 448,988 |
| Yorkshire and The Humber | 409,542 | 394,375 | 383,832 | 373,775 | 353,789 |
| East Midlands | 422,997 | 399,161 | 383,057 | 358,295 | 342,845 |
| West Midlands | 553,432 | 532,880 | 493,846 | 460,040 | 445,794 |
| Eastern | 353,160 | 327,716 | 333,244 | 323,586 | 307,363 |
| London | 286,890 | 296,061 | 285,840 | 260,360 | 236,166 |
| South East | 442,432 | 444,320 | 432,596 | 407,442 | 389,903 |
| South West | 320,565 | 313,861 | 301,941 | 299,835 | 282,829 |
| Wales | 208,160 | 206,857 | 200,600 | 188,958 | 184,644 |
| Scotland | 326,688 | 315,020 | 302,043 | 294,162 | 262,552 |
| Northern Ireland | 110,250 | 111,189 | 108,904 | 99,756 | 97,498 |

*Source:*
GB Annual Business Inquiry, ONS and the Northern Ireland Annual Business Inquiry, NISRA

The manufacturing jobs estimates refer to December of each year.

These estimates cover the total number of both full and part-time jobs in the manufacturing sector and cover the number of employee jobs, not necessarily the number of people in jobs. If a person has more than one employee job it is possible that they could be counted twice in this measure.

### Royal Mail

**Mr. Caton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the recent loss of mail in the Swansea area. [154921]

**Mr. Timms:** These are matters that fall within the day-to-day responsibility of Royal Mail. I have therefore asked the Chief Executive to reply direct to the hon. Member.

### Metal Finishing Industry

**Michael Fabricant:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action is proposed to meet the Commission of the European Communities communication COM (2003) 354 in respect of assistance to small operators in meeting administrative burdens and environmental challenges, with particular regard to the metal finishing industry. [152512]

**Mr. Morley:** I have been asked to reply.

This June 2003 Communication from the European Commission set out the Commission's view on implementation of the 1996 directive concerning integrated pollution prevention and control (IPPC) and invited responses to seven questions, among which was one about what support measures should be taken at EU, national, regional or local level to facilitate compliance by installations, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The Government response, submitted to the Commission on 12 September 2003 and available at http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/ppc/cipp.htm, pointed out that, in the UK's experience, it is essential for regulators to work closely with operators—whether or not SMEs—to explain as precisely as possible what IPPC requires.

In the case of the metal finishing industry, the Environment Agency is working with the Surface Engineering Association (SEA) to do that, raising awareness of the requirements and providing draft sector guidance. An Agency Sector Co-ordinator has been appointed to provide advice and support to the

industry. Three IPPC Launch Workshops were held in January 2004 for the sector, each including a presentation by the SEA. The agency is supporting the Association's IPPC "club" arrangement under which a series of workshops will be held (led by a consultant and with Agency staff contributing) to help operators write their applications in a common and therefore more efficient approach to IPPC permit application and compliance. Revised IPPC guidance for the sector will be issued by the Environment Agency in mid-February.

### Miners' Compensation/Pensions

**Jeff Ennis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the average level is of final settlements that have been agreed so far to former miners suffering from *(a)* chronic bronchitis and emphysema and *(b)* vibration white finger. [155026]

**Nigel Griffiths:** As of 1 February 2004 the average payment figure to each miner for respiratory disease was £7,715. The average payment figure for vibration white finger (VWF) was £8,354.

**John Mann:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people are in receipt of a pension from the Mineworkers Pension Scheme; and how much has been paid from the scheme in each year since it was established. [154613]

**Nigel Griffiths** *[holding answer 12 February 2004]*: The information requested is in the table.

| | *Number of pensioners in payment* | *Amount of pension benefit paid (£ million)* | *Amount of bonus payments (£ million)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1994 | 251,674 | 355 | |
| 1995 | 243,147 | 359 | |
| 1996 | 243,257 | 364 | |
| 1997 | 241,217 | 398 | 23 |
| 1998 | 241,068 | 483 | 69 |
| 1999 | 237,132 | 485 | 76 |
| 2000 | 234,568 | 488 | 82 |
| 2001 | 234,455 | 531 | 119 |
| 2002 | 237,929 | 584 | 127 |

### National Grid

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the current replacement rate of assets operated by the national electricity grid is. [152040]

**Mr. Timms:** Capital expenditure on asset replacement by the National Grid Company plc is currently of the order of £120 million per year, approximately one-third of NGC's total annual capital expenditure under its current regulatory price control. The value of the company's network assets is approximately £5 billion, which gives an average replacement rate of 42 years.

NGC's asset replacement expenditure is based on a careful assessment of asset condition and not on a simple average asset age approach to replacement rate.

### Offshoring

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when the deadline is for the consultation document on the practice of offshoring which her Department has recently issued. [151827]

**Ms Hewitt:** The consultation document invited comments by 30 January 2004. But we would still welcome comments from others who were not able to respond by this date. We are currently studying the information we have received carefully.

### Post Office

**Sir Paul Beresford:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations Postwatch South East has received on Post Office Ltd.'s proposal to close the Fetcham sub-Post Office; and if she will make a statement. [155432]

**Mr. Timms:** I understand that Postwatch South East received 98 representations during the public consultation period in Post Office Ltd.'s proposal to close Fetcham sub-Post Office under its urban network reinvention programme.

**Sir Paul Beresford:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) if she will undertake to take the final decision if Post Office Ltd. intends to fufil its proposal to close Fetcham sub-Post Office; [155433]

(2) when she expects to be able to make a decision on Post Office Ltd.'s proposal for closure of the Fetcham sub-Post Office. [155435]

**Mr. Timms:** Following public consultation on a post office closure proposal, as required under the Code of Practice agreed between Post Office Ltd. and Postwatch, the final decision on closure is an operational matter for the company.

**Sir Paul Beresford:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent changes there have been to the rural to urban classification of post offices and sub-post offices in Mole Valley. [155434]

**Mr. Timms:** I understand from Post Office Ltd. that there have been no recent changes of rural to urban classification of post offices and sub-post offices in Mole Valley.

**Mrs. Ellman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what criteria the Post Office will use in deciding the future of post offices in Liverpool, Riverside which is recommended for closure. [155668]

**Mr. Timms:** Decisions on post office closures are an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. and I have asked the Chief Executive to reply direct to my hon. Friend.

### Productivity

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the impact that Faraday Partnerships have had on *(a)* the overall productivity of UK businesses and *(b)* reducing disparities in regional productivity. [153576]

**Ms Hewitt:** The 24 Faraday Partnerships were designated on the basis of the needs of their respective sectors to accelerate new product development based on research. They feed into DTI's overall objectives for improving productivity and competitiveness in the UK.

The Partnerships operate against business plans that are individually agreed with the public sectors sponsors (typically DTI and one or more Research Councils). Progress against the business plan is regularly assessed.

Partnerships do not have a specific objective to reduce disparities in regional productivity; their aims are to improve knowledge transfer and overall performance in UK businesses wherever they are to be found.

### Regional Development Agencies

**Mr. Goodman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether regional development agencies only fund organisations located within the regions they serve; and if she will make a statement. [155981]

**Jacqui Smith:** Section 4 of the Regional Development Act 1998 sets out the five purposes of the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs). These purposes relate to the region covered by the RDA. RDAs may fund organisations, located outside their regions, if this benefits their regions and furthers their strategic objectives for the region.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of regional development agencies *(a)* achieved their targets and *(b)* delivered their regional economic strategies and corporate plans in the last year for which figures are available. [153585]

**Jacqui Smith:** Information on regional development agencies' achievements against targets set for 2002–03 was published on 7 July 2003, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

As regards the Regional Economic Strategies, the East Midlands Development Agency, One North East, the Northwest Development Agency, the South East of England Development Agency, the South West Regional Development Agency and Yorkshire Forward, published their Regions' current strategies in 2002, Advantage West Midlands and the London Development Agency published theirs in 2003 and the East of England Development Agency will publish a revised Strategy in 2004. The current Corporate Plans for each RDA cover the period 2003–06 and were approved by Ministers and published in 2003. The Regional Economic Strategies and Corporate Plans are available on each RDA's website.

**Mr. Betts:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many staff each Regional Development Agency employs; what the total salary bill of each agency was in the last year for which figures are available; what the average salary per employee was in each case; and what the proportion of staff salary per thousand head of population was in each case. [154335]

**Jacqui Smith** *[holding answer 11 February 2004]:* The information is set out according to the most recent RDA annual reports for year ending 31 March 2003 (for reference the website for each RDA is provided in the table).

| *RDA* | *Number of staff* | *Total salary bill (£000)* | *Average salary per employee (£)* | *Midyear population estimate for 2002*[1] | *Proportion of staff salary per 1,000 head of population (£)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| AWM | 216 | 9,159 | 42,403 | 5,304,124 | 1,726.77 |
| EEDA | 139 | 5,435 | 39,101 | 5,420,360 | 1,002.70 |
| EMDA | 170 | 5,569 | 32,759 | 4,215,492 | 1,321.08 |
| LDA | 236 | 7,541 | 31,953 | 7,355,354 | 1,025.24 |
| NWDA | 291 | 10,784 | 37,058 | 6,770,981 | 1,592.68 |
| ONE | 249 | 9,186 | 36,892 | 2,513,274 | 3,654.99 |
| SEEDA | 182 | 8,118 | 44,604 | 8,037,140 | 1,010.06 |
| SWRDA | 227 | 7,546 | 33,242 | 4,959,593 | 1,521.50 |
| YF | 282 | 10,004 | 35,475 | 4,982,503 | 2,007.81 |

[1] Source:
Midyear Population Estimates: Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Copies of RDA annual reports are placed in the Libraries of the House and are available on the internet. Figures for the current financial year should be published on RDA websites the following May.

Advantage West Midlands (AWM): www.advantagewm.co.uk
East of England Development Agency (BEDA) www.eeda.org.uk
East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA) www.emda.org.uk
London Development Agency (LDA) www.lda.gov.uk
North West Development Agency (NWDA) www.nwda.co.uk.
One North East (ONE) www.onenoriheast.co.uk
South of England Development Agency (SEED A) www.seeda.co.uk
South West Development Agency (SWRDA) www.southwestrda.org.uk
Yorkshire Forward (YF) www.yorkshire-forward.com

### Regional Venture Capital Fund

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures are being taken to *(a)* raise awareness of regional venture capital funds and *(b)* reduce regional disparities in application levels, especially within areas of lower entrepreneurial activity. [153582]

**Nigel Griffiths:** Government have invested £120,000 to raise awareness of the Regional Venture Capital Funds including holding a National Conference. We have also supported the regional launches of the nine Regional Venture Capital Funds and I have attended several events to launch or promote RVCF.

Officials regularly review the performance of all the Funds including the number of applications received. Any areas of concern are raised by my officials at the regular Advisory Committee meetings. I have asked officials to investigate any regional disparities and to report their findings back me.

### Renewable Energy Conference

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how her Department was represented at the

European Conference for Renewable Energy—Intelligent Policy Options, held in Bonn on 19 to 21 January; and what response she plans to make to the recommendations and conclusions of the conference. [155018]

**Mr. Timms:** The Director of Energy Innovation and Business Unit represented DTI at the Berlin Conference.

We note the conclusions and recommendations of the conference, which will form the basis of a more detailed discussion at the upcoming International Conference for Renewable Energies, Bonn, 1 to 4 June, 2004, the preparations for which are already under way. The Government support efforts at the international level to strengthen commitment to achieving progress on the penetration of renewables in the energy market.

### Bribery

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much her Department has spent on implementing *(a)* the OECD convention on combating bribery in each year since 1997 and *(b)* Part 12 of the Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act 2001 in each year since it came into force. [155010]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** The Department's main role in implementing the OECD convention and the relevant part of the Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act is promoting awareness of them among UK businesses and liaising with the OECD on policy development and implementation. As a result, the majority of DTI expenditure in implementing these instruments has been on human resources, with a number of officials contributing. Their time is equivalent to at least one full time post. Our expenditure is not recorded in such a way as to permit a precise analysis of the year-by-year spend against-implementing these specific instruments.

### Small Business

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which statutory inspectors have a right of entry to small businesses; and if she will make a statement. [151990]

**Nigel Griffiths:** DTI responsibilities where there is a right of entry relevant to small businesses include the following; Export Control, Employment Agency Standards, Trading Standards (enforced through local authorities). I encourage all appropriate enforcement authorities to sign up to the Enforcement Concordat to ensure that inspections are carried out fairly.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 2 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 650W, on the Small Business Service, what the cost was of the programmes delivered by the Small Business Service for each year between 2000 and 2003. [155364]

**Nigel Griffiths:** The Programme cost of Small Business Service for each year between 2000 and 2003 are shown below. These figures are available in the Small Business Service Annual reports deposited in the Libraries of the House.

| | *Programme cost (£ million)* |
|---|---|
| 2000–01 | 244 |
| 2001–02 | 268 |
| 2002–03 | 336 |

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 2 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 650W, on the Small Business Service, what the running costs of the Small Business Service were for 2000, including agency staff and secondments. [155365]

**Nigel Griffiths:** The running cost of the Small Business Service for 2000–01 including agency staff and secondments was £10,195,000.

### SMART Awards

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many and what value of SMART awards were issued for each year between 1998 and 2003. [153555]

**Nigel Griffiths:** The information is as follows:

*£ million*

| *Financial year* | *Number of awards*[1] | *Value of awards*[1] |
|---|---|---|
| 1998–99 | 402 | 24.0 |
| 1999–2000 | 396 | 19.3 |
| 2000–01 | 578 | 28.6 |
| 2002–03 | 829 | 34.0 |
| 2003–04[2] | 618 | 28.5 |

[1] Offers of grant.

[2] To end of Q3.

The figures are for offers of grant made under the Smart scheme between 1 March 1998 and 31 December 2003. Smart formally closed to applications on 31 August 2003. The new Grant for Research and Development which replaces the Smart scheme, began accepting applications on 1 June 2003.

### Euro

**Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations she has received from British business on the possible effects of the collapse of the euro area stability and growth pact. [153622]

**Ms Hewitt:** I have received representations from several members of the business community. The Government support a prudent interpretation of the Stability and Growth Pact, taking into account the economic cycle, sustainability and the important role of public investment.

### Statutory Audit Threshold

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent consultation she has undertaken on raising the statutory audit threshold; and if she will make a statement. [153548]

**Jacqui Smith:** In July 2003 the Department published a consultation document on the proposal to increase the thresholds below which most small companies can be exempt from audit. A copy of the consultation document is available for reference in the Libraries of the House. Copies of responses to the consultation are available from the DTI library.

The Regulation increasing the audit exemption thresholds came into force on 30 January 2004 and applies in respect of financial years ending two months later.

### Sustainable Energy

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the operation and effectiveness of the Sustainable Energy Policy Network since its establishment under the Energy White Paper of February 2003; and how many times the Sustainable Energy Policy Advisory Board has met since its inception. [155229]

**Mr. Timms:** The Sustainable Energy Policy Network (SEPN) was established to drive forward the implementation of the Energy White Paper and will be judged on that basis. It comprises Government Departments, regulators, agencies and regional organisations which have a direct role to play in delivering the White Paper's commitments. The Government will report on progress in 2003–04 shortly after the Easter recess.

The network includes a number of structures:

the Ministerial Group offers strategic direction and is chaired jointly by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs;

the Sustainable Energy Policy Advisory Board provides independent expert advice to Ministers. The Board met for the first time in December 2003 and its second meeting will be in March;

the Programme Board comprises senior officials accountable to ministers for delivering the commitments set out in the White Paper.

Further details are set out in the SEPN website at http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/index.shtml.

### Asbestos Claims (T&N Ltd.)

**Mr. Clapham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she last met the administrators of T&N Ltd. to discuss compensation for former employees suffering from asbestos-related illnesses; and if she will make a statement. [153910]

**Jacqui Smith** *[holding answer 11 February 2004]*: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has not had a meeting with the Administration of T&N Ltd. to discuss this issue, as the payment of compensation to the former employees does not fall within her areas of responsibility.

**Mr. Clapham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much has been paid for the services of the UK administrators of T&N Ltd. since they were appointed; and what the weekly fee paid to *(a)* them and *(b)* their solicitor is. [153911]

**Jacqui Smith** *[holding answer 11 February 2004]*: Administration is a collective insolvency procedure and it is for creditors to determine the administrators' remuneration. Insolvency legislation provides that creditors who consider an administrator's remuneration to be excessive can apply to the court for it to be reduced.

**Mr. Clapham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the latest estimate is of when Federal Mogul are likely to be out of administration; what is being done to protect the interests of the former T&N employees suffering from asbestos-related illnesses in the meantime; and if she will make a statement. [153912]

**Jacqui Smith** *[holding answer 11 February 2004]*: T&N went into administration when Federal Mogul a US-based manufacturing group filed for bankruptcy in the US. T&N's discharge from administration is dependent on Federal Mogul's discharge from bankruptcy.

A Global Reorganisation Plan for Federal Mogul, which includes a Trust Distribution Plan to handle payments to all asbestos claimants in the group, is to be put before the US Bankruptcy Court this week. If the plan is approved the Administrators hope to be in a position to apply for the discharge of the administration order against T&N in the final quarter of 2004.

Asbestos claimants of T&N were represented on a committee established in the US bankruptcy proceedings that have been involved in negotiating the Trust Distribution Plan. The Administrators have negotiated to improve the treatment of UK asbestos claimants within the Plan and have taken legal proceedings against T&N's Employer Liability insurers, which, if ultimately successful, will directly benefit T&N's employee claimants.

Administration is a collective court-based insolvency procedure and it would be inappropriate for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to make a statement regarding this administration.

### Communications Masts

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many TETRA masts in England are *(a)* in place and *(b)* planned in total for complete roll-out in (i) the United Kingdom and (ii) Sussex. [155652]

**Mr. Timms:** Ofcom has provided the following figures.

*United Kingdom*

The Airwave network currently has around 2,200 sites and has plans to install a further 1,100. Dolphin operates 951 live sites and subject to customer requirements plans to install a further 10. The West Midlands Ambulance service has six sites with no plans at present for more. London Underground plans to install 270 sites, with rollout to commence shortly.

*Sussex*

Airwave have 65 sites in place and plan to install a further 15. Dolphin have 20 sites with no further installations planned for 2004 unless customer requirements change.

### University Challenge Seed Funds

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the impact that University Challenge Seed Funds have had on *(a)* the overall productivity of UK businesses and *(b)* reducing disparities in regional productivity. [153574]

**Ms Hewitt:** Since their establishment the Challenge funds have invested £47.3 million in projects which will improve UK productivity by making our excellent science and engineering base more easily accessible to business.

### Radioactive Waste

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what meetings have been held between her Department's liabilities management unit and the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM); what matters have been discussed with CoRWM at such meetings; and what decisions have been taken. [154690]

**Mr. Timms:** My Liabilities Management Unit (LMU) and NDA Team have held two meetings with CoRWM to discuss the establishment of the NDA, as part of the on-going work of the Committee.

This dialogue will continue.

### Wind Farms

**Mr. Peter Duncan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the number of wind turbines which will be required to meet Government targets on renewable energy in the United Kingdom. [155481]

**Mr. Timms:** To meet the Government's target of 10 per cent. of electricity generated from renewable sources by 2010 we expect that approximately 3,500 to 5,000 wind turbines will be required. This includes both onshore and offshore turbines, and assumes that around 7 per cent. to 8 per cent. of electricity is generated from wind with the remaining 2 per cent. to 3 per cent. from other renewable sources.

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment has been made of the potential hazard posed by wind turbines to migrating bats. [155023]

**Mr. Timms:** Studies[1] of the impact of wind farms on wildlife suggest that there is a small risk of bat strikes from the operation of wind turbines but that this occurs on a very irregular basis due to the good echolocation systems that bats use to navigate.

In addition, under the normal planning regime and for consent under section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 regime or the Transport and Works Act 1992 wind farm developers are required to consider all environmental aspects of wind energy projects and produce an Environmental Impact Assessment. These assessments are available to the public.

The great majority of British bat species do not undertake large scale migrations and so would not be expected to interact with offshore wind farms. The exception to this is Nathusius's pipistrelle which is known to undertake long distance migrations in Europe (including sea crossings), but this is an uncommon species in the UK. The potential for bat interactions with wind turbines is recognised and are being considered in the Strategic Environmental Assessments that will precede any future offshore wind farm licensing rounds.

Similarly, bats are listed as a consideration in guidance "Background document on problems and benefits associated with the development of offshore wind farms" issued by the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic (OSPAR document EIHA 03/4/6-E(L)) and thus potential effects on bats would be expected to be assessed in project specific Environmental Impact Assessments for offshore wind farms.

[1] Crockford, N, February 1992. A review of the Possible Impacts of Wind Farms on Birds and Other Wildlife (Joint National Conservation Committee report no. 27); JNCC, Peterborough

[1] National Wind Co-ordinating Committee, December 1999. Studying wind energy/bird interactions: A Guidance document: NWCC, Washington DC (USA)

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research has been undertaken by *(a)* her Department, *(b)* the Energy Technology Support Unit on behalf of her Department and *(c)* consultants for her Department on (i) shadow flicker and (ii) noise from wind farms. [155024]

**Mr. Timms:** Research on wind turbine noise has been carried out under the Department's New and Renewable Energy Programme. Copies of the reports[1] from those studies are available on the DTI website at www.dti.gov.uk/publications. No research has been carried out into shadow flicker from wind turbines under the DTI's New and Renewable Energy Programme. However, others have conducted research in this area and references[2] to those studies are provided as follows.

[1] "The Assessment & Rating of Noise from Wind Farms" ETSU-R-97

"Noise Emission from Wind Turbines" ETSU W/13/00503/REP

"Low Frequency Noise and Vibrations Measurement at a Modern Wind Farm" ETSU W/13/00392/REP

"Assessment of the Effects of Noise and Vibration from Offshore Windfarms on Marine Wildlife" ETSU W/13/00566/REP

"Aerodynamic Noise Reduction for Variable Speed Turbines" ETSU W/45/00504/REP

"Machine Tests for Audible Noise Emission on an Atlantic Corporation 15/50kw Wind Turbine Installed on the Carmichael Estate" ETSU W/24/00472/REP3

[2] Clarke, A. D. (1991), A Case of Shadow Flicker/Flashing: Assessment and Solution, Open University, Milton Keynes

Clarke, A. D. October (1995). Assessment of Proposed Wind Energy Project at Meenacahan, Donegal, Ireland, for Shadow Flicker. Report for B9 Energy Services Ltd.

## MINISTER FOR WOMEN

### Gender Pay Gap

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Minister for Women what the difference in pay was between *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time male and female workers in each year since 1997. [152065]

**Ms Hewitt:** The following table shows *(a)* the full-time hourly pay gap and *(b)* the part-time hourly pay gap, measured as the difference in hourly pay between women working part time and men working full time since 1997.

*Percentage*

| | *Full-time pay gap* | | *Part-time pay gap* |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *Mean* | *Median* | *Mean* |
| 1997 | 19.8 | 16.2 | 42 |
| 1998 | 20.0 | 16.2 | 43 |
| 1999 | 19.2 | 15.4 | 42 |
| 2000 | 18.9 | 15.0 | 40 |
| 2001 | 18.5 | 14.5 | 41 |
| 2002 | 19.0 | 14.3 | 41 |
| 2003 | 18.0 | 12.9 | 40 |

The Government are taking steps to address the underlying causes of the full-time and part-time gender pay gap. The part-time pay gap, which closed by two full percentage points over the period 1997 to 2003, is significantly bigger than the full-time pay gap.

To some extent this reflects the occupations that part-time work has historically been concentrated in. The Government are seeking to encourage alternative ways of working for both women and men through initiatives such as the Work-Life Balance campaign, and legislation such as the new law for working parents which enables parents with children under six or disabled children under 18 to request to work flexibly, whilst placing a duty on employers to seriously consider such requests.

## PRIME MINISTER

### 10 Downing Street

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the hon. Members who are not Cabinet Ministers who have *(a)* security clearance for and *(b)* passes to No. 10 Downing street. [155431]

**The Prime Minister:** We do not comment on security arrangements for No. 10 Downing street.

**Mr. Grogan:** To ask the Prime Minister what his policy is on the serving of beer at official receptions held at No. 10 Downing street. [155789]

**The Prime Minister:** Catering at official functions held at No. 10 Downing Street is provided by the Government Hospitality Section of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and a mixture of soft and alcoholic drinks including beer is served as appropriate.

### Dr A. Q. Khan

**Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Prime Minister if he will discuss with President Musharraf of Pakistan the case of Abdul Qader Khan. [155911]

**The Prime Minister:** We remain in contact with the Pakistani Government over counter-proliferation issues, including the case of Dr. A. Q. Khan.

### EU Migrants

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Prime Minister what recent discussions he has had with *(a)* the presidents of (i) Austria, (ii) Finland, (iii) France, (iv) Italy and (v) Spain, *(b)* the Prime Ministers of (A) Belgium, (B) Denmark, (C) Greece, (D) Ireland, (E) Luxembourg, (F) Portugal, (G) Sweden and (H) the Netherlands and *(c)* the Chancellor of Germany about the expected number of migrants coming to their respective countries after enlargement of the European Union. [155625]

**The Prime Minister:** I have regular discussions with Governments of EU countries on a wide range of international and European issues including on migration and the forthcoming enlargement.

### Iraq

**Norman Lamb:** To ask the Prime Minister for what reason the words

'if he believes his regime is under threat'

were excised from the final version of the September 2002 dossier; and if he will make a statement. [156010]

**The Prime Minister:** As Lord Hutton said in his report, the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) had overall responsibility for the dossier of 24 September and accepted only drafting suggestions which were consistent with the intelligence known to the JIC.

### Middle East

**Sir Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Prime Minister whether it is his policy that Israel should cease building settlements and the security wall on Palestinian territory unconditionally; and if he will make a statement. [155284]

**The Prime Minister:** As we have made clear, we consider all settlements in the Occupied Territories illegal under international law and an obstacle to a comprehensive peace in the region. The Government regularly presses the Israeli Government to freeze settlement activity and dismantle outposts in line with Israel's commitments under the roadmap.

We condemn unequivocally the suicide bombing of Israeli civilians and we understand Israel's need to take steps, within international law, to protect itself from terrorist attack. But we have made clear that we regard the wall Israel is building on occupied Palestinian land as unlawful.

**Sir Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the principal barriers to peace in the Middle East; and if he will make a statement. [155285]

**The Prime Minister:** The path towards a renewed political process is through the Quartet (US, UN, EU and Russia) roadmap. Both the Palestinian and the Israeli Governments should implement their roadmap commitments without delay.

The Palestinian leadership should renew its determination to tackle violence and dismantle terrorist capabilities and make further progress on Palestinian Authority reform. Israel should remove settlement outposts erected since March 2001, freeze all settlement activity and reroute the fence away from Palestinian land. Israel should also seek to improve the humanitarian situation in the Occupied Territories.

### Minister for Women

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Prime Minister if he will add interests in parental contact to the responsibilities of the Minister for Women. [155108]

**The Prime Minister:** I have no plans to do so.

### Headed Paper

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Prime Minister what authority members of the Prime Minister's staff have to use 10 Downing street headed paper subsequent to employment in his Office. [154888]

**The Prime Minister:** I have nothing further to add to my previous answer.

## SOLICITOR-GENERAL

### Iraq

**Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Solicitor-General if the Attorney-General will release his full opinion on the legality of the war in Iraq to Parliament before the Butler Committee has reported. [155100]

**The Solicitor-General:** No. As I indicated in my reply to the hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Llew Smith) of 23 October 2003, *Official Report*, column 693W, there is a long-standing convention, observed by successive Governments, that advice which the Law Officers have given to the Government is not publicly disclosed. This is consistent with paragraphs 2 and 4(d) of Part II of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

### Sir Roy Meadow

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Solicitor-General what directions she has issued to local authority departments to identify and secure documents relating to cases involving infanticide or harm to children which relied on expert testimony from Sir Roy Meadow. [151028]

**The Solicitor-General:** With regard to the review of criminal cases, a total of 258 convictions over the past 10 years for the murder, manslaughter or infanticide of a child under two by its parent have been identified. Of those, a total of 72 relate to persons still serving a custodial sentence. These will be accorded the utmost priority. Currently, some 365 boxes of evidence relating to 52 high profile cases have been recovered from central storage and dispatched to CPS areas for them to conduct an initial review. The remaining high profile cases are being recovered from the areas themselves.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Butler Inquiry

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) whether individuals will be able to put themselves forward as prospective expert witnesses to the Butler Inquiry into weapons of mass destruction intelligence; [153779]

(2) what the *(a)* contact postal address and *(b)* e-mail address of the Butler Inquiry into intelligence gathering and use are. [155066]

**Mr. Straw:** On 12 February the Butler Review announced that the Committee would in due course be taking oral evidence from a number of witnesses at its own invitation. But it is also inviting anyone who has information that might assist it in considering its remit to submit evidence by 31 March 2004 by post to the Secretary, The Butler Review, Cabinet Office, 70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS; by email to secretary@butlerreview.org.uk.

### Democratic Republic of the Congo

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what his involvement has been in planning Operation Artemis; and what discussions he has had with the police with regard to Operation Artemis; [154727]

(2) what the likely cost to the police is of Operation Artemis; [154729]

(3) when he last met the Chief Constable of North Wales to discuss Operation Artemis; [154730]

(4) if he will make a statement on his policy on Operation Artemis. [154731]

**Mr. Rammell:** At the request of the UN Secretary-General, the Security Council agreed to the deployment in June 2003 of an Interim Emergency Multinational Force (Operation Artemis) to Bunia in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The purpose of the operation was to support the UN Mission present in the country and to provide a secure environment under which the interim Administration could function. Operation Artemis was a French-led European Security and Defence Policy force, over which the EU's Political and Security Committee exercised political control and strategic direction. It was deployed for a short period until 15 September 2003 and was a military mission with no civilian police involvement.

The UK contributed some 85 military personnel to Operation Artemis. The Operation's mandate expired on 15 September 2003, by which time all forces involved had been withdrawn from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

### Outer Space Treaty

**Alan Simpson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the Government continue to support the outer space treaty. [154984]

**Mr. MacShane:** Yes.

### Colombia

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Colombian Government regarding human rights issues, with particular reference to *(a)* press, *(b)* trade union and *(c)* religious freedoms. [155352]

**Mr. Rammell:** Both I and our Embassy in Bogota have regular discussions with the Colombian government, and also with NGOs and trades unions, about human rights issues. We frequently raise specific cases with the Colombian government. The Colombian Constitution guarantees freedom of the press, the right to establish and participate in trades unions and religious choice. We continue to urge the Colombian Government to bring the perpetrators of human rights crimes swiftly to justice and to take effective measures to protect all vulnerable groups at risk from illegal armed groups in Colombia. We have underlined the importance of the Colombian government implementing the specific recommendations of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on recent arrests of church leaders in Colombia. [155353]

**Mr. Mullin:** Neither our Embassy nor the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Bogota is aware of recent arrests of Church leaders in Colombia. If additional information can be provided we would be willing to investigate further.

### Department Branding

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much his Department spent on branding the Department between 1997–98 and 2003–04, broken down by *(a)* consultancy fees, *(b)* design and orders for new stationery, *(c)* website design and *(d)* other material featuring new logos. [154067]

**Mr. Rammell:** The Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not spend funds on branding the Department.

### Departmental Expenditure

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much his Department has spent on implementing *(a)* the OECD convention on combating bribery and *(b)* Part 12 of the Anti-terrorism Crime and Security Act 2001 in each year since 1997. [155009]

**Mr. MacShane:** Foreign and Commonwealth Office expenditure in this area involves work by staff at home and abroad and is not recorded in such a way as to permit an answer to this question. UK Trade and Investment, which is co-funded by my Department and the Department for Trade and Industry, has produced a guidance leaflet on UK Bribery and Corruption Law. A small amount of other expenditure, for example on travel costs, has been incurred but is not accounted for separately from other related activities.

### Drugs Production

**Paul Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the results of Plan Colombia on drugs production and use *(a)* in Colombia and *(b)* elsewhere. [154939]

**Mr. Mullin:** According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's (UNODC) latest survey, available on the UN website: www.un.org, there was a 30 per cent. decrease in the amount of coca cultivated in Colombia in 2002: 102,071 hectares at the end of 2002, compared with 144,807 hectares at the end of 2001.

While cultivation in Colombia decreased in 2002, there was an increase in Peru and Bolivia and farmers have increased productivity through the introduction of higher yielding varieties of coca and by increasing the number of plants planted per hectare.

Drug consumption is believed to be rising in Colombia. Latest UN figures for global consumption indicate that the number of people consuming drugs regularly were 200 million worldwide in the period 2000–01 compared with 185 million worldwide in the period 1998–2000.

**Paul Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what changes have taken place since the end of the war in Afghanistan in levels of *(a)* poppy cultivation and *(b)* heroin production in areas previously controlled by (i) the Taliban and (ii) the Northern Alliance. [155001]

**Mr. Rammell:** The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) conducts an annual survey into the level of opium poppy cultivation and production in Afghanistan.

According to the UNODC annual survey, the estimated volume of opium production and cultivation in each of the last three years is as follows:

| | *Hectares* | *Tonnes* |
|---|---|---|
| 2001 | 8,000 | 185 |
| 2002 | 74,000 | 3,400 |
| 2003 | 80,000 | 3,600 |

Since the end of the war in 2001, survey figures have recorded rises in opium poppy cultivation and production in all provinces, including those controlled previously by the Taliban and the Northern Alliance. However the low level of cultivation and low production figure in 2001 reflect the Taliban ban on opium cultivation, which did not address the underlying causes of poppy cultivation in Afghanistan and was enforced with a mix of threat and bribery.

### Somalia

**Mr. Robathan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will investigate the allegations of *(a)* genocide, *(b)* crimes against humanity and *(c)* war crimes against General Mohammed Hersi Morgan, while Governor of Hargeisa in 1988; [154132]

(2) if he will pursue at the United Nations the allegations of *(a)* genocide, *(b)* war crimes and *(c)* crimes against humanity in Hargeisa in 1988; [154133]

(3) if he will assist the Government of the Republic of Somaliland in pursuing those responsible for the alleged war crimes in Hargeisa in 1988. [154135]

**Mr. Mullin:** In 1988 the then British Government expressed concern at reports of serious human rights violations in Somalia and suspended their aid programme. We have no current plans to take further action in relation to those events. Our priority for the moment is to achieve stability and peace in the south.

### Iran

**Mr. McFall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Iranian Government on *(a)* cultural and *(b)* educational programmes. [154094]

**Mr. Mullin:** My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has discussed educational and cultural matters with the Iranian Government, most recently during the visit of the Iranian Foreign Minister to London in February 2003.

In the last few years, the Government has stepped up its promotion of educational and cultural links with Iran, for example through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Chevening Scholarships scheme, which enables a number of high-achieving Iranians to study at UK universities each year. The British Council reopened in Tehran in 2001.

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he had while in Iran on the treatment of *(a)* different ethnic groups and *(b)* women within that country; and if he will make a statement. [155833]

**Mr. Rammell:** My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary last visited Iran in October 2003, with his French and German counterparts. On that occasion, the three Ministers decided to focus their discussion with Iranian leaders solely on the nuclear issue. But in his other frequent contacts with the Iranian Government, he has made clear our serious concerns about discrimination against and persecution of women and minorities in Iran.

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he had while in Iran on the development of democracy in that country; and if he will make a statement. [155834]

**Mr. Rammell:** My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary last visited Iran in October 2003, with his French and German counterparts. On that occasion, the three Ministers decided to focus their discussion with Iranian leaders solely on the nuclear issue. However, in other contacts with the Iranian Government, he has made clear our support for the development of democracy and reform, and our deep concern at the disqualification of candidates from the parliamentary elections on 20 February.

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he *(a)* received and *(b)* made while on his recent visit to Iran on religious freedoms. [155835]

**Mr. Rammell:** My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary last visited Iran in October 2003, with his French and German counterparts. On that occasion, the three Ministers decided to focus their discussion with Iranian leaders solely on the nuclear issue. However, in other contacts with the Iranian Government, he has made our serious concerns about restrictions on religious freedom in Iran and the persecution of people for their beliefs.

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he *(a)* received and *(b)* made while on his recent visit to Iran, on the recent mass resignation of Iranian MPs; and if he will make a statement. [155836]

**Mr. Rammell:** My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary last visited Iran in October 2003, before the disqualification of candidates for the Majlis elections and the mass resignation of Iranian MPs. In contacts with Iranian leaders since the current dispute began, he has made clear our deep concerns. For elections in any country to be free and fair, it is essential that voters should be able to choose from a range of candidates.

## Iraq

**Norman Lamb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) for what reason elements of the PhD thesis by Dr. Ibrahim al Marashi were incorporated into the Government's second dossier on Iraqi weapons of mass destruction; and if he will make a statement; [153061]

(2) for what reason elements of the PhD thesis by Dr. Ibrahim al Marashi were altered before incorporation into the Government's second dossier on Iraqi weapons of mass destruction; who authorised these alterations; and if he will make a statement; [153062]

(3) who authorised the use of parts of the PhD thesis by Dr. Ibrahim al Marashi in the Government's second dossier on Iraqi weapons of mass destruction; when the decision to do so was taken; and if he will make a statement. [153063]

**Mr. Rammell:** The circumstances surrounding the inclusion of Dr. Al Marashi's PhD thesis in the document produced by the Communications Information Centre in February 2003, and the roles of the officials involved, were set out in a memorandum to the Foreign Affairs Committee by the then Director of Communications at 10 Downing street dated 24 June 2003 (paragraphs 11–16), and in his evidence before the Committee on 25 June 2003 (questions 1064–1090).

**Joan Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Iraqi Governing Council regarding Sharia law in Iraq. [153703]

**Mr. Rammell:** It is for the Iraqis to debate and decide the future laws suitable for their country. We will seek to use our influence, however, to ensure that Iraqi law is compatible with international human rights standards.

**Sir Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what he expects will become of the *(a)* International Advisory and Monitoring Board and *(b)* Iraq Development Fund after a sovereign government of Iraq is established; to whom control of the monies will be passed; and if he will make a statement. [154547]

**Mr. Straw:** According to UN Security Council Resolution 1483, Iraqi revenues from the export of petroleum, petroleum products and natural gas should be deposited into the Development Fund for Iraq (DFI) until an

"internationally recognised, representative government of Iraq"

is formed. Unless the Security Council decides otherwise, it will then be for that government to decide how they handle future revenues. At the same time, there will remain a continuing obligation on UN member states to transfer financial assets or economic resources of the former Iraqi regime to the DFI.

Resolution 1483 does not envisage an end to the International Advisory Monitoring Board (IAMB) with the formation of an Iraqi government. Unless the Security Council decides otherwise, we would expect the IAMB to continue in existence after the formation of that government.

**Sir Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many British representatives sit on the Programme Review Board which determines expenditure in Iraq; what the relationship of the Board to *(a)* the United Kingdom Government, *(b)* the US Government and *(c)* the Iraqi Governing Council is; and if he will make a statement. [154548]

**Mr. Straw:** The Programme Review Board (PRB) was established to enable emergency or unanticipated extra-budgetary spending requests to be brought to a joint Iraqi-Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) body for assessment and authorisation. CPA Regulations 2–4 (available online at www.cpa-iraq.org) outline the criteria for the PRB's operations.

The relationship of the UK and US Governments and the Iraqi Governing Council to the PRB is reflected in the distribution of voting members of the PRB. which includes representatives of:

the Governments of the United Kingdom and Australia;

the Iraqi Minister of Finance (who is accountable to the Iraqi Governing Council);

Officials from the US and other coalition members from the CPA's Economic Affairs, Governance and Security Policy Offices, and Office of Infrastructure and Operations;

the Iraqi Council for International Co-operation;

and the Coalition Military (Combined Joint Task Force 7).

One UK Voting Member may attend the Board.

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what definition he uses of humanitarian intervention, with particular reference to the invasion of Iraq. [154978]

**Mr. Rammell:** Our decision to take military action was to enforce Iraq's disarmament obligations, in accordance with the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. It was taken as a last resort. The Iraqi regime's refusal to cooperate left us with no option. Authority to use force against Iraq derived from the combined effect of UNSCRs 678, 687 and 1441; and all of these resolutions were adopted under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which allows the use offeree for the express purpose of restoring international peace and security.

Clearly, however, the removal of Saddam Hussein's oppressive regime has had humanitarian benefits for the Iraqi people. The coalition and international community are helping to rebuild Iraq's infrastructure. Donors have committed $33 billion in grants and concessional loans; and Iraq's assets and oil revenue are now being used for the benefit of the Iraqi people.

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the UN Monitoring Verification and Inspection Commission inspectors discovered at the Al-Rafah test site; whether additional information has since been found by the Iraq Survey Group; and whether the Government has obtained further information since September 2002 on Al-Rafah in addition to that produced by the UN Special Commission on Iraq and the Iraq Survey Group. [155057]

**Mr. Mullin:** As reported by Dr. Hans Blix in the UN Monitoring Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) working document on unresolved disarmament issues published on 6 March 2003, UNMOVIC inspectors discovered the construction of a new liquid propellant test stand at Al-Rafah designed for both horizontal and vertical testing of engines for Al-Samoud missiles.

The Iraq Survey Group is continuing to carry out investigations at sites throughout Iraq. They will present their findings in due course.

**Sir Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will place in the Library all minutes in English of the Coalition Provisional Authority Program Review Board to date. [155287]

**Mr. Straw:** Yes. These minutes are also available on-line at the Coalition Provisional Authority website: www.cpa-iraq.org/budget/program_review_board.html.

**Mr. Tynan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what *(a)* financial and *(b)* other support the Government are giving to promote inter-religious dialogue in Iraq. [155564]

**Mr. Rammell:** The UK Government are funding an inter-faith conference in Baghdad this month, organised by Iraqis with support from the International Centre for Reconciliation based at Coventry Cathedral. Participants have been drawn from the leaderships of mainstream Iraqi religious communities. This is one of a number of initiatives which aim to promote religious dialogue in Iraq. UK and Coalition Provisional Authority officials are in regular dialogue with religious leaders about a range of issues.

**Sir Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the organisation of regional caucuses in the British-controlled areas of Iraq. [155858]

**Mr. Straw:** On 15 November 2003, the Iraqi Governing Council announced the process and timetable for the handover of power to a sovereign Iraqi Government and democratic elections. Since then the Coalition Provisional Authority has engaged in a process of consultation with the Governing Council and others on the best way to establish a transitional national administration before full democratic elections are held. The UN Secretary-General sent a technical team to Iraq this month to examine the options for elections. His team's report was due on 21 February. We look forward to receiving its recommendations, to which we will give serious consideration.

**Sir Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the proposed deadline for transfer of power to a transitional Government in Iraq. [155859]

**Mr. Straw:** On 15 November 2003, the Iraqi Governing Council announced the process and timetable for the hand-over of power in Iraq, including the establishment of an Iraqi transitional Government by 30 June 2004. We believe that deadline remains realistic and are working hard to achieve the hand-over by that date.

**Sir Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his policy is on the mandate of a transitional Government in Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [155860]

**Mr. Straw:** On 15 November 2003, the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) announced the process and timetable for the hand-over of power in Iraq. This includes the drafting of the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL), which will define the powers and principles of the Iraqi transitional administration. It is important that the TAL gains wide acceptance among Iraqis. It is currently being debated within the IGC. We will use our influence to help ensure that the TAL safeguards fundamental rights and contributes to the building of a free, democratic Iraq at peace with its neighbours.

### Israel

**Dr. Tonge:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Israeli Government concerning Israel's citizenship law. [154195]

**Mr. Rammell:** The British Embassy in Tel Aviv last lobbied the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the issue of citizenship on 11 August 2003. Embassy staff raised concerns about the implementation of the revised citizenship law and the discriminatory effect it would have on certain sectors of the population, including many Palestinians. We continue to monitor the situation closely.

### Lord Hutton's Report

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will reconcile paragraph 14 of "A Further Response of the Secretary

of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to the Ninth Report of the Foreign Affairs Committee's Session 2002–03" (Cm 6123) with Appendix 13 of the Hutton Report. [153747]

**Mr. Mullin:** No reconciliation is called for. Lord Hutton's conclusion on the basis of the evidence was clear:

"As the dossier was one to be presented to, and read by, Parliament and the public, and was not an intelligence assessment to be considered only by the Government, I do not consider that it was improper for Mr. Scarlett and the JIC to take into account suggestions as to drafting made by 10 Downing Street and to adopt those suggestions if they were consistent with the intelligence available to the JIC."

(Paragraph 228 (7) of Lord Hutton's Report of the Inquiry into the Circumstances Surrounding the Death of Dr. David Kelly CMG.)

### MEPs and EU Officials

**Mr. Swire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with other EU Foreign Ministers about *(a)* the harmonisation of salaries for MEPs and *(b)* ensuring greater transparency in the travel expenses of MEPs and EU officials. [155044]

**Mr. MacShane:** Salaries and travel expenses for MEPs were most recently discussed at the General Affairs and External Relations Council on 27 January, where the Council failed to reach agreement on a revised Statute for MEPs. We nonetheless hope the European Parliament will implement its Expenses Regulation—which it can do with or without a Statute—so reforming its travel expenses system.

Draft revised Staff Regulations for all EU officials are currently being discussed at working group level; they have not been discussed by the Council. We hope that they will be implemented on 1 May and will make the travel expenses system for EU officials simpler and more transparent.

### Middle East

**Mr. Tynan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government have taken to secure a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems as envisaged in UN Security Council Resolution 1284, in respect of *(a)* Israel and *(b)* Syria. [155562]

**Mr. Mullin:** The Government have consistently supported Resolutions in the UN General Assembly calling for the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

We take every available opportunity to urge all states in the region to sign, ratify and abide by the obligations of all Treaties and Conventions covering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the means for their delivery.

### Mozambique

**Mr. Gibb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the *(a)* independence and *(b)* integrity of the Mozambican judicial system. [155310]

**Mr. Mullin:** The independence of the Mozambican judiciary is enshrined in Section 1, Article 164 of the Mozambican constitution. This states that, "In the discharge of their functions, judges are independent and only owe obedience to the law". The Government of Mozambique is committed to ensuring an independent and fair judicial system.

**Mr. Gibb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will place in the Library the list lodged with his Department of United Kingdom claimants for property appropriated without compensation by the Mozambique Government since 1975. [155311]

**Mr. Mullin:** Under Exemption 15 (Statutory and other restrictions: Data Protection Act in this case) of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, the Government is prohibited from placing in the Library the list of UK claimants for property appropriated without compensation by the Mozambique Government since 1975 without the written permission of all those listed.

**Mr. Gibb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the occasions in the last 12 months in which the issue of claims for compensation for confiscated property have been raised with the Mozambican authorities. [155312]

**Mr. Mullin:** Our High Commission in Maputo last raised the issue of claims for compensation for confiscated property with the Mozambican authorities in July 2003. We will continue to raise the matter with the Mozambicans as and when appropriate opportunities present themselves.

### Nigeria

**Mr. Tynan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the acquisition of ballistic missiles and associated technology by Nigeria from North Korea. [155563]

**Mr. MacShane:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Blaby (Mr. Robathan) on 10 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1305W.

### North Korea

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what evaluation he has made of recent evidence from North Korea of continuing human rights abuses, with specific reference to use of political prisoners to test chemical weapons. [155572]

**Mr. Mullin:** We fully share my hon. Friend's concerns about reports of continued and widespread human rights violations in North Korea, and we raise the issue regularly with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) authorities. My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Bill Rammell) raised the allegations concerning chemical weapons tested on North Korean prisoners with the DPRK Ambassador on 12 February and urged the DPRK government to allow independent monitors access to the country to verify or disprove such allegations, as called for in the Resolution adopted by the UN Commission on Human

Rights in 2003. We will continue to encourage the DPRK government to co-operate fully with UN human rights mechanisms.

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of China on its policy of sending back North Korean refugees. [155613]

**Mr. Mullin:** We regularly raise the issue of North Korean refugees with the Chinese, including at the biannual UK/China Human Rights Dialogue. At the last round of the Dialogue, on 10/11 November 2003, we urged China to allow the UNHCR access to the border areas and to observe its obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention. In addition, my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Bill Rammell) raised the issue with the Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister Zhang Yesui in December 2003.

We will continue to encourage China's greater co-operation with the UNHCR on this issue.

### Parliamentary Questions

**Mr. Brady:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many days on average his Department took in Session 2002–03 to give a substantive answer to a parliamentary question for ordinary written answer; and what the greatest number of days taken to answer such a question was. [155925]

**Mr. Straw:** My Department took an average of four days to answer parliamentary questions for ordinary written answer in Session 2002–03, within the five working day Parliamentary guidelines.

The greatest number of days taken to provide an ordinary written answer in Session 2002–03 is 102 working days, which includes the summer recess.

### Recruitment Advertising

**Pete Wishart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his Department's expenditure on recruitment advertising was in each of the last three years, broken down by publication; and what proportion of such expenditure was *(a)* to advertise vacant posts and *(b)* in the form of other general recruitment advertising. [155530]

**Mr. Mullin:** The information requested is as follows:

*Advertising vacant posts—Financial year to end March 2003*

£

| *Publication* | *Cost* |
|---|---|
| *FCO London* | |
| *A1—Administrative assistants—June 2002, September 2002, October 2002, March 2003* | |
| South London Press | 19,348.80 |
| Metro and Evening Standard | 91,544.00 |
| www.thisislondon.co.uk | 144.00 |
| Total | 111,036.80 |
| *A2—Executive Assistants—July 2002, October 2002, February 2003* | |
| Evening Standard and Metro | 15,722.40 |
| Daily Mail | 35,713.44 |
| Ethnic Media Group | 8,510.00 |
| The Voice | 4,261.68 |
| Glasgow Herald | 10,858.40 |
| Scotsman (including Evening News) | 12,690.00 |

*Advertising vacant posts—Financial year to end March 2003*

£

| *Publication* | *Cost* |
|---|---|
| Belfast Telegraph (including Sunday Life) | 7,354.71 |
| Cardiff Western Mail | 14,064.60 |
| Metro Manchester | 2,352.16 |
| Glasgow Evening Times | 2,856.80 |
| Edinburgh Evening News | 3,816.80 |
| Metro Scotland | 913.20 |
| Metro Birmingham | 2,536.64 |
| Total | 121,650.83 |
| *B3—Operational Entry—September 2002, January 2003* | |
| Belfast Telegraph | 4,832.97 |
| Cardiff Western Mail | 9,615.50 |
| Ethnic Media Group | 5,513.68 |
| Evening Standard and Metro | 10,872.00 |
| Glasgow Herald | 10,985.60 |
| Guardian | 9,355.84 |
| The Scotsman | 11,160.80 |
| The Voice | 2,837.12 |
| Total | 65,173.51 |
| *Overseas Security Managers—January 2003* | |
| Police Review | 3,816.24 |
| Pathfinder | 3,550.12 |
| Total | 7,366.36 |
| *C4—DS General—September 2002* | |
| Guardian | 3,920.40 |
| The Voice | 1,317.40 |
| Asian Times | 1,645.00 |
| Belfast Telegraph | 2,055.16 |
| Glasgow Herald | 4,342.00 |
| Scotsman | 5,281.00 |
| Cardiff Western Mail | 3,347.90 |
| Total | 21,908.86 |
| *C4—DS Economists—September 2002, January 2003* | |
| Guardian | 6,480.00 |
| Totaljobs.com | 275.00 |
| The Voice | 1,317.40 |
| Asian Times | 1,645.00 |
| Belfast Telegraph | 4,680.32 |
| Glasgow Herald | 9,554.00 |
| Scotsman | 10,706.00 |
| Economist | 17,575.00 |
| Cardiff Western Mail | 6,469.40 |
| Sunday Times Website | 340.00 |
| Ethnic Media Group | 2,908.00 |
| Total | 61,950.12 |
| *Specialist Recruitment* | |
| Accountancy Age | 3,000.00 |
| Asian Times Group | 1,506.00 |
| Bedfordshire Times | 950.00 |
| Ethnic Media Group | 19,764.00 |
| Evening Standard | 1,296.00 |
| Financial Times | 5,250.00 |
| Guardian | 33,612.00 |
| Luton and Dunstable Herald | 1,577.00 |
| Milton Keynes Chronicle | 834.50 |
| Milton Keynes Citizen | 3,362.70 |
| New Scientist | 10,495.00 |
| Northampton Chronicle | 2,067.00 |
| Northampton Herald and Sport | 1,223.00 |
| Northants Curon and Echo | 1,587.00 |
| Sunday Times | 7,840.00 |
| The Times | 1,519.00 |
| THES | 3,165.00 |
| www.jobs.ac.uk | 470.00 |
| Total | 99,518.20 |
| *FCO Hanslope Park* | |
| *C4—Contract Managers—April 2002* | |
| Personnel Publications | 4,465.00 |
| Total | 4,465.00 |

*Advertising vacant posts—Financial year to end March 2003*

£

| Publication | Cost |
|---|---|
| *C4—Electrical Technician Officer—April 2002* | |
| McMillan Scott | 705.00 |
| Premier Newspapers | 4,450.76 |
| Institution of Electrical Engineers | 4,624.80 |
| Total | 9,780.56 |
| *D7—Head of Technical Security—May 2002* | |
| Premier Newspapers | 4,450.76 |
| Express Newspapers | 9,987.50 |
| Total | 14,438.26 |
| *C4—Investigating Officer—September 2002* | |
| Daily Mail | 4,758.75 |
| Jane's Information Group | 3,877.50 |
| Total | 8,636.25 |
| *A1—Mail Room Assistants—November 2002* | |
| Evening Standard | 1,057.50 |
| Total | 1,057.50 |
| *B3—Assistant Government Butler—March 2003* | |
| Restaurant Magazine | 1,938.75 |
| Evening Standard | 2,350.00 |
| Caterer and Hotel Keeper | 1,854.16 |
| Total | 6,142.91 |

*General and diversity advertising—Financial year to end March 2003*

| Publication | Cost |
|---|---|
| Hobsons Career Guide for Women 2003<br>Hobsons Career Guide for Students with Disabilities 2003<br>Hobsons Career Guide for Ethnic Minorities 2003<br>Hobsons Diversity Handbook<br>www.hobsons.com microsite<br>Newsletters for Ethnic Minority students | 82,500.00 |
| KAL—Careers Advice for Ethnic Minority Graduates<br>Number Ten—Careers Advice for Women Graduates<br>Arberry Profile—Careers Advice for Disabled Graduates<br>Recruitment Brochures<br>Spectrum—Careers Advice for Ethnic Minority 16 to 19-year-olds | 81,114.00 |
| Headstart | 3,850.00 |
| Doctor Job's Little Black Book<br>www.doctorjob.com employer profile | 4,450.00 |
| National Guide to Black History Month | 3,100.00 |
| Futures/Network News | 5,600.00 |
| Employment Opportunities website and newsletter | 2,000.00 |
| Black and Asian Graduate website | 495.00 |
| Total | 183,109.00 |

Total cost of advertising April 2002 to March 2003: £716,234.16.

We advertise widely for jobs in the Diplomatic Service and specialist positions, as well as general careers advertisements placed in diversity publications and websites. The placement of adverts is reviewed regularly according to the nature of the position, cost and response from previous advertisements. The above breakdown for the years 2000–02 could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### Serbia and Montenegro

**Mr. Robathan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what representations he has made to EU partners on *(a)* the situation in Serbia and *(b)* Serbian co-operation with international institutions; [155670]

(2) what assessment he has made of the co-operation of the Serbian Government with *(a)* UN authorities and *(b)* the War Crimes Tribunal; [155671]

(3) what assessment he has made of UN reports that Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic are in Belgrade; and what representations he has made to the Serbian authorities on this matter. [155672]

**Mr. MacShane:** We and our European Union partners regularly discuss the situation in Serbia and the rest of the Balkans region. The General Affairs and External Relations Council on 26 January noted the results of the recent Serbian parliamentary elections of 28 December 2003. It urged all democratic parties to help form a government committed to reform and further integration with the European Union.

While the relationship between Belgrade and the United Nations Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) has been difficult, the Serbian Deputy Prime Minister and Head of the Co-ordination Centre for Kosovo and Metohija, Nebojsa Covic, has recently made helpful statements on the Direct Dialogue Working Groups. These talks will cover areas such as environmental issues, energy and missing persons. This is a positive step towards building a stable future for Kosovo.

The UK fully supports the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), which helps foster reconciliation and stability in the region. Serbia and Montenegro (SaM) made some progress in early 2003, but co-operation has since stalled. We take every opportunity to remind Belgrade that in order to realise her Euro-Atlantic aspirations, SaM must fulfil the international obligation of full and complete co-operation with the ICTY.

We believe that SaM could do more to co-operate with the ICTY, particularly by assisting in the arrest and transfer of Bosnian Serb leaders Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic. Through both bilateral and EU initiatives, we continue to put pressure on the SaM Government to transfer all remaining ICTY indictees, including Mladic and Karadzic, and to allow ICTY full access to documents and witnesses.

### Somali National Reconciliation Conference

**Mr. Robathan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs who attended the Somali National Reconciliation Conference at the Safari Park Hotel outside Nairobi. [154137]

**Mr. Mullin:** The main Somali political and faction leaders attended these consultations, although leaders from Somaliland did not. A UK observer was also present.

**Mr. Robathan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the cost was to the UK Government of the Somali National Reconciliation Conference held at the Safari Park Hotel outside Nairobi. [154138]

**Mr. Mullin:** The UK Government made a voluntary contribution of US$100,000 to support these consultations.

### Terrorism

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his answer of 28 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 415W, on terrorism (political parties), what means have been used to persuade Hizbollah to abandon all terrorist activity. [154659]

**Mr. Rammell:** Hizbollah's terrorist wing, the External Security Organisation, is proscribed in the UK. We maintain contact with the political wing of the organisation, on which we press the pursuit of legitimate political engagement and the abandonment of terrorist activity. We have also urged Lebanon, Iran and Syria to exercise any influence they have with Hizbollah in a positive manner.

### Train Travel

**Bob Russell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last used a train in connection with his ministerial duties. [155158]

**Mr. Straw:** 16 January 2004.

### Tristan da Cunha

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the division of responsibilities between his Department and the local council on Tristan da Cunha in respect of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. [148621]

**Mr. Mullin:** The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs takes the policy lead on Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) related matters for the UK. The UK's ratification of CITES applies to Tristan da Cunha. Under the latter's current legislation, which is under review, the functions of the CITES Management Authority are carried out by the Administrator, who is a Foreign and Commonwealth Office official. The Island Council would not be involved.

### Turkey

**Bob Russell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will seek the consent of the Turkish Government for British officials to monitor the Turkish local elections on 28 March. [155581]

**Mr. MacShane:** No. The British Embassy in Ankara will follow the local elections in Turkey closely. This will include consultations with political parties, non-governmental organisations and electoral authorities.

**Bob Russell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will seek the consent of the Turkish Government for British officials to monitor the Kurdish New Year Newroz celebrations on 21 March. [155582]

**Mr. MacShane:** No. Non-governmental organisations will observe the Newroz celebrations and the British Embassy in Ankara, which follows developments in Turkey closely, is in regular contact with them.

### Ukraine

**Mr. Grogan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Government of Ukraine on the importance of free and fair elections there; and if he will make a statement. [155937]

**Mr. MacShane:** My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary made clear to Foreign Minister Kostyantyn Gryshchenko in January that Ukraine's aspirations towards membership of the EU and NATO were dependent on its democratic progress. The extent to which the 2004 presidential elections are free and fair will be a test of Ukraine's readiness for closer relationships with the EU and NATO.

### United Nations Compensation Commission

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether it is the Government's policy to support *(a)* new approvals and *(b)* new payments of claims from the United Nations Compensation Commission. [154555]

**Mr. Mullin:** As a permanent member of the United Nations Compensation Commission's (UNCC) Governing Council, the UK actively supports the work of the UNCC, including any Governing Council decisions relating to new approvals and new payments.

### Weapons of Mass Destruction

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the scope of international monitoring of weapons of mass destruction proliferation, with particular reference to biological and chemical weapons. [154858]

**Mr. MacShane:** The threat of proliferation of WMD has, in recent years been successfully limited by international arms control and effective multilateral treaties including the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC).

The NPT is the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime, with 188 States Parties. It forbids acquisition or possession of nuclear weapons, except by the five acknowledged nuclear weapons States, who are required to pursue negotiations on nuclear disarmament. The NPT requires non-nuclear weapons Parties to enter into safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in order to verify compliance. The IAEA's safeguards system is being strengthened by the introduction of an Additional Protocol expanding the IAEA's access. The UK is working with EU partners to see this Additional Protocol accepted as an international norm.

The CTBT provides for a global system of monitoring stations, using four complementary technologies, to record data necessary to verify compliance. Its aim is to achieve a total ban of explosive testing of nuclear weapons.

The CWC bans the production, acquisition and retention of chemical weapons and requires CW possessors to destroy, under supervision, CW stockpiles

and production facilities. CWC implementation is verified by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) through on-site monitoring of CW destruction activity, and regular inspection of relevant industrial facilities. The CWC also provides for any Party with a concern about another's compliance to seek a challenge inspection. The CWC has 159 Parties, most recently including Libya's welcome accession.

The BWC has 151 Parties. The Fifth Review Conference of the BWC agreed in November 2002 on a three-year programme of work leading up to the Sixth Review Conference in 2006. This process is designed to strengthen the Convention, which currently has no ability to verify compliance. Assistance with the establishment of national legislation and regulation was provided to two States Parties following the annual Meeting of States Parties in 2003. The UK actively encourages universality of the Convention and urges all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Convention.

### Western Sahara

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the decision of the UN to extend the Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara until 30 April; and what impact he expects this to have on Morocco. [154462]

**Mr. Rammell:** We have consistently supported the efforts of the UN Secretary General and James Baker III, his Personal Envoy, to find a solution to the dispute over Western Sahara. We supported UN Security Council Resolution 1523, which extended the mandate of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) until 30 April, allowing Morocco the opportunity to consult further with Mr. Baker on the final Moroccan response to the latest UN Proposals, known as the Peace Plan. We continue to urge Morocco to engage constructively with Mr. Baker.

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the situation with regard to the imprisonment of Western Sahara Polisario activists in Morocco. [154463]

**Mr. Rammell:** Ministers and officials regularly call upon the parties to the Western Sahara dispute to take action on human rights issues and we also raise specific cases. For example, my officials raised with the Moroccan authorities the cases of some of the 12 Saharawi activists who were subsequently released by the Moroccan authorities on 7 January 2004. We also raise with the Polisario and Algerian authorities the over 600 Moroccan prisoners of war who continue to be held by the Polisario, many on Algerian territory. We will continue to monitor the situation closely, taking action with the appropriate authorities where necessary.

### Zimbabwe

**Mr. Ancram:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs at which EU General Affairs Council meetings in the last six months he has called for the toughening of EU sanctions against the Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe; and what specific measures he called for. [155437]

**Mr. Straw:** We have been consistent advocates of tough EU sanctions against Mugabe. The present measures consist of an arms embargo on Zimbabwe, and an assets freeze and travel ban on leading members of the regime. I have raised the matter with relevant EU Foreign Minister colleagues on a number of occasions and so have officials on my behalf with their counterparts. The result is that with our strong support, these measures were extended on 19 February for a further year.

We also sought and secured an increase in the number of senior ZANU-PF figures subject to the travel ban and assets freeze, from 79 to 95. This includes several additional individuals who bear particular responsibility for the abuses of human rights in Zimbabwe.

The 23 February General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC), which I attended, issued a strong statement deploring the failure of the government of Zimbabwe to address the EU's concerns over the deteriorating situation in the country. The GAERC also made clear the EU's intent to continue to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Zimbabwe, on the basis of need.

## INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Agriculture (Africa)

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what proportion of *(a)* employment, *(b)* exports and *(c)* gross national income in *(a)* Nigeria, *(b)* Ghana, *(c)* Tanzania and *(d)* Kenya is accounted for by agriculture. [155405]

**Hilary Benn:** Accurate data on agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa are not always available. For example, some smallholder farmers may not be taken into account in those agricultural censuses and surveys that focus on 'formal' agriculture. DFID does not produce its own data—the following have been collated from other sources which we believe to be among the best available:

| | *2001 labour force employed in agriculture*[1] *(percentage)* | *2001 agricultural exports as percentage of total*[2] | *2001 agricultural production as percentage GDP*[3] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nigeria | 32 | 3 | 35 |
| Ghana | 57 | 22 | 36 |
| Tanzania | 80 | 28 | 45 |
| Kenya | 75 | 39 | 19 |

[1] World Resources Institute (2001) sourced from FAOstat.
[2] World Bank (2003) African Development Indicators 2003.
[3] World Bank (2003) World Development Indicators 2003.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what proportion of *(a)* employment, *(b)* exports and *(c)* gross national income in (i) Mozambique, (ii) Malawi and (iii) Lesotho is accounted for by agriculture. [155407]

**Hilary Benn:** The SADC 2000 Human Development Report suggests that in 1990 the percentage of the labour force deriving its primary source of income from agriculture was 87 per cent. in Malawi, 83 per cent. in Mozambique and 40 per cent. in Lesotho (where only

10 per cent. of the land area is suitable for cultivation). These figures are broadly in line with more recent assessments in the three countries. In all three countries, a higher percentage of households derive at least some of their livelihood from farming.

Agriculture contributes 93 per cent. of export earnings in Malawi, 6 per cent. in Mozambique and 1 per cent. in Lesotho.

Agriculture represents 33 per cent. of GDP in both Malawi and Mozambique, and 18 per cent. in Lesotho.

### Palestine

**Mr. Swire:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with his EU counterparts on the allegations that foreign aid to the Palestinian Authority from the EU has been diverted to the Al-Aqsa brigade. [155043]

**Hilary Benn:** The European Union takes such allegations extremely seriously, and has responded by in investigating the matter. The Commission, on the basis of the material it has examined, has not found any evidence of European funds being used for terrorism or other purposes other than those agreed with the Palestinian Authority. A comprehensive report on the matter, by the EU's Anti Fraud Office, is due to be published shortly.

### Bush Meat

**Mr. Gardiner:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development when the inter-departmental ministerial group on biodiversity will discuss bushmeat. [153152]

**Mr. Morley:** I have been asked to reply.

The first meeting of this group is likely to take place soon after my return from the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity later this month. Bushmeat is an issue that the Group will want to consider, but all arrangements for this meeting, including the agenda, still have to be finalised.

### Central America

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what measures are in place to deal with Central American garment factories that are found not to comply with the relevant codes of conduct. [155279]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** If a Central American garment factory is found not to comply with codes of conduct enshrined in national legislation, the relevant government institution is responsible for taking remedial actions, as laid out within the legislation. If, however, a garment factory is found not to comply with the corporate codes of conduct specified by the retailers with which the garment factory has a contract, remedial actions are identified by the independent monitor by the retailers to ensure compliance. If these actions are not taken, the factory is liable to be fined by the retailers, or in serious breaches, to losing the contract. The threat of losing a contract is a powerful incentive for a factory to implement these actions.

### Chad-Cameroon Pipeline

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) when independent external audits of the Chad/Cameroon pipeline project will be undertaken; [155408]

(2) when the mandatory fiscal accountability and transparency measures for the Chad/Cameroon pipeline project will be in place; [155409]

(3) what assessment he has made of the level of compliance of the Chad/Cameroon pipeline project with statutory international requirements for safety and environmental protection; [155410]

(4) when the area special oil spill response plan for the Chad/Cameroon pipeline project *(a)* was due to be in place and *(b)* is expected to be in place. [155411]

**Hilary Benn:** DFID is not directly involved in funding or implementing this World Bank project. DFID therefore does not have first-hand information on detailed implementation issues concerning external auditing, fiscal accountability, environmental and safety compliance or oil spill response plans.

However, DFID is confident that the World Bank's systems for the monitoring and implementation of this project, and for the investigation of any warranted complaints are appropriate.

Since the project was approved in June 2000, exceptional resources have been allocated by the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation, to monitor and support the project's implementation against Internationally agreed standards. This includes the establishment of the Independent Inspection Panel (IIP) and the External Compliance Monitoring Group (ECMG).

In relation to the quality of auditing and fiscal accountability, the World Bank policy identifies two sets of appropriate auditing standards: the International Standards on Auditing published by the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) and the Auditing Standards published by the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions. Project arrangements provide for regular audits of the Chad-Cameroon pipeline projects accounts, plus independent opinions from the International Advisory Group (IAG) and the External Compliance and Monitoring Group (ECMG), which carries out regular independent supervisions of the technical and environmental aspects of the project, and from the Inspection Panel which may investigate complaints from people who believe they have been negatively affected by a World Bank project.

The Chad-Cameroon pipeline is subject to a number of monitoring and supervision controls to ensure quality control, application of environmental regulations, design and implementation adhere to International rules and regulations. The Environmental Management Plan (EMP) has strict requirements and specifications, and compliance with these by all parties is spelled out in legally binding agreements. Strong remedies are provided in legal agreements with all parties in case they fail to comply with this obligation. The EMP represents an extensive analysis of the potential environmental and social impacts of the project.

The World Bank are being advised by the ECMG in monitoring the implementation of the Environmental Management Plan, and by an International Advisory Group on broader implementation issues, including those that need to be addressed to achieve the project's developmental objectives. Both the ECMG and IAG make regular site visits. These third party reviews supplement the Bank's own monitoring and supervision of the project which includes site visits, internal reporting and continual discussions with the project sponsors.

The above measures are additional to on-going monitoring by the Consortium and by the Governments of Chad and Cameroon. The Consortium provides quarterly reports which are publicly available.

DFID's interest is as a member of the Executive Board of the World Bank. We do and will continue to take our role on the Executive Board seriously, ensuring that issues identified by the Independent Inspection Panel and External Compliance Monitoring Group are raised, monitored and rectified.

The investigation reports mentioned above are publicly available and can be found on http://www.worldbank.org/afr/ccproj/index.htm.

## Civil Servants

**Dr. Cable:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many civil servants, broken down by grade, there are in the Department and the agencies for which the Department is responsible; and what the figures were in January 1997. [150267]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** Details of the numbers of current civil servants in DFID (there are no agencies), broken down by grade, are contained in the following table.

| *Grade (highest first)* | *Staff numbers* |
|---|---|
| Senior Civil Service | 71 |
| A1 (Level 6) | 178 |
| A2 (Level 7) | 368 |
| A3 (Senior Executive Officer) level | 139 |
| B1 (Higher Executive Officer) level | 297 |
| B2 (Executive Officer) level | 295 |
| C1 (Administrative Officer) level | 306 |
| C2 (Administrative Assistant) level | 90 |
| Total | 1,744 |

There were 1,177 Civil Servants in DFID, in 1997. A breakdown of that figure by grade, is not available.

## CDC

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the estimated annual amount of investment that the Government will make through CDC when it becomes a Government-owned investment company. [153421]

**Hilary Benn:** The Commonwealth Development Corporation Act of 1999 transformed CDC into a Government-owned investment company that deploys some £1.1 billion of public capital for investment. This capital was injected into CDC by the Government over several decades up to the mid-1990s. We have no current plans to invest additional funds in CDC.

All new investments made by CDC in the future will be funded from the proceeds of realisation of existing investments. CDC's business plan for the next few years estimates that between £200 million and £300 million will be invested each year into the new funds to be managed by Actis. The intention is that, in the medium term, third party investors will be attracted to commit capital to these funds alongside CDC.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the environmental sustainability requirements of Actis and the Commonwealth Development Corporation will be following the reorganisation announced in his Written Statement of 8 January. [153445]

**Hilary Benn:** Since 1999, CDC has been required to follow a set of business principles that require compliance with best practice, both at fund and investee company level. These principles include environmental standards, where, as a minimum, World Bank rules must be applied, or at least met within an agreed timeframe.

The other business principles cover the areas of personal and corporate integrity, social issues such as child or forced labour or discriminatory practices, health and safety, transparency and legal and fiscal compliance.

The reorganisation does not affect these principles. They will in future apply to both Actis and CDC.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what *(a)* objectives and *(b)* return requirements will be required for investment of capital provided to an Actis-managed fund by the CDC following the reorganisation announced in his Written Statement of 8 January. [153446]

**Hilary Benn:** As set out in my Written Statement of 8 January, *Official Report*, column 15WS, CDC's objective is to maximise the creation and long-term growth of viable businesses in poorer developing countries by making responsible investments and mobilising private capital alongside public funds. This objective will remain unchanged under the reorganisation proposals and will apply to all CDC capital invested in any Actis-managed fund.

The rates of return of the different Actis funds will vary according to the region or sector at which a particular fund is targeted; for example, the rate of return for the Africa fund will differ from that for the Power fund. Target rates of return will be set according to the requirements of businesses in the region or sector in question and according to the requirements of potential co-investors in the fund.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether ventures managed by Actis that are fully commercial will be eligible for investment capital from the Commonwealth Development Corporation. [153455]

**Hilary Benn:** Actis will be a fully commercial organisation and all ventures that it manages will be on fully commercial terms. CDC will only invest its capital in businesses that offer the prospect, with the help of the investment offered by CDC, of generating returns acceptable to CDC and co-investors. CDC's mission is to develop the private sector in the poorer developing countries. It does not plan to make available any form of concessional financing

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the *(a)* salaries and *(b)* bonuses awarded to each board member and member of senior management of the Commonwealth Development Corporation for each year since 1997. [153456]

**Hilary Benn:** The salaries, bonuses and/or fees paid to the executive and non-executive directors of Commonwealth Development Corporation each year are published in the directors' remuneration report included in CDC's Annual Report. For the period 1997 to 2002, they were as follows:

£

| | *Salary/fee* | *Bonus* |
|---|---|---|
| *2002* | | |
| *Non-Executive Directors* | | |
| Lord Cairns (Chair) | 48,000 | |
| Jayne Almond (Deputy Chair) | 22,432 | |
| Jonathan Kydd | 16,658 | |
| Lalith de Mel | 17,000 | |
| Pen Kent (to 1 December 2001) | 10,250 | |
| Russel Seal (to 2 May 2001) | 4,375 | |
| Peter Smitham (from 15 March 2001) | 17,000 | |
| Tim Parker (from 1 December 2001) | 17,000 | |
| *Executive Directors* | | |
| Alan Gillespie (CEO to 30 November 2002) | 143,055 | 90,000 |
| Paul Fletcher (from 17 January 2001) | 141,225 | 90,000 |
| Richard Laing | 139,425 | 75,000 |
| Andrew Reicher (from 17 January 2001) | 137,000 | 90,000 |
| Nicholas Selbie (from 17 January 2001) | 147,900 | 67,500 |
| *2001* | | |
| *Non-Executive Directors* | | |
| Lord Cairns (Chair) | 37,500 | |
| Jayne Almond (Deputy Chair) | 16,333 | |
| Jonathan Kydd | 10,833 | |
| Lalith de Mel (from 13 April 2000) | 10,916 | |
| Pen Kent (to 1 December 2001) | 10,250 | |
| Russel Seal (to 2 May 2001) | 4,375 | |
| Peter Smitham (from 15 March 2001) | 8,637 | |
| Tim Parker (from 1 December 2001) | 1,416 | |
| *Executive Directors* | | |
| Alan Gillespie (CEO) | 170,000 | 43,350 |
| Richard Laing (from 24 January 2000) | 135,000 | 35,000 |
| Paul Fletcher (from 17 January 2001) | 128,769 | 42,300 |
| Andrew Reicher (from 17 January 2001) | 128,769 | 32,300 |
| Nicholas Selbie (from 17 January 2001) | 138,308 | 32,100 |
| *2000* | | |
| *Non-Executive Directors* | | |
| Lord Cairns (Chair) | 32,250 | |
| Jayne Almond (Deputy Chair) | 13,146 | |
| Pen Kent | 9,000 | |
| Jonathan Kydd | 8,250 | |
| Russel Seal | 10,260 | |
| Lalith de Mel (from 13 April 2000) | 5,909 | |
| *Executive Directors* | | |
| Alan Gillespie (CEO) | 160,000 | 57,600 |
| Richard Laing (from 24 January 2000) | 114,583 | 45,000 |

£

| | *Salary/fee* | *Bonus* |
|---|---|---|
| *1999* | | |
| *Members of the Corporation (to 7 December 1999) and Non-Executive Directors of CDC Group plc (from 8 December 1999)* | | |
| Lord Cairns (Chair) | 30,813 | |
| Jayne Almond (Deputy Chair) | 11,625 | |
| Pen Kent | 9,000 | |
| Jonathan Kydd | 8,250 | |
| Russel Seal | 8,953 | |
| *Chief Executive Officer (to 7 December 1999)* | | |
| Roy Reynolds | 148,750 | 35,000 |
| *Executive Director of CDC Group plc* | | |
| Alan Gillespie (CEO from 8 December 1999) | 13,333 | |
| *Members of the Corporation (to 7 December 1999)* | | |
| Carolyn Hayman | 7,728 | |
| Roger Murray | 7,728 | |
| David Pearce | 7,728 | |
| Hari Shankar Singhania (to June 1999) | 3,750 | |
| *1998* | | |
| Chairman (Lord Cairns) | 29,000 | |
| Other Members of the Corporation (Board) | 68,000 | |
| CEO (Roy Reynolds) | [1]168,189 | |
| Executive Management Committee members | 819,429 | |
| *1997* | | |
| Chairman (Lord Cairns) | 27,000 | |
| Other Members of the Corporation (Board) | 68,000 | |
| CEO (Roy Reynolds) | [1]153,762 | |
| Executive Management Committee members | 747,071 | |

[1] Inclusive of bonus.

*Notes:*

1. The remuneration committee of the board (made up of the independent directors) is responsible for recommending the total remuneration of executive directors including any bonuses. Bonuses reflect individual performances in the context of the overall performance of CDC including performance against the investment policy.

2. Prior to transformation into CDC Group PLC in 1999, remuneration data for the former Commonwealth Development Corporation was not published in full detail.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what proportion of Commonwealth Development Corporation investment capital was directed to agriculture ventures for each year since 1997. [153457]

**Hilary Benn:** The proportion by year of CDC's new and total investments in the agricultural sector were as follows:

| | *Percentage of new investment into agricultural sector* | *Percentage of total portfolio in agricultural sector* |
|---|---|---|
| 1998 | 23 | 25 |
| 1999 | 23 | 18.5 |
| 2000 | 20 | 17 |
| 2001 | 10.2 | 10.2 |
| 2002 | 11.3 | 11.3 |
| 2003 | 5.4 | 10.9 |

I regret that the figures for 1997 are not readily available.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what proportion of Commonwealth Development Corporation investment capital was directed to the poorest quartile of Commonwealth countries in each year since 1997. [153472]

**Hilary Benn:** The mandate of the former Commonwealth Development Corporation was widened to include all developing countries in 1969. After transformation into CDC in 1999, we gave it a target of making at least 70 per cent. of its new investments in the poorer developing countries (basically those with a GNI per capita of less than US$1,750).

The poorest quartile of Commonwealth countries all fall within this grouping. For the years 1997 to 2001 (which is the latest year for which data are available) these countries were Bangladesh, Cameroon (1997 only), Gambia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Lesotho (1998 to 2001 only), Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The proportion of CDC's new investment that were made in these countries is as follows:

1997—32 per cent.

1998—47 per cent.

1999—25 per cent.

2000—26 per cent.

2001—44 per cent.

2002—24 per cent.

2003—61 per cent.

*Note:*
2002 and 2003 figures are based on the countries in the poorest quartile in 2001.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the measures that will be in place to ensure that Actis does not obtain capital from the CDC that could be obtained through private investors. [153454]

**Hilary Benn:** Under a five-year contract, CDC will place 95 per cent. of its investment capital into the funds that Actis will launch and manage. Actis will be encouraged to raise as much further capital from private and other third party investors as possible for investment in the poorer developing countries. Maximising the mobilisation of third party capital is the key feature of the reorganisation proposals.

CDC's investment policy (set by DFID) obliges it to concentrate its investment in the poorer developing countries where the private sector is generally reluctant to invest. We believe that in practice there is a wide gap between the demand for investment capital in the poorer countries and the amount actually available to them. It is our aim that CDC will help bridge this gap.

We are aware that CDC's investments must not crowd out or otherwise discourage private investors already active in developing countries. This .is the opposite of its purpose and we will expect the Board of CDC to be particularly vigilant about this issue.

### Conflict Resolution

**Mr. Tynan:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what funds his Department has committed to conflict resolution in 2003–04; and what percentage of the Department's budget this represents. [155565]

**Hilary Benn:** In 2003–04, it was forecast that £22 million would be allocated to DFID for conflict prevention work through the Africa Conflict Prevention Pool (ACPP) and £16 million through the Global Conflict Prevention Pool (GCPP). £4.4 million was committed to Conflict Policy and Projects within DFID's Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department.

DFID's total programme budget for financial year 2003–04 is £3,611 million. Therefore, committed and specific conflict related spending is equivalent to 1.2 per cent. of DFID's total programme budget. However, this does not incorporate the full extent of DFID's spending on conflict issues in this financial year.

DFID's total budget for its bilateral country and regional programmes is £1,429 million. A significant proportion of this budget is committed to countries affected by conflict and many of DFID's poverty reduction programmes in these countries will have a positive impact on conflict. However, further breakdown by sector is not possible until all actual programmes spending for 2003–04 has been recorded.

These spending commitment figures are available in the 2003 DFID Departmental Report, a copy of which is available in the House of Commons Library.

### Department Branding

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much his Department spent on branding the Department between 1997–98 and 2003–04, broken down by *(a)* consultancy fees, *(b)* design and orders for new stationery, *(c)* website design and *(d)* other material featuring new logos. [154078]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** Since its establishment in 1997 as the successor to the Overseas Development Administration, this Department has spent the following amounts on creating a new logo and departmental identity:

*(a)* Consultancy fees—£6,000 plus licensing typeface—£5,000 and producing guidelines for contractors on logo/identity—£5,600.
*(b)* All major items of stationery requiring the new logo were held in electronic form so costs for design and new stock were negligible.
*(c)* There were no significant Website re-design costs.
*(d)* Publications featuring the old logo continued in use until stocks were exhausted or until the publication became obsolete. Write off costs were therefore negligible.

### Departmental Expenditure

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what proportion of his Department's funding was paid to *(a)* governments and *(b)* non-governmental organisations in each year since 1997. [154250]

**Hilary Benn:** In recent years, around 7 per cent. of DFID's programme has been channelled through non-governmental organisations and some 23 per cent. directly through governments. The remainder also supports governments and NGOs indirectly, but the initial cash payment is made to multilateral organisations (45 per cent.) or companies and research institutes for development programmes that they manage or goods and services provided by them (25 per cent.).

### Direct Budget Support

**Tony Baldry:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what indicators he intends to use to assess whether direct budget support is effective. [152085]

**Hilary Benn:** DFID continuously monitors the effectiveness in reducing poverty, and the value for money, of its direct budget support. Assessing effectiveness means both monitoring the fiduciary risks we take as we use budget support, and also evaluating budget support in terms of its actual effects on poor people.

DFID monitors fiduciary risk in order to have a basic indication of whether our budget support is being used effectively. Indicators for monitoring fiduciary risk include:

- whether the objectives for which funds were allocated have been achieved;
- whether reporting is accurate and timely;
- whether actual expenditure matches the agreed budget allocations;
- whether value for money and transparency have been demonstrated in procurement;
- what progress has been made towards improving financial management.

In addition to this, a joint donor evaluation of general budget support is under way, which will provide a comprehensive assessment of the effects of budget support on developing countries and their people. DFID has the lead in this process which is co-funded by 15 other donors, through the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

The evaluation's indicators of effectiveness will include:

- whether there are macroeconomic benefits from budget support (for example: recession avoided, inflation controlled);
- whether the recipient Government has greater control over externally-funded activities and resources;
- whether public expenditure is made more efficient;
- whether public administration is made more effective (due to focus on national budget rather than off-budget financing);
- whether democratic accountability is enhanced.

Ultimately the evaluation will assess whether budget support reduces poverty and reduces social exclusion. This assessment will be made using developing countries' own monitoring systems.

Full details of the indicators used by the evaluation will be published in April in the document "Joint Evaluation of GBS: Evaluation Framework". A copy of this document will be placed in the House of Commons Library.

### Ethiopia

**John Barrett:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what representations he has made to the Government of Ethiopia about human rights in the country. [153344]

**Hilary Benn:** During my recent visit to Ethiopia I raised the issue of human rights with Prime Minister Meles and Members of his Government about how respect for human rights—as enshrined in Ethiopia's own Constitution—can be improved. The Prime Minister told me of his commitment to improving human rights as enshrined in the constitution and it will be important for the people to see this happen. He nevertheless accepted that there are problems with human rights in Ethiopia. He gave an undertaking to build the capacity of the judiciary and security sectors to help in the securing and protection of constitutional rights for all. Our office in Ethiopia also frequently discusses such issues with the Government.

Representations concerning human rights form part of a wider ongoing dialogue with the Government of Ethiopia. This dialogue centres on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)—signed between DFID and the Government of Ethiopia in 2003—that sets out undertakings by each side. The improvement of human rights is one such undertaking given by the Government of Ethiopia.

We have also ensured that indicators and targets relating to human rights will be linked to our direct budget support in Ethiopia. This will allow us to track the direction of change and inform decisions on future support.

### Iraq

**Clare Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to his answer of Thursday 4 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 115W, on Iraq, whether the Treasury provided an additional £60 million to his Department to help meet the Madrid pledge. [153321]

**Hilary Benn:** The £60 million set aside by the Chancellor from the Treasury Reserve to meet additional needs in Iraq was included in the United Kingdom's Madrid pledge of £544 million for the three years from April 2003, which covers actual and planned expenditure on reconstruction by DFID, the MOD and the FCO.

To date, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has been allocated £35.7 million of the £60 million to meet the costs of civilian staff seconded to the Coalition Provisional Authority and to the office of the UK's Special Representative to Iraq, including the costs of providing suitably secure accommodation and transport. These staff are engaged in rebuilding Iraqi government capacity and facilitating progress towards a stable, effective and representative Iraqi government. DFID has been allocated £6.5 million for reconstruction work in southern Iraq and funding for NGOs. The remainder has yet to be allocated.

**Sir Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what payments have been made by his Department into the Development Fund for Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [155334]

**Hilary Benn:** DFID has made no payments into the Development Fund for Iraq. The Fund was established to hold Iraq's own revenues, principally from oil sales.

**Sir Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list direct payments from his Department to the Coalition Provisional Authority; what the payments were for in each case; and if he will make a statement. [155336]

**Hilary Benn:** DFID has made no direct payments to the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA). Payments for DFID support to the CPA are made to individuals undertaking secondments and to companies providing consultancy, recruitment, security, equipment supply and other services.

### Ministerial Travel

**Bob Russell:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development when he last used a train in connection with his ministerial duties. [155167]

**Hilary Benn:** I regularly travel to Brussels by Eurostar. The last time was 3 February. When undertaking ministerial duties in the UK, depending on time constraints, I travel by train.

All my ministerial travel on official business is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in "Travel by Ministers".

### Nigeria

**Mr. Robathan:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the implications for UK aid assistance to Nigeria are of the Nigerian Government's attempts to procure ballistic missiles and associated weapons technology; and what representations he has made to Nigerian representatives on the issue. [155489]

**Hilary Benn:** Speculation that Nigeria has attempted to procure military equipment from North Korea has not been substantiated and Nigerian Government spokesmen claim to have been misreported. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has nonetheless made representations to the Nigerian authorities about Britain's policy and position. DFID's criterion for allocating development assistance is where we can make the greatest impact on reducing poverty—as expressed by the UN Millennium Development Goals. The Nigerian Government has embarked on an ambitious programme of reform that provides the best opportunity for substantial and lasting poverty reduction in a generation. DFID is committed to supporting this.

**Mr. Tynan:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the situation in Plateau State, Nigeria; and what action the Government are taking to support peace and conflict resolution initiatives there. [155566]

**Hilary Benn:** Violent outbreaks throughout Nigeria are a matter of great concern to the Nigerian Government. The roots of conflicts can be hard to establish: groups tend to divide on religious and ethnic grounds but the underlying causes are often more complex.

DFID, the FCO and the MOD have developed a joint conflict prevention strategy for Nigeria, in partnership with the Nigerian Institute for Conflict Prevention and Resolution. As part of this strategy, the British Government are supporting the International Centre for Reconciliation at Coventry Cathedral, who has been supporting reconciliation and conflict transformation work in Plateau State, at the invitation of the Governor. The British High Commission maintains close contact with the Nigerian authorities, and regularly visits afflicted areas.

### Opium Production (Afghanistan)

**Norman Lamb:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the estimated volume of opium production in Afghanistan is for the current year; and what the estimated volume was in each of the last five years. [154884]

**Mr. Rammell:** I have been asked to reply.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) conducts an annual survey into the level of opium poppy cultivation and production in Afghanistan. The UNODC is in the process of preparing the 2004 report on behalf of the Afghan government, which will be published in the autumn. According to the UNODC annual survey, the estimated volume of opium production and cultivation in each of the last five years is as follows:

| *Year* | *Hectares* | *Tonnes* |
|---|---|---|
| 1999 | 91,000 | 4,600 |
| 2000 | 82,000 | 3,300 |
| 2001 | 8,000 | 185 |
| 2002 | 74,000 | 3,400 |
| 2003 | 80,000 | 3,600 |

The low level of cultivation and low production figure in 2001 reflect the Taliban ban on opium cultivation; the ban did not however address the underlying causes of poppy cultivation in Afghanistan, and was enforced with a mix of threat and bribery.

### Recovery Infrastructure Group

**Sir Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development into which bank account the assistance for the Recovery Infrastructure Group is paid; who controls the account; and if he will make a statement. [155335]

**Hilary Benn:** The Recovery and Infrastructure Group project rehabilitates and refurbishes Government and other public buildings. Project funds are paid into an account managed by Crown Agents Financial Services Ltd. Halcrow Group Ltd. design and supervise the implementation of projects by local firms. Progress is reviewed by DFID staff.

### Serbia and Montenegro

**Mr. Robathan:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the impact of Serbian co-operation with *(a)* international institutions and *(b)* the War Crimes Tribunal on development assistance to Serbia; and what representations he has made to (i) EU partners and (ii) the Serbian government about this. [155669]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** For the three-year period to the end of 2003, positive dialogue between Serbia and the International Community, including the IMF, World Bank, and European Commission led to a programme of reform backed up by substantial assistance programmes from key donors. In 2003, The European

Commission allocated some £160 million (UK share of which was about £30 million) and the World Bank had committed nearly £210 million of a three-year allocation of £286 million approved in 2001.

Although Serbia and Montenegro (SaM) made some progress in co-operating with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in early 2003, co-operation has since stalled. We and our partners in the International Community take every opportunity to remind Belgrade that in order to realise her Euro-Atlantic aspirations, SaM must fulfil the international obligation of full and complete co-operation with the ICTY. Through both bilateral and EU initiatives, we continue to put pressure on SaM to arrest and transfer all remaining ICTY indictees, including Serb leaders Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic and to allow ICTY full access to documents and witnesses.

We and our European Partners regularly discuss the situation in Serbia. It is unclear how Serbia's relations with international institutions and ICTY will now develop since Serbia has yet to form a government following last December's parliamentary elections. We will continue to liaise closely with EU and other International Community partners, to identify the most effective ways to support and promote both reform and co-operation with ICTY.

### Small Arms Global Pool

**Mr. Robathan:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the Small Arms Global Pool. [155673]

**Hilary Benn:** The Global and Africa Conflict Prevention Pools (GCPP) as a whole are currently undergoing a full and independent evaluation after the first three years of operation. A report will be published shortly.

The GCPP's Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) Strategy is that it has achieved a number of notable outcomes in a short period of time.

The strategy has helped to ensure that recent UN and regional agreements could be implemented in many arms-affected regions. We have supported practical measures to combat the supply, demand and availability of weapons at local, national and regional levels in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe; notably the establishment in Tanzania of the first ever government-endorsed national action plan, which tackles in a comprehensive way the problem of small arms proliferation. New legislation in Brazil banning the carrying of weapons by civilians is another initiative supported by the strategy that has resulted in lasting change.

However, more needs to be done to raise awareness and to integrate small arms control and reduction measure into wider defence relations, foreign policy, conflict, security and development programmes. A new SALW strategy (2004–07) is currently being developed and this will seek to address this.

**Mr. Robathan:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the weapons destroyed so far as a result of the Small Arms Global Pool, broken down by type. [155674]

**Hilary Benn:** A key element of the UK Government's Global Conflict Prevention Pool (GCPP) Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) Strategy is to reduce the availability of SALW through support for weapons stockpile management, collection and destruction programmes.

Within the framework of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (2001), the UK supports a number of governments including those of developing countries to dispose of small arms stocks, preferably by destruction, that are surplus to national requirements.

The UK is supporting the development of five-year National Action Plans in Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Mozambique and Namibia. These plans will provide a comprehensive approach to weapons controls in these countries and include elements for the disarmament, management and destruction of weapons.

Since 2001, the GCPP-funded Small Arms and Demobilisation Unit of UNDP have supported the destruction of over 360,000 weapons and in excess of 24 million items of ammunition (i.e. small arms cartridges) and 1,090 tonnes of ammunition as part of their global weapons collection management and destruction programme.

The UK has also funded a Brazilian NGO, Viva Rio, which has, as part of its awareness raising campaign, worked with the police and military in organising ceremonial public destructions of firearms. In excess of 114,000 have been destroyed since UK support for the project started in 2001. Destruction of weapons is done in partnership with the Rio State Government.

The UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Lima, Peru, which is supported by the GCPP, has a programme for capacity building and training of law enforcement officials in Latin America. As a component of this work the Regional Centre has been involved in supporting local military and police with weapons destruction exercises.

The UK is also one of a number of countries contributing to an ammunition destruction programme carried out in Albania by the NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency (NAMSA), which aims to destroy 11,600 tonnes of small arms and light weapons ammunition over a four-year period.

Further statistics on the type of weapons and ammunitions destroyed are not readily available.

**Mr. Robathan:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the countries in which activities are taking place under the Small Arms Global Pool; and what the *(a)* targets and *(b)* achievements of those initiatives were in each case. [155675]

**Hilary Benn:** Under the UK Government's Global Conflict Prevention Pool (GCPP), the Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) Strategy (£19.5 million,

2001–04) seeks to control and reduce the supply, demand and availability of weapons. It does this by supporting policy development and programmes that assist a wide range of international organisations, regional organisations, Governments and NGOs to combat the proliferation and misuse of small arms.

The four key areas that the strategy seeks to promote are:

Policy focused research and analysis to evaluate the impact of programmes and design more effective arms control and reduction policies;

Building consensus among Governments on the need for increased arms controls;

Implementing practical projects such as weapons collection, management, and destruction, training of police and customs officers; and

Integrating small arms controls into wider conflict prevention and poverty reduction programmes.

For example, the UK has supported regional and sub regional efforts to combat SALW proliferation, and the development of long-term national programmes. The strategy has also supported work to build regional and international consensus on the need for an international agreement on small arms transfers and trade. This is done within the framework provided by the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons (2001).

The UK has contributed to the UN Development Programme's Small Arms and Demobilisation Unit global programme of weapons collection, stockpile management, capacity building and destruction within the context of disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration of ex-combatants and community development. UNDP is active in 45 countries in many parts of Africa, Asia, Europe and Central America.

The GCPP has also supported a number of other initiatives including the work of:

The NGO, Viva Rio, which works with police and communities in Brazil to improve security policy and tackle gun violence;

The Nairobi Secretariat, which co-ordinates action for Governments and civil society in East Africa, Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa;

National Governments, which are developing Action Plans, with civil society participation, in Tanzania, Uganda, Mozambique, Malawi and Kenya;

SaferAfrica, Saferworld, and the Security Research and Information Centre, which undertake research, analysis, policy facilitation and practical programmes in East Africa, the Horn, Great Lakes Region and Southern Africa;

International Alert, which carries out research and analysis projects in Europe, Latin America and West Africa; and

International Action Network on Small Arms, which has established a global network and co-ordinates advocacy, awareness raising and campaigns among 500 civil society groups around the world.

I have placed in the Library a table providing details of the work funded under the GCPP SALW strategy during the period 2001–04.

### Water Supply/Sanitation

**Mr. Donaldson:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps the UK Government are taking to ensure that the agreement on sustainable development reached at the World Summit is fully implemented in respect of the halving by 2015 of the number of people without access to an adequate water supply and proper sanitation. [155491]

**Hilary Benn:** The key commitments on water and sanitation made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) were:

a re-affirmation of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) to halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water;

halving by the year 2015 the proportion of people who do not have access to basic sanitation; and

an agreement to develop integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans by 2005.

In May 2003, a Sustainable Development Task Force was established to help ensure effective follow-up of the UK's WSSD commitments, and monitor progress towards sustainable development against the UK's 1999 sustainable development Strategy, "A Better Quality of Life". The Task Force, chaired by Defra Secretary of State, Margaret Beckett, brings together Ministers from across Whitehall with colleagues from Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and some key stakeholders.

The last Task Force meeting, on 4 February 2004, considered DFID's draft Water Action Plan, which describes how DFID intends to take forward its commitments in water and sanitation, and continue to contribute to achieving the MDGs in a way that recognises that such efforts are most effective when they support plans drawn up by developing countries themselves. This will be presented to Parliament shortly.

### World Trade Organisation

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what representations he has received from the World Trade Organisation on *(a)* meeting the targets and *(b)* implementing the policies agreed in Cancun. [155150]

**Hilary Benn:** Since Cancun all World Trade Organisation members have committed themselves to working to implement the Doha development commitments. While this is welcome, it is imperative that we turn these commitments into progress. The recent WTO General Council agreed on chairs being appointed to the general council and the negotiating groups. We must now seek to ensure that these negotiating groups agree adequate work plans on agriculture and Non Agricultural Market Access (NAMA), and on a resolution to the Singapore issues.

## TREASURY

### National Insurance

**Ms. Drown:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the annual cost to *(a)* employees and *(b)* others in (i) 10, (ii) 20 and (iii) 40 years of reducing the lower earnings limit for National Insurance (A) by £17 and (B) altogether. [155939]

**Dawn Primarolo:** Estimated increases in National Insurance contribution income of (A) reducing the primary threshold by 17 per week in 2003–04 or (B) reducing the primary threshold to zero, are shown in the following table.

*(£ billion)*

| | *(i) 2013–14* | *(ii) 2023–24* | *(iii) 2043–44* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *(a) Effect on primary contributions of reducing the primary threshold* | | | |
| (A) by 17 per week | 2.2 | 2.3 | 2.3 |
| (B) to zero | 12.0 | 12.3 | 12.2 |
| *(b) Effect on secondary contributions if the secondary threshold is also reduced* | | | |
| (A) by 17 per week | 2.6 | 2.7 | 2.7 |
| (B) to zero | 14.2 | 14.4 | 14.3 |

*Notes:*
Figures are for Great Britain, on an accruals basis and the effect on total contributions allocated to both the NIF and NHS in 2003–04 price terms.
Results based on the long-term estimates published in the Quinquennial Review of the National Insurance Fund as at April 2000 (Cm 6008) assuming 2 per cent. a year real earnings growth. No allowance has been made for the effects of the most recent (2002-based) population projections, or any other information which has become available since the results underlying the Quinquennial Review were prepared.

**Norman Lamb:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the value was of underpayments not pursued by the National Insurance Contributions office for tax years *(a)* 1999–2000, *(b)* 2000–01, *(c)* 2001–02 and *(d)* 2002–03; how many underpayments of less than £150 were not pursued in each of those tax years; how much these totalled in each of those tax years; and if he will make a statement. [153288]

**Dawn Primarolo:** National insurance contributions identified as due, but not paid and subsequently written off, amounted to £189 million in 1999–2000; £180 million in 2000–01; £145 million in 2001–02; and £275 million in 2002–03. The amount in 2002–03 includes insolvent companies' debts accrued before July 2001 which were cleared from the accounts as part of a special exercise in that year.

National insurance contributions may be written off where pursuit is unlikely to be successful, for example, because a company is insolvent; or where it is regarded as neither practical nor cost effective to pursue the debt, for example, because the debtor has gone abroad. Underpayments of less than £150 are not identified separately and the information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

### Close Companies

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what estimate he has made of the number of close companies that may currently be operated with the primary purpose of reducing owners' personal tax liability; [151943]

(2) what estimate he has made of the loss to the Treasury from close companies that may currently be operated with the primary purpose of reducing owners' personal tax liability. [151944]

**Dawn Primarolo:** The vast majority of companies are run with the primary purpose of generating profits for shareholders, and a wide variety of strategies might be employed to minimise owners' tax liabilities. Consequently, it is impossible to say how many close companies are operating with the primary purpose of reducing owners' personal tax liability.

**Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the number of close companies which may operate with the primary purpose of reducing their owners' personal tax liability; and what value of tax revenues he estimates may thus be lost to the Exchequer. [154863]

**Dawn Primarolo:** The vast majority of companies are run with the primary purpose of generating profits for shareholders, and a wide variety of strategies might be employed to minimise owners' tax liabilities. Consequently, it is impossible to say how many close companies are operating with the primary purpose of reducing owners' personal tax liability or estimate the tax and national insurance that might be lost from such companies.

### Copyright

**Dr. Cable:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate HM Customs and Excise has made of the loss of government revenue from counterfeiting and copyright theft in each of the last five years. [154956]

**John Healey:** No such estimates have been made.

### Corporation Tax

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received on the impact of corporation tax rates on business in Northern Ireland. [155483]

**Dawn Primarolo:** The Government has received a number of representations on a wide range of subjects. The Government has cut corporation tax rates for all companies—since 1997 the main rate has been reduced from 33 per cent. to 30 per cent. and the small companies' rate from 23 per cent. to 19 per cent. The UK now has the lowest rates of corporation tax in history.

### Demography

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the size of population in the Chorley constituency was in each of the last five years; and what projections have been made for each of the next five years. [155307]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Lindsay Hoyle, dated 23 February 2004:*

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question concerning the population of the Chorley constituency over the last five years, and the projected population for the next five years. (155307)

The Office for National Statistics does not currently produce mid-year population estimates on parliamentary constituency boundaries. The lowest geography at which mid-year population estimates are currently published is local authority areas. However, Chorley is an unusual case in that the Parliamentary Constituency currently has the same boundaries as the Chorley Borough Council area. Therefore, the population estimates for the two areas will be the same.

The population estimates for Chorley Borough Council area for the latest five years available, are given below. Published population estimates are rounded to the nearest 100 people.

*Mid-year population estimates for Chorley local authority, 1998–2002*

| | *Population (Thousand)* |
|---|---|
| 1998 | 98.4 |
| 1999 | 98.8 |
| 2000 | 100.0 |
| 2001 | 100.6 |
| 2002 | 101.3 |

There are currently no official subnational population projections consistent with this series. The last official long-term subnational projections were based on 1996 population data and did not take account of the significant new information produced by the 2001 Census.

### Departmental Minutes

**Richard Ottaway:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is his Department's policy to make notes of *(a)* meetings and *(b)* telephone conversations involving Ministers; and under what circumstances no notes would be made. [149803]

**Ruth Kelly:** HM Treasury follows the central "Guidance on the Management of Private Office Papers" which makes clear that good record management procedures are necessary not least to ensure accountability and provide an audit trail. Among the records covered by the guidance are Ministers' meetings and telephone conversations.

### Financial Services

**Mr. Love:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what research has been undertaken to estimate the impact of Basel 2 on *(a)* the UK lending industry and *(b)* those lenders with assets of less than £1 billion; and if he will make a statement. [155861]

**Ruth Kelly:** The new Basel Accord will be an international agreement on prudential capital, applying mainly to internationally active banks. Implementation of the new Basel Accord in Europe will be through a new Capital Adequacy Directive, which is expected to apply to all UK credit institutions and investment firms (as was the case for the implementation of the existing Basel Accord). The Treasury is currently consulting on the expected impact on all UK lenders ahead of a formal proposal from the European Commission expected later in the year.

### Gold Reserves

**Mr. Swire:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to sell more of the Bank of England's gold reserves. [155676]

**Ruth Kelly:** The Government currently have no plans to sell holdings of gold from their International Currency Reserves. We remain firmly committed to transparency so, if our plans were to change in the future, we would announce this publicly.

### Illegal Meat Imports

**Mr. Gardiner:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what assessment has been made of the effectiveness of Her Majesty's Customs and Excise illegal meat enforcement strategy, with particular regard to the number of prosecutions that have been pursued; [155685]

(2) how many prosecutions there have been as a result of illegal meat seizures by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise in the last 12 months; [155686]

(3) what Her Majesty's Customs and Excise's policy is on prosecuting people caught in possession of illegal meat at United Kingdom ports of entry. [155689]

**John Healey:** Customs' illegal meat enforcement strategy aims to deter and detect illegal imports and thereby reduce the risk of disease from such imports. The strategy delivers this aim through:

*(a)* increasing passengers' awareness of the rules and regulations, encouraging the voluntary surrender of any illegal meat on arrival and increasingly discouraging the public from embarking on their journey to the UK with illegal meat in their possession;

*(b)* anti-smuggling checks to detect illegal imports on the basis of risk assessment and intelligence;

*(c)* seizing imports surrendered by passengers in the Red Channel or detected in the possession of passengers in the Green Channel;

*(d)* issuing a seizure notice and warning letter to the owner where the illegal meat was not declared or surrendered;

*(e)* responding flexibly to formal notifications by Defra or the Food Standards Agency by imposing additional restrictions in the event of an outbreak of animal disease or other circumstances which may present a risk to animal or human health.

Within that overall policy, Customs consider cases for investigation and prosecution where suitable evidence is available, and in particular:

serious cases involving repeat offenders;

large scale imports;

commercial smuggling;

other aggravating circumstances.

Customs have not undertaken any prosecutions since taking on responsibility for these anti-smuggling controls on 11 April 2003.

The effectiveness of Customs' strategy is kept under continual review.

**Mr. Gardiner:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what trials Her Majesty's Customs and Excise has undertaken of x-ray equipment to detect illegal meat imports; and when they took place. [155690]

**John Healey:** Customs have undertaken a number of informal trials using their own x-ray equipment as well as external trials involving developments in x-ray technology offered by other manufacturers. The most recent trials took place in June last year.

This is a constantly developing area and Customs remain committed to working with other UK and overseas agencies as well as manufacturers to make the most of new technology where it can provide good value for money.

### Inland Revenue

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people are employed by the Inland Revenue in Northern Ireland. [155484]

**Dawn Primarolo:** At 1 April 2003, the number of people employed by the Inland Revenue in Northern Ireland was 1,840, which represents 1,727 Full-Time Equivalent Units.

### Iraq

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what sums in United Kingdom claims on Iraq have been notified to the Paris Club, including interest, broken down by *(a)* government and *(b)* non-government claims. [154556]

**John Healey:** The Government have notified to the Paris Club unrecovered claims of £623 million arising from commercial export contracts with Iraq signed prior to the first Gulf conflict in 1991 insured by the Export Credits Guarantee Department. This amount does not include interest, which it is estimated could bring the figure to around £1.15 billion. The Paris Club deals only with claims arising out of government loans or government-insured commercial credits.

The Government believe that Iraq's external debt is unsustainable and that creditors will need to agree a significant reduction through a clear multilateral process in order to restore Iraq to sustainability. That is likely to involve writing off the vast majority of Iraq's external debt.

### Labour Statistics

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the unemployment rate was in England and Wales on the latest date for which figures are available; what the unemployment rate was in each ward in each principal seaside town of England and Wales on the latest date for which figures are available, listed in descending order, with figures for Welsh seaside town clusters disaggregated; and if he will make a statement. [154962]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Chris Ruane dated 23 February 2004:*

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question on what the unemployment rate was in England and Wales on the latest date for which figures are available; what the unemployment rate was in each ward in each principal seaside town of England and Wales on the latest date for which figures are available, listed in descending order, with figures for Welsh seaside town clusters disaggregated. (154962)

The unemployment rate in England and Wales for the period October-December 2003, the latest date for which information is available, was 4.8 per cent. This rate is seasonally adjusted and calculated using the standard International Labour Organisation (ILO) definition of unemployment.

The most recent data on unemployment rates by ward are taken from the 2001 Census. They are based on the number of people aged between 16 and 74 who were unemployed and seeking work at April 2001 as a proportion of all economically active people aged 16–74, apart from full-time students, at that date. This measure is not directly comparable with the rate using the ILO definition of unemployment above. The average unemployment rate at April 2001 for England and Wales as a whole was 5.2 per cent. on this basis.

Data on the number of unemployed people who were seeking work in England and Wales was released in Table KS09a of the Census Key Statistics. The table showing information for wards in England and Wales can be viewed from the National Statistics web site at: http//neighbourhoodstatistics.gov.uk/Downloads.asp?nsid = = false&CE = True&SE = Tme&T: = D&d sid = 2891

I am placing in the House of Commons Library a table, which shows the figures for all wards which are situated on the coast, and ordered by the unemployment rate as measured by the 2001 Census.

### Land Transactions

**Mrs. Lait:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if the Inland Revenue will prioritise the delivery of land transaction *(a)* forms and *(b)* certificates to Scottish solicitors to ensure that they meet the time limits to secure title to land imposed by Scottish law. [155814]

**Ruth Kelly:** The Inland Revenue is committed to issuing certificates within five working days of receipt of a properly completed return. It would not be practicable to give priority to the issue of certificates to Scottish addresses. However, in certain circumstances certificates in respect of transactions in Scotland can be obtained by personal attendance at Edinburgh Stamp Office. Return forms can be obtained in advance of settlement of land transactions so I see no reason why obtaining a return form should delay matters. In addition the Inland Revenue, and some software suppliers, offer the scope for forms to be completed on-line or on-screen and then printed off for signature.

**Mrs. Lait:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the reasons for delay in the Inland Revenue's distribution of land transaction *(a)* returns and *(b)* certificates to Scottish solicitors. [155815]

**Ruth Kelly:** The Inland Revenue is committed to issuing certificates within five working days of receipt of a properly completed return. This target has been achieved across the United Kingdom. In addition, in certain circumstances certificates in respect of transactions in Scotland can be obtained by personal attendance at Edinburgh Stamp Office.

Return forms have been and are being sent out to all those who ask for them.

**Mrs. Lait:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from Scottish solicitors about the effect of changes in stamp duty land tax on their work. [155816]

**Ruth Kelly:** The Inland Revenue has received many representations on several aspects of stamp duty land tax, including some from Scottish solicitors. In addition Inland Revenue officials are in regular discussion with the Law Society of Scotland on all aspects of stamp duty land tax.

### London City Bonds

**Norman Lamb:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the London City Bond bonded warehouse cases. [155354]

**John Healey:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Surrey Heath (Mr. Hawkins) on 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1552–53W.

**Norman Lamb:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the registered customs informants used since 1994 in the London City Bond cases. [155355]

**John Healey:** Consistent with long standing convention, it is not Customs policy to disclose publicly the identity of registered informants, except where necessary as part of the legal process.

### Mr. Ed Balls

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he authorised the giving of a speech by his principal special adviser, Mr. Ed Balls, in Leeds on 3 February which included comments on the policy behind setting the level of interest rates; and whether the authorisation of such a speech on the day before a meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee of the Bank of England complies with the Government's policy on the independence of the Bank and the proper conduct of monetary policy. [153775]

**Ruth Kelly** *[holding answer 9 February 2004]*: The Chief Economic Adviser's speech reiterated the Government's long-standing position on monetary policy as set out most recently by the Chancellor in his 18 June 2003 speech to the Mansion House and is consistent with the Bank of England Act 1998.

### Oil/Gas Sector

**Mr. Peter Duncan:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people were employed in the oil and gas sector in Scotland in each of the last five years. [155472]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Peter Duncan, dated 23 February 2004:*

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about jobs in the oil and gas sector in Scotland. (155472)

The table below shows the number of people in Scotland working in industries whose primary activities were described as:

extraction of crude petroleum/natural gas

service activities in oil and gas extraction

manufacture of refined petroleum products

manufacture/distribution of gas.

Figures are provided for the years 1998 to 2002, the last five years for which data are available, and are obtained from the Annual Business Inquiry (ABI).

*Number of people in Scotland working in the oil and gas sector, 1998–2002*

| | *Number of people (Thousand)* |
|---|---|
| 1998 | 26.6 |
| 1999 | 24.5 |
| 2000 | 21.6 |
| 2001 | 23.6 |
| 2002 | 22.9 |

### Private Health Care

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his policy is regarding whether a taxpayer's contribution towards the cost of private health care should be taxable. [155106]

**Dawn Primarolo:** I assume my right hon. Friend is referring to the provision of tax relief for these contributions. It is not the Government's policy that tax relief for private health care costs should be introduced. The Government's belief is that the best way to fund the nation's health needs is directly through the NHS from public expenditure, and not by subsidising those people who, for whatever reason, choose to make alternative arrangements.

### Recruitment Advertising

**Pete Wishart:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his Department's expenditure on recruitment advertising was in each of the last three years, broken down by publication; and what proportion of such expenditure was *(a)* to advertise vacant posts and *(b)* in the form of other general recruitment advertising. [155533]

**Ruth Kelly:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Bromsgrove (Miss Kirkbride) on 14 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 812–15W.

### Seaside Towns

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many and what percentage of people in each ward in each principal seaside town in England and Wales had a limiting long-standing illness on the latest date for which figures are available, listed in descending order with Welsh seaside town clusters disaggregated; and if he will make a statement. [154950]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Chris Ruane, dated 23 February 2004:*

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning limiting long-standing illness in seaside towns. (154950)

The latest source of information on this topic is the 2001 Census of Population and Housing. Data on the number of people with a limiting long-term illness in England and Wales was released in Table KS08 of the Census Key Statistics. The table showing information for wards in England and Wales can be viewed from the National Statistics web site at: http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/Downloads.asp?nsid = false&CE = True&SE = True&T = D&dsid = 2919

I am placing in the House of Commons Library a table that shows the figures for all wards which are situated on the coast, and ordered by the percentage of people with a limiting long-term illness. There is no definitive list of principal seaside towns so this table includes those wards in England and Wales which have a boundary on the coast.

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the economic inactivity rate in the UK was in the latest month for which figures are available; what percentage of the population of each ward in each principal seaside town in England and Wales was economically inactive in the latest month for which

figures are available, listed in descending order, with figures for Welsh seaside town clusters disaggregated, and if he will make a statement. [154965]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Chris Ruane, dated 23 February 2004:*

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question on what the economic inactivity rate in the UK was in the latest month for which figures are available; what percentage of the population of each ward in each principal seaside town in England and Wales was economically inactive in the latest month for which figures are available, listed in descending order, with figures for Welsh seaside town clusters disaggregated. (154965)

The economic inactivity rate in the UK for people for the period October–December 2003, the latest date for which information is available, was 21.5 per cent. The data are seasonally adjusted and relate to all people aged between 16 and normal retirement age (64 for men, 59 for women).

The most recent data on economic inactivity rates by ward are taken from the 2001 Census. They are based on the number of people aged between 16 and 74 who were retired, students, looking after home or family, permanently sick or disabled, or otherwise economically inactive at April 2001 as a proportion of all people aged 16–74 at that date. The average rate of economic inactivity at April 2001 for England and Wales as a whole was 33.5 per cent. on this basis. This figure is not on a comparable basis with that quoted above because the census based measure includes more retired people.

Data on the number of people who were economically inactive in England and Wales was released in Table KS09a of the Census Key Statistics. The table showing information for wards in England and Wales can be viewed from the National Statistics web site at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/Downloads.asp?nsid = false&CE = True&SE = True&T = D&dsid = 2891

I am placing in the House of Commons Library a table, which shows the figures for all wards which are situated on the coast, and ordered by the unemployment rate as measured by the 2001 Census.

### Spirit Duty

**Mr. Carmichael:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a decision on the introduction of strip stamps on bottles of spirits before the Comptroller and Auditor General completes his review of the level of spirit duty fraud. [155913]

**Angus Robertson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the remit is of the National Audit Office investigation into Customs and Excise estimates of duty diversion on spirits; what the timescale of the inquiry to report is; and whether the Treasury will implement its plans on strip stamps before the NAO conclusions are published. [155842]

**John Healey:** I refer the hon. Gentlemen to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland on 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1554W. The Chancellor announced in the Pre-Budget Report that the Government intends to introduce tax stamps for spirits as part of a reinforced strategy, to tackle alcohol fraud. However, the Government has also invited the industry to put forward alternative proposals equally effective in tackling fraud. Detailed discussions with the industry on this issue are continuing.

### Tax Credits

**Lynne Jones:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what money was paid to private contractors in *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* so far in 2003–04; and what the expected total payment is in 2003–04 for the delivery of the tax credit programme. [145812]

**Dawn Primarolo:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Havant (Mr. Willetts) on 28 April 2003, *Official Report*, column 161W.

**Mr. Swire:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people *(a)* have taken up and *(b)* are entitled to tax credit in East Devon. [155325]

**Dawn Primarolo:** The number of families in each constituency and local authority receiving tax credits are shown in "Child and Working Tax Credit Statistics. Geographical Analyses. January 2004." This is available on the Inland Revenue website at: www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/menu.htm

No estimates are available of the number of families in each constituency or local authority that are entitled to these tax credits.

### Tax Revenues

**Mr. Swire:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been received from East Devon in respect of *(a)* inheritance tax, *(b)* capital gains tax and *(c)* stamp duty in each of the past seven years. [155296]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested is not available.

### UK Overseas Territories

**Mr. Tynan:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent assessment he has made of the *(a)* financial and *(b)* taxation systems of the UK Overseas Territories. [155567]

**Dawn Primarolo:** The Government welcomes the progress made so far by the Overseas Territories in adopting international standards on financial regulation and transparency in tax matters, and is committed to encouraging them to meet international standards.

### VAT Directive

**Mr. Carmichael:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the review of Annex H of the Sixth VAT Directive will be concluded. [156018]

**John Healey:** The review of the reduced rate provisions in Annex H of the Sixth VAT Directive will not be concluded until European Commission proposals are either accepted by all Member States, or withdrawn. We have made clear that the current proposal, which challenges a number of the UK's VAT zero rates, is unacceptable.

### Wage Payments (Overseas Accounts)

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of how many people domiciled in the UK are paid wages into overseas accounts. [155541]

**Dawn Primarolo:** I regret that this information is not available.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### Agricultural Shows

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many agricultural shows she has visited in the last three years. [153440]

**Margaret Beckett:** Since the formation of Defra on 8 June 2001 the Department's Ministers have attended a total of 27 agricultural shows.

### Agriculture and Environment Biotechnology Committee

**Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the Agriculture and Environment Biotechnology Committee report on co-existence and liability; and if she will make a statement. [153893]

**Mr. Morley:** We are currently considering the AEBC report and will give our response in due course.

### Avian Influenza

**Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with her counterparts in *(a)* Thailand and *(b)* other countries in South East Asia about the recent outbreak of avian influenza in the region. [151964]

**Mr. Bradshaw** *[holding answer 30 January 2004]:* The Secretary of State has not had any discussions with her counterparts in Thailand or other countries in South East Asia. Defra, the Food Standards Agency and the Department of Health have been closely monitoring the development of avian influenza in Thailand and other countries in South East Asia. The European Commission have been in constant contact with the Thai authorities and are reporting their findings to all member states.

**Mr. Steen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which countries no longer export chickens to the UK following the outbreak of bird influenza. [155097]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Outbreaks of avian influenza have been reported in Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Pakistan, the People's Republic of China, including the Territory of Hong Kong, South Korea, Thailand and Vietnam. Under EU rules none of these countries is allowed to export live poultry or hatching eggs to the EU. Imports of poultry meat are permitted from Thailand only.

The risk of the avian influenza virus spreading through meat is low. However, the European Commission took action on 23 January to ban imports from Thailand of fresh/frozen poultry meat and cooked poultry meat that has not been heat treated to at least 70°C, unless it is accompanied by additional certification confirming that it was from birds slaughtered before 1 January 2004. Poultry meat products which have been cooked to 70°C or more are not considered to be a risk and may still be exported to the EU. The UK took immediate action to implement these measures in domestic law.

### Bio-accumulative Chemicals

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent research has been carried out *(a)* by and *(b)* for her Department on the levels of persistent and bio-accumulative chemicals in the food chain and environment in the Thames Estuary. [153111]

**Mr. Morley:** The Department has not recently undertaken research specifically on the levels of persistent and bio-accumulative chemical in the food chain and environment in the Thames Estuary. However, the Environment Agency has an on-going monitoring programme in the Thames Estuary which includes the following persistent and bio-accumulative substances:

1,2,3 trichlorobenzene; 1,2,4 trichlorobenzene; 1,3,5 trichlorobenzene; Aldrin; Anthracene; Benzo *(a)* pyrene; DDE (pp); DOT (op); DOT (pp); DOT total; Dieldrin; Drins total; Endosulphan a; Endosulphan b; Endrin; Fenitrothion; HCB; HCH alpha; HCH beta; HCH delta; HCH gamma; HCH Total; Hexachlorobenzene; Hexachlorobutadiene; Isodrin; Lambda-cyhalothrin; PCB 101; PCB 118; PCB 138; PCB 153; PCB 180; PCB 28; PCB 52; PCB Total (Congeners 28,52, 101,118, 138,153,180); TDE (pp); Tributyltin; Trichlorobenzene total; Trifluralin

In addition, the Food Standards Agency has a statutory monitoring programme to detect marine biotoxins in shellfish sampled from shellfish harvesting waters. The Agencies also keep abreast of research relating to Thames Estuary, including a recent study on tributyl tin levels.

### Biodegradable Plastic Bags

**Mr. Peter Ainsworth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to encourage the use of biodegradable plastic bags. [153745]

**Mr. Morley:** Government are not taking steps to promote the use of biodegradable plastic bags. The use of degradable plastics that are made from fossil fuel, and specifically designed for disposal with no beneficial recovery potential, runs counter to the Government's aim to increase recycling. In addition, if disposed of in landfill rather than, for example, being composted, biodegradable waste breaks down to release methane, a highly potent greenhouse gas.

The Government do support the development of biodegradable plastics from non-fossil sources. The Government-Industry Forum on Non-Food Uses of Crops has concluded that there is an opportunity to produce compostable packaging materials in the UK.

Defra is currently drawing up a Non-Food Crops Strategy. A draft is expected to be issued for consultation later in 2004.

### Bovine TB

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the spread of bovine TB in *(a)* the North West and *(b)* each county in the North West. [153887]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Statistics are collected by areas covered by Animal Health Divisional Offices (AHDOs). Carlisle AHDO covers Cumbria. Preston AHDO covers Lancashire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside.

In Cumbria, there were 3,969 registered herds in 2003, with 1,949 TB herd tests carried out. Provisional data show there were 70 new herd TB incidents in 2003, of which 15 were confirmed (three remain unclassified). In 2002. there were 4,041 registered herds, and 1,504 herd tests carried out. There were 33 new herd incidents, of which 10 were confirmed.

The increase in incidence in Cumbria is giving some concern. TB testing is now being carried out on all farms in an area of South West Cumbria known as the Furness Peninsula, concurrent with a survey of badgers (killed in Road Traffic Accidents) and deer (culled, or found dead, with suspicious lesions) in the same geographical area. It is hoped the data collected will help inform decisions about TB controls in the area.

In the area covered by Preston AHDO, there were 3,160 registered herds in 2003, with 918 herd tests carried out. Provisional data show five TB herd incidents, with one confirmed. In 2002, there were 3,303 registered herds, and 1,126 herd tests. These resulted in nine TB incidents, with none confirmed.

There has been a recent breakdown in a herd in Greater Manchester, but this has not yet been confirmed at post-mortem.

**Mr. Paterson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the preferred foods of adult badgers are; and on what foods they rely when their preferred foods are in short supply. [153966]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Badgers eat both animal and plant material and are considered to be largely opportunistic in their choice of food. Although they feed on a wide range of foodstuffs, earthworms are the most important single item in the diet of British badgers. Because these and other food types are taken according to their availability, the diet of badgers varies both geographically and seasonally[1].

[1] The Handbook of British Mammals (1991). Third Edition. Edited by GB Corbet and S. Harris. Blackwell Scientific Publications, Oxford.

**Mr. Paterson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to what diseases, other than tuberculosis, badgers are susceptible. [153978]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Rabies and distemper have been found in badgers in other European countries but these diseases have not been detected in UK populations. Badgers are also susceptible to bacterial infections, including leptospirosis and salmonellosis.

**Paul Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the total paid in compensation to farmers for bovine tuberculosis was in each of the last five years; and what percentage of the total was paid in excess of the market value of the animals destroyed. [155000]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** The following table gives the compensation paid to farmers for cattle slaughtered under TB control measures 1998 to 2002.

£

| | *Compensation paid* |
|---|---|
| 1998 | 3,605,242 |
| 1999 | 5,770,983 |
| 2000 | 7,307,797 |
| 2001 | 7,074,125 |
| 2002 | 23,138,512 |

There is evidence from a National Audit Office study carried out in Wales in 2002 and from other sources that, overall, average compensation payments are significantly higher than average market prices. However, it is difficult to quantify the extent of this disparity.

### Carbon Dioxide Emissions

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the Government's progress towards reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 60 per cent. by 2050. [153803]

**Mr. Morley** *[holding answer 11 February 2004]*: Provisional data for 2002 shows that carbon dioxide emissions decreased by 8.7 per cent. between 1990 and 2002.

The Government aims to cut the UK's carbon dioxide emissions by 60 per cent. by around 2050, with real progress towards this goal by 2020. To put us on course, we estimate that in addition to the cuts from existing policies in the Climate Change Programme we will need to aim for further cuts of 15–25 MtC (million tonnes of carbon) by 2020. As set out in the Energy White Paper, published in February 2003, the key measures to achieve this goal will be to increase the share of renewable energy and reduce energy demand by increasing energy efficiency.

On renewables, the Government's target is for 10 per cent. of UK electricity to be supplied from renewable sources by 2010, with an aspiration to double this share to 20 per cent. by 2020. Though we have started from a low base we are making encouraging progress towards the 2010 target. The Government has also announced its intention to raise the levels of the Renewables Obligation beyond 2010/11. Further yearly targets have been set, reaching 15.4 per cent. in 2015/2016.

On energy efficiency, the Government plans to publish its Energy Efficiency Implementation Plan in the spring, which will set out how it intends to deliver the White Paper commitments.

### Carbon Trust

**Mr. Carmichael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion

of the Carbon Trust budget for the last financial year has been allocated for projects in (i) Scotland, (ii) England, (iii) Wales and (iv) Northern Ireland; what proportion remains unallocated; what funds have been allocated to hydrogen demonstration and innovation projects; and what proportion of funds have been allocated to small and medium enterprises. [153937]

**Mr. Morley:** The Carbon Trust is a private company limited by guarantee that receives funding from: the Climate Change Levy (via Defra for England and via separate relationships with the Devolved Administrations); Defra for the non-domestic element of the UK wide Energy Efficiency Best Practice Programme (EEBPp). The Carbon Trust was allocated a total of £49.6 million for 2002–03 (including £17.1 million from the EEBPp) by my Department.

The Carbon Trust carried out an assessment of the technologies needed to deliver a low carbon economy to inform the development of its Innovation Programme. Suitable proposals for hydrogen based technologies such as fuel cells, infrastructure and hydrogen production will be considered as priorities. But no specific sum has been set aside for these technologies.

The Carbon Trust manages Action Energy, the UK's main energy efficiency information, advice and research programme for organisations in the public and business sectors. Action Energy services including site visits are available to UK businesses regardless of size. The Carbon Trust also run the Action Energy Loan fund that provides loans of between £5,000 and £50,000 specifically to Small and Medium Enterprises for energy efficiency projects.

### Chicken Welfare

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent research into broiler chicken welfare she has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* received, with particular reference to issues of lameness in broiler chickens kept at stocking densities above 30 kilograms per square metre. [154774]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Defra has commissioned research projects into a number of areas. This includes projects on the effect of stocking density and the causes and management of leg health problems. These issues are highly complex and there are many factors influencing the welfare conditions of meat chickens. The Department continues to review the results of research and assess proposals that have been received. Details of the Department's research programme are published on the Defra website at: http://www.defra.gov.uk

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the Government will support the recommendations of the report from the EU Scientific Committee for Animal Health and Animal Welfare on chicken welfare. [154775]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** The report of the European Commission's Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare is the first step in enabling the Commission to produce proposals on specific welfare standards for meat chickens. The UK will take account of the recommendations alongside other evidence during the negotiations on the proposals. The Commission expects to issue proposals later this year.

### Chlorofluorocarbons

**Mrs. Spelman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the average recovery level achieved by licensed UK plants in respect of CFC R12 from refrigeration equipment was in each year for which figures are available. [154285]

**Mr. Morley:** For 2003, the average recovery level of CFC R12 achieved at fridge destruction facilities in England and Wales was 50.5 g per unit and for CFC R11 186.13 g, therefore giving a total of 236.63 g per fridge.

For 2001 and 2002, figures for CFC R12 and CFC R11 are not separately available.

**Mrs. Spelman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many items of equipment containing chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) were processed in each year for which CFC recovery figures are available. [154286]

**Mr. Morley:** For the year 2002, 299,000 items of equipment containing refrigerants were treated in England and Wales and 418,000 units were exported for recovery to Germany and the Netherlands.

For the year 2003, 979,336 items of equipment containing refrigerants treated in England and Wales and 377,168 units exported for treatment to Germany, Netherlands and Denmark.

Not all the refrigerants within the equipment were CFCs. Reporting mechanisms for future years will undertake to distinguish between different refrigerants.

### Civil Liability (Claims/Actions)

**Mr. Paterson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many civil liability *(a)* claims and *(b)* actions (i) have been initiated and (ii) are pending, by or on behalf of her Department against (A) contractors, (B) farmers and (C) others, in respect of claims made for works undertaken on behalf of her Department; how many court hearings have been completed; how many cases have been successful; and how much money has been (1) recovered and (2) saved as a result of these actions. [150554]

**Alun Michael:** The Department launched civil proceedings against one contractor in the Mayors and City of London county court and obtained judgment against the contractor on 6 January 2004.

Three prosecutions were commenced into fraudulent claims for compensation by farmers: one farmer pleaded guilty, two farmers were acquitted. There are no outstanding civil or criminal prosecutions against farmers.

Currently, there are five civil cases in the Courts pertaining to expenditure with contractors on goods, services and works during the FMD outbreak in 2001. It would be inappropriate to comment on cases that are

the subject of ongoing court proceedings. Similarly, public comment cannot be made on civil or criminal cases that are pending.

### Civil Servants

**Dr. Cable:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many civil servants, broken down by grade, there are in the Department and the agencies for which the Department is responsible; and what the figures were in January 1997. [150265]

**Alun Michael:** I refer the hon. Member to the Answer given by my hon. Friend, the Minister of State, Cabinet Office (Mr. Douglas Alexander) on 9 February, *Official Report*, column 1293W.

### Combustion Plants

**Mr. Bill O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many states in the EU who operate indigenous coal industries have applied for the Emissions Limited Values option within the Large Combustion Plant Directive. [148756]

**Mr. Morley:** The Directive requires that member states send their National Plan to the Commission if they propose to follow this option. According to the latest information provided by the European Commission, two other member states, Ireland and Finland, have submitted a National Plan in addition to the UK. There is no requirement on member states to notify the Commission if they intend to adopt the alternative Emissions Limit Value option

### Committee on Radioactive Waste Management

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what use has been made by the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management of the final report of the information needs research project commissioned by her Department in 2002; and if she will place a copy of the report in the Library. [154691]

**Mr. Morley:** The Committee will consider this and other relevant reports when drawing up its work programme, agreeing this work programme with sponsoring Ministers, and subsequently implementing this agreed programme. The report, published in October 2002, under the reference Defra/RAS/02.014, may be accessed via Defra's Radioactive Substances Research website (www.defra.gov.uk/environment/radioactivity/research/index.htm). I have arranged for copies of the report to be placed in the Library.

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the annual budget in 2003–04 for the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management is; and what plans she has, in consultation with the devolved Administrations, to increase its budgets. [154693]

**Mr. Morley:** For this financial year, CoRWM is working within existing Defra budgets to formulate its detailed work programme and associated estimates of resource needs. This programme and estimates, once agreed with sponsoring Ministers, will provide the basis for formally allocated Committee budgets for subsequent financial years.

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management is empowered to sub-contract research to consultants. [154694]

**Mr. Morley:** It is for CoRWM to judge what contracts, or sub-contracts may be required to enable it to carry out its programme. Contracts will be placed by my Department on behalf of CoRWM. All contracts and sub-contracts, which, in CoRWM's view, materially impact on its work programme, will be subject to approval by CoRWM. In all cases, Government procurement procedures will apply.

### Comprehensive Performance Assessment

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on including energy in the comprehensive performance assessment. [153805]

**Mr. Morley** *[holding answer 11 February 2004]*: Defra Ministers have had a number of discussions involving colleagues in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on the interaction between the comprehensive performance assessment (CPA) and Defra's policies that relate to local government. Similar discussions have also taken place at official level. These discussions have included issues relating to energy.

Proposals for redesigning the CPA methodology are currently the subject of an Audit Commission consultation paper. A key objective of these proposals is for CPA to respond to the shared priorities agreed between central and local government. This is intended to improve the ability of CPA to reflect cross cutting issues like sustainable energy, including energy efficiency and related issues such as fuel poverty.

### Correspondence

**Mr. Kaufman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she intends to reply to the letter to her dated 9 December 2003 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. A. Warrich. [149551]

**Margaret Beckett:** I replied to my right hon. Friend on 16 February 2004.

### Dee Cockle Regulation Order

**Mr. Ben Chapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will hasten implementation of the Dee Cockle Regulation Order following the incident in Morecambe Bay on Thursday 5 February. [154461]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** The Department will take action to make a Regulating Order under the Sea Fisheries (Shellfish) Act 1967 once the prospective grantee, the Environment Agency in Wales, has submitted a formal application for an Order. I understand that the Agency has made good progress in obtaining the necessary

written consents from landowners and that it expects to forward its formal application to the Department in March.

### Departmental Bodies

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) who the members of *(a)* the governing board of Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, *(b)* the Sea Fisheries Committee and *(c)* the Sugar Beet Research and Education Committee were on 1 January; what the term of office of each member is; and what their remuneration is; [150838]

(2) who the members of *(a)* the Home Grown Cereals Authority, *(b)* Horticulture Research International, *(c)* the Meat and Livestock Commission, *(d)* the Plant Varieties and Seeds Tribunal and *(e)* the Regional Floods Defence Committee were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and what their remuneration is; [150839]

(3) who the members of *(a)* the Advisory Committee on New Foods and Processes, *(b)* the Agricultural Dwelling House Advisory Committee, *(c)* the Apple and Pear Research Council, *(d)* the British Potato Council and *(e)* the Consultative Panel on Badgers and Bovine Tuberculosis were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and what their remuneration is. [150840]

**Alun Michael:** I am sending a copy of the information requested to my hon. Friend and a copy has been placed in the Library of the House.

### Departmental Minutes

**Mr. Lilley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether it is the Department's policy to make notes of *(a)* meetings and *(b)* telephone conversations involving ministers; and under what circumstances no notes would be taken. [149527]

**Margaret Beckett:** My Department follows the central "Guidance on the Management of Private Office Papers" which makes clear that good record management procedures are necessary not least to ensure accountability and provide an audit trail. Among the records covered by the guidance are Ministers' meetings and telephone conversations.

### Environment Agency

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many people were employed by the Environment Agency in January *(a)* 1997, *(b)* 2000 and *(c)* 2004. [152076]

**Mr. Morley:** The number of staff employed by the Environment Agency (including temporary and part-time staff) was as follows:

*(a)* January 1997—9,123

*(b)* January 2000—10,296

*(c)* January 2004—11,532

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of the Environment Agency's budget in *(a)* 1999–2000 and *(b)* 2003–04 was spent on national insurance contributions. [152077]

**Mr. Morley:** The proportion of the Environment Agency's budget spent on National Insurance contributions is as follows:

*(a)* 1999–2000: 2.6 per cent.

*(b)* 2003–04: 2.7 per cent. (forecasted)

### Environmental Education

**Mrs. Helen Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of whether funding for environmental education in schools will change when the landfill tax credit scheme is amended. [154458]

**Mr. Morley:** No formal assessment has been made by this Department of the funding of environmental education in schools.

Environmental education forms a part of the national curriculum for schools. A number of non-curriculum waste education projects received funding through the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme. The reform of the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme was announced in the Pre-Budget Report in 2002. As a result, waste projects are no longer eligible for funding. However, certain types of environmental educational projects are eligible for funding under the current scheme, for example, in the biodiversity category.

A sustainable waste delivery public spending programme, administered by Defra, has been established following the reform of the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme, to ensure that sustainable alternatives to landfill disposal are widely available. Under the public expenditure programme the Waste and Resources Action Programme is responsible for taking forward work on waste awareness.

### European Commission Payments

**Mr. Paterson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the estimated value is of payments due from the European Commission in respect of expenditures incurred and payments made by her Department, for which no claim has yet been made. [150849]

**Alun Michael:** The payments due from the European Commission for expenditures incurred as at December 2003 are £235,575,256.02.

The Rural Payments Agency's (RPA) December 2003 claim was lodged with the Commission on 9 January 2004 for reimbursement at the beginning of February 2004.

The payments made by the RPA as at January 2004 for which no claim has yet been made are £184,382,364.07.

The January 2004 claim is due to be lodged with the Commission on 10 February 2004 for reimbursement to the RPA at the beginning of March 2004.

## Transgenic Fish

**Adam Price:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list applications for licences to import transgenic fish made in the last three years. [153870]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** There have been no applications for licences to import transgenic fish.

## Fisheries

**Mr. Paterson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the cost to the United Kingdom is in 2003–04 of maintaining the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas Fishing Technology and Fish Behaviour Working Group. [150241]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** It is not possible to give the annual cost of maintaining the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas Fishing Technology and Fish Behaviour Working Group because the ICES budget does not separately identify individual working groups.

**Mr. Paterson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the financial contribution made by the United Kingdom Government to the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas was for each of the last five financial years; and what proportion of those contributions was spent on fisheries research. [150246]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** The United Kingdom Government contributed the following amounts:

| | *Danish Krona* |
|---|---|
| 2003–04 | 1,425,600 |
| 2002–03 | 1,384,000 |
| 2001–02 | 1,354,000 |
| 2000–01 | 1,314,480 |
| 1999–2000 | 1,276,200 |

It is not possible to determine how much of the UK's contribution was spent on fisheries research because the ICES budget does not separately identify such research. Individual countries' contributions are not allocated to specific areas of work.

**Mr. Paterson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research she has conducted into the extent to which the level of one fish stock is affected by the levels of fish stocks of similar species sharing the same habitat. [150304]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Models which look at the interaction between species are still being developed by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). However, the evidence to date suggests that, in most cases, the level of one species is a relatively minor factor in the level of similar species, due to the rich marine food webs.

**Mr. Paterson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the reasons are for the relative decline in cod biomass in the North Sea; and to what extent stocks have been affected by *(a)* long-term changes in sea temperatures, *(b)* predation and competition by other fish species, *(c)* commercial exploitation of food supplies upon which cod stocks rely, *(d)* seals, *(e)* overfishing and *(f)* other factors. [150306]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Scientists advise that over the last 20 years the fishing rate on cod has been five times that required to promote optimal use of the cod stock, and the fishery captures too many immature fish. On average less than 5 per cent. of each new brood now survives to maturity, and the cod age structure is very restricted. The stock is severely overfished, the biomass of mature fish has shown a prolonged decline, and the number of young cod entering the stock decreased in the mid-1980s.

The ICES Advisory Committee on Fishery Management (ACFM) advises that the reduction in recruitment can be at least partly explained by a reduction in the quantity and quality of eggs produced by a reduced spawning stock. There is speculation about the effect of environmental change and species interactions because of increased water temperature, and various contemporaneous changes in other species, but work carried out on these factors does not yet allow them to be quantified. ACFM notes that there may be some changes to the natural mortality of cod, such as a decrease on younger ages, possibly due to reduced cannibalism, and an increase on older ages due to seal predation, but the supporting evidence for these changes is weak.

**Mr. Paterson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what independent scientific advice she uses in relation to fisheries management; and if she will publish the advice she has received in relation to increased fishing effort for haddock while protecting cod stocks. [150307]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** We and other EU member states receive independent advice on fish stocks from the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES). The latest such advice on haddock has already been published by ICES on their website: http// www.ices.dk/

The European Union's Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee on Fisheries has also considered the mixed cod and haddock fisheries but the European Commission has yet to publish its work.

**Mr. Paterson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the accuracy of scientific assessments of the levels of fish stocks. [150317]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** ICES stock assessments are carried out internationally using landings and biological and survey data that are analysed in a standard way by methods that are well-known and are accepted by the international fisheries science community. Results are dependent on the quality of the data, and on our understanding of biological processes in the sea. It is accepted that the data and the methods are not perfect, but they are the best available. Assessment results are reviewed within ICES by ACFM, as well as by the North Sea Fisheries Commission Partnership in the case of the North Sea stocks, and ACFM is further developing quality assurance and review processes.

**Mr. Paterson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research she has commissioned on the effect of escape behaviour between different species on mortality rates for cod in North Sea fisheries. [150941]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Differences in escape behaviour alone are not significant determinants of fishing mortality. The combination of escape behaviour and net design can be a factor and considerable research has been conducted into net designs which will, for example, reduce fishing mortality of juvenile cod. One option is to separate cod from other species within the trawl and then subject them to a different selection process (e.g. a larger mesh size) when they try to escape. Alternatively, it may be possible to design nets so that some species, including cod, avoid the net completely. Each fishery targeting different ranges of species may require a different complex design with the aim of catching the marketable species and releasing the unwanted species. Research is ongoing in the UK, in collaboration with commercial fishermen.

**Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many *(a)* EU, *(b)* UK and *(c)* French fisheries observers have spent research time on board (i) industrial trawlers, (ii) bass pair trawlers and (iii) other pelagic trawl fisheries vessels operating in areas (A) VII and (B) VIII in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement. [152856]

**Mr. Bradshaw** *[holding answer 4 February 2004]:* As part of Defra-funded research into cetacean bycatch, the Sea Mammal Research Unit (SMRU) carried out eight days of observations at sea in 2000, 25 days in 2001 and four in 2002 in the following UK pelagic fisheries in Area VII: mackerel, pilchard, whiting and anchovy.

In the offshore pair trawl fishery for bass in Area VII, SMRU undertook 72 days of observations in 2001, 40 days in 2002 and 87 in the spring of 2003. Further observations have been taking place in the bass fishery since December 2003 but data are not yet available. Defra does not hold records of observations undertaken by other member states in these areas.

In addition, observers from the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) undertook 13 days' monitoring of English or Welsh registered vessels fishing for pelagic species in 2003 in Area VII and Area VIII. This work, which observed about 33 hours fishing, met obligations under the EU discard monitoring programme. CEFAS also undertook monitoring in Area VIId in 2001 for a total of about 21 hours fishing.

**Mr. Paterson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment has been made of whether fishing effort managed by limiting days at sea, including the banning of discards, is an effective fisheries management tool. [150851]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Scientific assessments have shown that fishing mortality on key species such as cod is too high in waters around the UK. Total Allowable Catches (TACs) and quotas on their own have not been effective in reducing fishing mortality to sustainable levels. In December 2002 and again in December 2003, EU Fisheries Ministers agreed limitations on days at sea to complement reductions in TACs—it is too early to assess what impact these restrictions will have had on fishing mortality.

A discards ban is a separate management tool to a days at sea scheme. At present a ban on discards is not yet considered to be practicable. The European Commission published an action plan in November 2002 which suggested a number of options to reduce discarding, including consideration in the medium term of a discards ban. The UK and other member states have welcomed the Commission's intention to try out the ideas in its action plan through a series of pilot projects.

**Mr. Paterson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research has been conducted on the effectiveness of hybrid systems which use total allowable catches, days at sea and individual species quotas. [150852]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** There is no such research available applicable to EU waters because the EU has only recently introduced days at sea rules to support the Total allowable catches (TACs) set for cod and other threatened species. In the past, TACs alone have not been respected. It is too soon for research to show whether the new approach is more effective.

### Flood Defence (Chorley)

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the flood defence works in the Chorley constituency; how many contracts have been let in connection with it; and what the value of the contracts is. [148227]

**Mr. Morley:** The following contracts have been awarded by the Environment Agency:

*Capital Works:*

Croston Flood Wall—Works started on the 5 January 2004 to improve existing flood defence walls along the River Yarrow, which protect the village of Croston: (estimated cost £680,000).

Strategic Studies and Investigations—A strategic study of flood risk management need is currently under way covering the River Douglas catchment area: (estimated cost £100,000).

In addition, EA's own maintenance works include:

*Revenue Works :*

Heavy Maintenance—Work is to be carried out along the north bank, upstream of Fishery Bridge at the west side of Croston village. This will safeguard the existing flood defences against erosion: (estimated cost £20,000).

Routine Maintenance—(estimated cost £75,000).

### Fresh Water Fisheries

**Mr. Steen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which of the recommendations of the Warren Committee on Fresh Water Fisheries she plans to implement; and when. [R] [154881]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** As explained in the Government response to the report of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Review Group chaired by Professor Lynda

Warren, issued in February 2002, the Government accepted (in full or in part) most of the 195 recommendations made by the review group. Those which can be implemented without the need for primary legislation have now been implemented. Work is proceeding towards the development of primary legislation required to implement other accepted recommendations, and this will be taken forward as and when the pressure of the legislative programme on parliamentary time permits.

### Game Laws

**Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what costs have been incurred in administering game licences in each of the last four years for which figures are available; and what fee income was raised in each year. [155181]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** The estimated costs and revenue from game licensing for the last three years[1] are given in the following table.

| | *Number of licences* | *Cost of administering (excluding VAT) (£)* | *Gross revenue (£)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2001-02 | 48,385 | 261,900 | 251,884 |
| 2000-01 | 42,310 | 224,792 | 217,408 |
| 1999-2000 | 39,262 | 217,822 | 195,617 |

[1] There are no figures available for the years prior to 1999 and information for 2002-03 has yet to be received from the Post Office.

These values refer to game licences issued by Post Offices in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

In addition to the licences referred to above, district councils and London borough councils issue licences to deal in game. No figures are collected centrally for the numbers of licences issued by councils. We understand that arrangements and charges vary.

**Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to review game *(a)* laws and *(b)* licences. [155175]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** It is our intention to review the game laws, including the licensing provisions established by the Game Licences Act, 1861. Announcements about timing and scope of a review and consultation arrangements will be made in due course.

### GM Crops

**Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to commission independent research into the environmental effects of growing GM maize using pesticides other than Atrazine. [153892]

**Mr. Morley:** Further research investigating the environmental effects of growing GM maize in relation to the phasing-out of Atrazine was recommended by the Government's statutory advisers on GM crop releases—The Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment (ACRE)—in January 2004 (see www.Defra.gov.uk/environment/acre). Accordingly, we are currently considering our research requirements in this area.

**Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the maximum level of GM material in seed for planting to ensure a harvested crop does not contain more than the 0.9 per cent. threshold of GM material required under EU regulations for produce to be classified GM-free. [153894]

**Mr. Morley:** I refer the right hon. Member to the assessment made by the EU Scientific Committee on Plants which advises that the Commission's proposed labelling thresholds for the marketing of seeds are based on the need to achieve the separate 0.9 per cent. labelling threshold for adventitious GM presence in non-GM food and feed products. Table 1 of the Scientific Committee's Opinion suggests that the Commission's proposed thresholds could achieve harvested crop thresholds of 0.81 per cent. for oilseed rape, 0.57 per cent. for maize and 0.67 per cent. for sugar beet.

**Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the economic *(a)* benefits and *(b)* disbenefits to UK farmers of growing GM maize. [153895]

**Mr. Morley:** As part of the GM Dialogue the Strategy Unit carried out a study of the costs and benefits of GM crops. Their report "Field Work: weighing up the costs and benefits of GM crops" was published on 11 July last year. The Unit concluded that GM crops could offer some cost and convenience advantages to UK farmers, although any economic benefit is likely to be limited in the short-term as only a narrow range of existing GM crops are currently suited to UK conditions, and weak consumer demand may limit take-up. In the longer term it concluded that future developments in GM crops have the potential to offer more wide-ranging benefits, to both farmers and consumers.

**Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to commission independent research on *(a)* gene transfer and *(b)* co-existence in relation to GM crops. [153896]

**Mr. Morley:** Details of previously commissioned research on gene flow from GM crops are available at www.defra.gov.uk/environment/gm/research/index.htm. Several Defra-funded projects looking at aspects of gene flow that are relevant to co-existence are still in progress. We constantly review our research requirements and may commission further work in future. The Government is currently considering a report on co-existence by the Agriculture and Environment Biotechnology Commission.

**Gregory Barker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make it her policy to vote to maintain the GM moratorium in Europe on 18 February. [154709]

**Mr. Morley:** No such vote is proposed on 18 February as there is no official moratorium on this matter in the EU. The Government supports the European Commission's view that the EU has an operating legislative framework for the consideration of applications for consent to market GM food and crops on the basis of proper human health and environmental

safety criteria. The vote on 18 February was in relation to one such application for consent made within this framework

The application under consideration is for the import and marketing of GM maize line NK603 for processing for use as animal feed. Consent for this GM maize, if granted, would not permit cultivation or use in food. Four varieties of GM maize already have EU marketing consents which were granted in 1997–98.

**Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what advice her Department has *(a)* given to and *(b)* received from the UK delegates attending European Commission regulatory standing and management committees on GM seed. [153905]

**Mr. Morley** *[holding answer 9 February 2004]:* The Government has advised UK delegates attending EU committee meetings on GM seeds to support, in principle, the introduction of measures, including labelling provisions, to control adventitious GM presence in non-GM seeds. UK delegates have reported on the discussions that have taken place. The Government is still considering its position with regard to the levels at which any thresholds for the adventitious presence of GMOs in seeds should be set.

**Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects to *(a)* announce her policy on growing GM crops in the UK and *(b)* decide the outcome of applications for licences to grow GM crops which are the responsibility of the UK to determine. [153906]

**Mr. Morley** *[holding answer 9 February 2004]:* The Government is now considering its overall policy on GM crops in the light of all the available information. This includes the reports of the public debate and science review, the study of the costs and benefits, the Agriculture and Environment Biotechnology Commission's report on co-existence and liability and the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment's advice on the Farm Scale Evaluation research. We are aiming to set out our conclusions shortly.

The procedures for considering applications to release or market genetically modified organisms are set out in EC Directive 2001/18. Currently 13 applications to place GM crops on the market for cultivation have been submitted to EU member states, none of these applications have been made through the UK as the lead member state.

If the lead member state considers that an application complies with the Directive it is required to forward its assessment report to the European Commission. The application is then subject to a collective decision by all member states.

**Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will ensure that UK decisions on applications to *(a)* grow and *(b)* use GM crops and foodstuffs are subject to parliamentary approval. [153907]

**Mr. Morley** *[holding answer 9 February 2004]:* The procedures for assessing applications are set out in the relevant EU legislation, either Directive 2001/18 on the deliberate release of genetically modified organisms or the Novel Foods Regulation 258/97, and in the implementing legislation. These were subject to parliamentary scrutiny at the time. The legislation provides for decisions to be taken on individual applications by Government. Final decisions on commercial approvals for GM crops and foodstuffs are taken collectively by EU member states.

**Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the basis of the decision by the Belgian Government to refuse an application for a licence to grow GM oilseed rape in the EU. [154000]

**Mr. Morley:** Applications for the deliberate release of GM organisms into the environment are assessed under the procedures set out in EC Directive 2001/18. No assessment has been made by the UK Government of the application to import and cultivate "Ms8xRf3" GM oil seed rape because notification of the Belgian competent authority's opinion has not yet been circulated by the Commission. When the application and the Belgian assessment is forwarded to us we will consider it very carefully in the light of the scientific evidence of any risks it may pose to human health and the environment.

### Hazardous Waste

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the conclusions of the recent report by the Hazardous Waste Forum in respect of her Department's hazardous waste management strategy. [154188]

**Mr. Morley** *[holding answer 10 February 2004]:* The Hazardous Waste Forum published its Action Plan in December. The Forum's recommendations centre around four main themes:

(i) There should be clarity and firm and fair enforcement of regulatory and legislative requirements, particularly with respect to the Landfill Directive.

(ii) There should be greater awareness raising amongst business and industry to promote waste minimisation and environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes.

(iii) There needs to be clear information on the likely capacity requirements for treatment and disposal of hazardous waste, and that a task force should be set up to review progress on the provision of this capacity.

(iv) That for the longer term, work should be put in hand to build on Waste Strategy 2000 to develop policy instruments to encourage waste minimisation and environmentally sound management, to develop better data on hazardous waste arisings and develop targets for hazardous waste reduction, and to address issues concerned with household hazardous waste.

Actions are and have been taken with respect to these recommendations. In particular the Government will shortly be announcing the outcome of the consultation on the implementation of the EU Council Decision on Waste Acceptance Criteria under the Landfill Directive. In addition, a treatment and capacity task force has been set up under the chairmanship of the waste industry to get better information on industry plans for

treatment and disposal facilities. The consideration and development of further policy instruments is likely to form part of the Forum's work for this year.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment her Department has made of the possible impact of implementing EU Directives relating to hazardous waste on the number of available dumping sites after July. [154190]

**Mr. Morley** *[holding answer 10 February 2004]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Guildford (Sue Doughty) on 14 January, *Official Report*, column 737W.

The treatment and disposal capacity task force of the Hazardous Waste Forum are currently assessing and updating the information in this table as industry plans develop.

### Hill Farmers (Environmental Standards)

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has received on the impact on hill farmers on the implementation by English Nature of EU directives setting environmental standards in *(a)* North Yorkshire, *(b)* Cumbria and *(c)* other parts of England. [154445]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** The Department receives a number of representations from farmers on a range of issues but I am not aware of any specifically concerning the impact on hill farmers of the implementation of EU directives by English Nature.

### Elephant Ivory

**Mr. Olner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment has been made regarding the fulfilment of conditions for the proposed sales of elephant ivory stockpiles under the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species from Botswana, Namibia and South Africa in *(a)* importing countries and *(b)* exporting countries. [154014]

**Mr. Morley:** It was an essential part of the decision at the last Conference of Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) that a number of strict conditions should be fulfilled before any of the proposed sales of ivory stockpiles went ahead. These included the provision of baseline data on elephant populations and poaching levels under the MIKE process (Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants) and confirmation by the CITES Secretariat that the potential importing countries could effectively regulate their domestic ivory markets. These issues will be discussed at the CITES Standing Committee meeting in Geneva next month. It is therefore too soon to make a definitive assessment but the UK Government remains clear that these sales must not proceed if these conditions have not been fulfilled.

**Mr. Laurence Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on her policy on the trade in elephant ivory; what discussions she has had with Ministers from other countries about the trade in elephant ivory; and if she will make a statement. [154207]

**Mr. Morley:** I have discussed the ivory trade with Ministers from other countries on a number of occasions, most recently during my visit to Kenya in October 2003. Officials have also discussed this issue several times in the EC CITES Committee (the Committee on Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora), most recently on 29 January 2004. The UK Government are strongly opposed to the illegal and unsustainable trade in elephant ivory.

**Paul Holmes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the results from the Elephant Trade Information System; and if she will make a statement. [152670]

**Mr. Morley:** The last comprehensive report on the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS) was presented by TRAFFIC at the 12th Conference of the Parties to CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) in November 2002. This concluded that the illegal trade in ivory is directly correlated to the presence of large-scale, unregulated ivory markets, predominantly found in West and Central Africa, China and Thailand. The report attributed the upward trend in seized ivory since 1998 to the increased demand for ivory consequent upon increased economic prosperity within China.

The UK shares TRAFFIC's concerns about the need to regulate domestic ivory markets around the world. Within the UK and the EU as a whole, trade in ivory is strictly regulated through a licensing system. Permits for the sale of ivory are not issued unless it can be shown that the ivory was legally acquired before the current world-wide ban on commercial trade in ivory came into force in 1990.

Last year the Government contributed some £60,000 to help ETIS continue its good work in monitoring the illegal trade in ivory and we will be providing an additional £20,000 this year.

**Paul Holmes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate has been made of the amount of illegal ivory sold in the United Kingdom through the antiques trade in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement. [152671]

**Mr. Morley:** We have made no such estimates. If we were given evidence that illegal ivory was being sold through the antiques trade we would ask the appropriate enforcement authorities to investigate any allegations that are brought to our attention.

All imports, re-exports and sales of antique ivory are controlled under the appropriate EC regulations, and permits and certificates are not issued unless we are satisfied as to their origin. In addition, my Department, HM Customs and Excise and the police, along with non-governmental organisations such as LAPADA (the Association of Art and Antique Dealers), work together to increase public awareness of the wildlife trade controls.

## Ivory Trade

**John Barrett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with other members of the European Union regarding the ivory trade in advance of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species in March. [152986]

**Mr. Morley:** This issue has been discussed on several occasions in the EC CITES Committee (the Committee on Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora), most recently on 29 January 2004. The UK Government is strongly opposed to the illegal and unsustainable trade in elephant ivory and this is reflected in the European Union stance on this issue. EU Member States will insist at the CITES Standing Committee in Geneva in March 2004, that all the very strict conditions governing the one-off sale of ivory by Botswana, Namibia and South Africa are met in full before any trade is allowed to go ahead.

**John Barrett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she will take at the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species to prevent an expansion in the ivory trade; and if she will make a statement. [152987]

**Mr. Morley:** We do not yet know what proposals on elephant ivory, if any, will be made at the Conference of Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) in Bangkok in October. However, we are concerned that the market for ivory may be poorly regulated in a number of countries around the world, thereby allowing the illegal trade to continue. We will, therefore, work with our partners within the EU and other CITES Parties to ensure that there is no relaxation of the current ban on commercial trade in ivory, unless it can be shown that very strict measures are in place to ensure that such trade would not be detrimental to the conservation of this species in the wild.

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 29 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 496W, on ivory, what assessment she has made of the reasons for the increase in ivory imports in 2003. [153333]

**Mr. Morley** *[holding answer 6 February 2004]:* Defra has not made a formal assessment. It is clear, however, that very little ivory has been imported to the UK in recent years. There was an increase in 2003, but as far as we can establish, this was largely as a result of shipments from other EU member states which are allowed to move freely within the Community.

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many Article 10 certificates her Department *(a)* granted and *(b)* refused for (i) ivory and (ii) items containing ivory in each year since 1997. [154810]

**Mr. Morley** *[holding answer 12 February 2004]:* Our records do not distinguish between sales of items of elephant ivory or items containing ivory, although both are included in the figures in the table. The number of certificates issued or refused were as follows:

| | *Asian (Elephas maximus)* | *African (Loxodonta africana)* |
|---|---|---|
| *1997* | | |
| Total certificates issued | 8 | 81 |
| Quantity of items sold | 24 | 157 |
| Number refused | 0 | 0 |
| *1998* | | |
| Total certificates issued | 6 | 76 |
| Quantity of items sold | 6 | 1,172 |
| Number refused | 0 | 0 |
| *1999* | | |
| Total certificates issued | 0 | 19 |
| Quantity of items sold | 0 | 78 |
| Number refused | 0 | 3 |
| *2000* | | |
| Total certificates issued | 0 | 63 |
| Quantity of items sold | 0 | 443 |
| Number refused | 0 | 2 |
| *2001* | | |
| Total certificates issued | 2 | 32 |
| Quantity of items sold | 2 | 33 |
| Number refused | 0 | 14 |
| *2002* | | |
| Total certificates issued | 13 | 44 |
| Quantity of items sold | 13 | 50 |
| Number refused | 0 | 0 |
| *2003* | | |
| Total certificates issued | 0 | 38 |
| Quantity of items sold | 0 | 45 |
| Number refused | 0 | 1 |

## Landfill

**Joan Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of disposal costs per tonne of contaminated soils to landfill after July; what assessment she has made of additional treatment facilities required by July; and if she will make a statement. [152542]

**Mr. Morley:** It is estimated that, from mid July, the requirements of the Landfill Directive could increase the disposal costs per tonne for contaminated soils to landfill by between 10 per cent. to 100 per cent. depending on the degree and type of contamination.

The treatment and disposal facilities required will depend on the volume of contaminated soil arising which in turn will be affected by a number of factors which include:

The classification of more contaminated soil as hazardous under the revised hazardous waste list.

The expected increase in disposal costs will provide a greater incentive to minimise, recycle and re-use waste and shift the management of waste up the waste hierarchy.

The greater incentive for on-site treatment, which can decrease the demand for landfill.

The requirement in the Landfill Directive for all waste to be pre-treated before landfill —this can both increase and decrease the volume for disposal.

Furthermore, the types of any additional facilities that will be required will be site-specific and based on a number of variables such as size of the site and type of

contaminate within the soil. The Hazardous Waste Forum task force on treatment and disposal capacity is currently assessing all these interlinking factors, continues to monitor closely the provision of facilities, and will advise on the issues that need to be addressed so that all waste is subject to environmentally sound management and disposal. Overall the Government's policy is to reduce the UK's reliance on landfill, which, as well as its negative environmental impacts, makes little practical use of waste and is a missed opportunity to recover value from waste.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on what grounds landfill sites can be closed. [153889]

**Mr. Morley:** Landfill sites can be closed in the following circumstances:

(i) When the conditions specified in the landfill permit are satisfied (e.g. the site is full);

(ii) When the Environment Agency approves the initiation of the closure procedures following a request from the operator; or

(iii) By a reasoned decision of the Environment Agency to initiate closure procedures (e.g. because the requirements of the landfill permit are not being met).

### Meat Sales

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with her counterparts in the *(a)* Scottish Executive and *(b)* National Assembly for Wales about the promotion of sales of (i) beef and (ii) lamb; and what assessment she has made of the level of spending on promotion in (A) Scotland and (B) Wales. [154319]

**Alun Michael:** No specific discussions have been held nor assessments made. The promotion of beef and lamb in Scotland and Wales is a matter for their industries representative bodies who receive proportionate funding from the Meat and Livestock Commission levy.

### National Waste Strategy

**David Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether her Department has a national waste strategy. [154290]

**Mr. Morley:** Yes. The Government's national waste strategy for England and Wales was set out in the document "Waste Strategy 2000", published in May 2000.

### Parliamentary Questions

**Mr. Peter Ainsworth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her policy is on the employment of secondees from commercial organisations to draft parliamentary answers; and if she will make a statement. [154600]

**Alun Michael:** Defra's Ministers see secondments and interchange as a key means of complementing the skills and experience of the Civil Service, drawing in expertise from such fields as business, local government and the voluntary sector as well as other Government Departments. This is assisting Defra's commitment to play its part in developing a modern, flexible, outward looking Civil Service that works in partnership with all sectors of society. Interchange is seen as a key tool in meeting this commitment. Defra continues to promote and encourage the interchange of personnel between the Department and a range of other organisations.

The term 'secondee' is used within the Civil Service in a more limited sense than the meaning used outside the Civil Service. In the Civil Service a secondee is a person who is 'borrowed' from an organisation outside the Civil Service for a period of between three months and three years (exceptionally five years), without affecting employment status. Great care is taken in setting up any secondment to ensure that conflicts of interest do not arise. During the secondment period the secondee would remain an employee of the parent organisation but would be expected to abide by the Defra staff handbook and the Official Secrets Act. At the end of the secondment the secondee would return to the parent organisation.

The duties performed day to day are a matter for the secondee's managers and may include drafting answers to parliamentary questions.

### Radioactive Waste

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on her plans for the long-term storage of high-level radioactive waste. [152613]

**Mr. Morley:** The Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) has been set up, under the "Managing Radioactive Waste Safely" programme, to recommend the best option, or combination of options, for the long-term management of the UK's higher activity wastes. As the "Managing Radioactive Waste Safely" consultation document itself indicated, the Committee will be assessing long-term storage options alongside other long-term management options that are available. Both the public and stakeholder groups will be extensively involved in this assessment process.

It will then be for UK Government and the Devolved Administrations to decide the UK's long-term management policy for this waste in the light of CoRWM's recommendations.

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on her policy in respect of the reprocessing of radioactive material. [152614]

**Mr. Morley:** Decisions about whether to reprocess spent nuclear fuel depend on the commercial judgment of the operator concerned.

The Department's responsibility is to ensure that where reprocessing takes place it is in accordance with appropriate environmental objectives, including the United Kingdom's regulatory requirements and international obligations.

### Recycling

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what household recycling levels have been attained in each year since 1997. [154245]

**Mr. Morley:** The annual Municipal Waste Management Survey, produced by the Office for National Statistics and Defra, shows the following household waste recycling rates for England:

| | *Percentage* |
|---|---|
| 1996–97 | 7.5 |
| 1997–98 | 8.2 |
| 1998–99 | 9 |
| 1999–2000 | 10.3 |
| 2000–01 | 11.2 |
| 2001–02 | 12.4 |

**Mrs. Spelman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether home composting is taken into account in the setting of recycling targets at *(a)* local and *(b)* national level. [154294]

**Mr. Morley:** Home composting activity is not measured as part of the local authority best value performance indicator (BVPI) for composting. Its contribution to recycling and composting rates is therefore excluded from statutory performance standards for local authorities and from the national targets for recycling and composting. This is because there is not yet a workable and auditable method of calculating the amount of waste diverted through home composting schemes, or one which properly reflects the local authority's contribution to the activity.

The impact of home composting on reducing waste arisings is already reflected at a local level by BVPI 84, which measures kilograms of household waste collected per head of population. Local authorities are required to set their own local targets for BVPI 84 which has to be included in their Best Value Performance Plans. The Government have concluded a number of Local Public Service Agreements in which home composting activity contributes directly to the achievement of the local authority's target.

Home composting will contribute to achievement of both national and local targets under the Landfill Directive to reduce the amount of biodegradable municipal waste sent to landfill.

**Mrs. Spelman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to include home composting in recycling figures at *(a)* local and *(b)* national level. [154300]

**Mr. Morley:** The Government are working with expert bodies, including the Waste and Resources Action Programme, to develop a robust methodology to calculate the amount of waste diverted from the household waste stream through home composting schemes. If a workable and auditable methodology is found, the Government will then review whether and how home composting can be incorporated into future local and national recycling and composting figures.

The impact of home composting on waste reduction is already reflected at local level by Best Value Performance Indicator 84, which measures kilograms of household waste collected per head of population. Home composting activity will also be reflected in local and national progress towards meeting targets under the Landfill Directive to reduce the amount of biodegradable municipal waste sent to landfill.

**Mrs. Spelman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the Environmental Agency plans to audit all refrigerator recycling plants, with particular reference to those licensed to recover chlorofluorocarbons from the refridgeration circuit. [154307]

**Mr. Morley:** The Environment Agency is auditing all the fridge destruction facilities. The audit will include an assessment of recovery of CFC from the refridgeration circuit.

### Research and Development

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to whom her Department distributes expenditure on research and development; how many staff are employed as a result; and how many research establishments of *(a)* her Department and *(b)* its agencies there are in each region of England. [154359]

**Alun Michael:** The Defra spend on research and development is some £150 million annually. We fund about 250 contractors including our laboratory agencies, the institutes of the Research Councils, a range of universities, and private sector providers of research such as ADAS. There are approximately 1,500 research projects in our portfolio and details of these can be found at www.defra.gov.uk/science. It is not possible to provide details of precise staff numbers employed on Defra R and D contracts. These will vary over the lifetime of projects, and will often involve less than full-time inputs from a number of researchers or in some cases sub-contractors. The main laboratory agencies of the Defra are:

the Central Science Laboratory—York

the Veterinary Laboratories Agency—Weybridge

the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science—Lowestoft, Burnham on Crouch and Weymouth

### Sudden Oak Death

**Mr. Caton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the threat to British woodlands posed by the fungus phytophthora ramorum. [155227]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** A Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) for Phytophthora ramorum was first conducted in the UK by Forest Research in September 2000.

The PRA has undergone a number of revisions and is currently under further review and will take account of the recent findings of the organism on ten trees of six species in Great Britain. Copies of the most recent revision were placed in the Library of the House on 13 February 2003 and updates have since been placed on the Defra website at http://www.defra.gov.uk/planth/pra.htm.

The Forestry Commission is currently undertaking a survey of around 1,000 woodland sites across Great Britain in order to help determine whether the disease is

present in our woodland environment. This survey, which is due to be completed by April, will help us better determine the threat to Britain's trees.

**Mr. Paterson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how the Department handles plants or trees affected with sudden oak death. [149618]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** All ornamental shrubs found to be infected with "Phytophthora ramorum" are destroyed either by burning or deep burial.

For infected trees there are two options: either the destruction of the whole tree by burning or deep burial, or the debarking and disinfection of the trunk and main branches which can then be removed and processed. The removed bark, all other branches and debris such as leaves and soil litter are similarly destroyed by burning or deep burial.

### Sustainable Energy

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department is taking to demonstrate to local authorities the potential benefits of developing sustainable energy policy. [153804]

**Mr. Morley** *[holding answer 11 February 2004]*: In the Energy Efficiency White Paper published in February 2003 the Government set out its strategy to help local authorities take a more proactive role in the delivery of sustainable energy policy. This includes establishing a new Beacon Council theme on sustainable energy, promoting energy efficiency as an area to be considered for Public Service Agreements and reviewing guidance to Energy Conservation Authorities on complying with the requirements of the Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA). The Government will publish in the spring an implementation plan for delivery of the energy efficiency policy commitments made in the White Paper.

The Government funded Carbon Trust and Energy Saving Trust (EST) provide support to local authorities to develop sustainable energy policy. For example, through its Carbon Management initiative the Carbon Trust assists local authorities in developing long term, strategic carbon emissions reductions plans. It is also piloting an energy-financing scheme aimed at local authorities. The EST helps local authorities to deliver their Home Energy Conservation Act and other sustainable energy responsibilities through initiatives such as the Local Authority Support Programme, the Practical Help website and funding for the National and Regional HECA Fora Secretariats.

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how her Department disseminates best practice in sustainable energy management programmes to local authorities. [153807]

**Mr. Morley** *[holding answer 11 February 2004]*: The Department disseminates best practice in sustainable energy management programmes to local authorities through its funding of the Energy Saving Trust and the Carbon Trust.

The Energy Saving Trust and Carbon Trust have developed a range of programmes aimed at supporting local authorities sustainable energy activities.

### Toxic Waste Disposal

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the potential use of salt mine workings for toxic waste disposal. [154758]

**Mr. Morley:** The Government have set out a policy and planning framework, in Waste Strategy 2000 and Planning Policy Guidance Note 10 Planning and Waste Management, which is concerned with reducing the amount of waste produced and where waste is produced, for dealing with in a way that supports sustainable development. Proposals for waste management facilities should be developed and considered within that framework. The criteria and procedures for the acceptance of waste are set out in the Landfill Directive (1999/31/EC) and the associated Council decision (2003/33/EC), including those applicable to underground waste disposal sites such as salt mine workings.

### US Ships (Decommissioning)

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answers of 14 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 739W, on Tees Estuary, whether ballast water has been removed or disposed of from the ships *(a)* in accordance with a detailed method statement and *(b)* without such a statement. [152749]

**Mr. Morley:** No ballast water has yet been removed or disposed of from the ships. No removal is permitted until the Environment Agency has approved a method statement. Able UK has not yet submitted a method statement to the Agency for its approval.

**Mrs. Spelman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she intends to instruct that the four ghost ships moored in Hartlepool be returned to America. [151641]

**Mr. Morley** *[holding answer 29 January 2004]*: The US authorities accept that the four ships will have to return to the US, unless environmentally suitable and legally acceptable methods for their disposal have been identified. The immediate return of the vessels is not practicable.

### Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive

**Mr. Edwards:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether she has met representatives from the printer cartridge remanufacturing industry to discuss the scope of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive. [153198]

**Mr. Morley:** I have not met any representatives from the printer cartridge remanufacturing industry to discuss the scope of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive.

**Mr. Edwards:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which Ministers in her Department have met *(a)* Lexmark and *(b)* Hewlett Packard to discuss the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive; and what the dates were of such meetings. [153199]

**Mr. Morley:** In October 2002, my right hon. Friend, the then Minister of State for Environment (Mr. Meacher), met with industry representatives to discuss the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive. A representative of Hewlett Packard was present at the meeting.

**Mr. Edwards:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for what reasons the Government's transposition of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive *(a)* included only whole products and *(b)* did not include consumables. [153200]

**Mr. Morley:** The Government have not yet transposed the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive but is working to do so by the August 2004 deadline.

The WEEE Directive applies to electrical and electronic equipment that falls into one of 10 indicative categories set out in an annex to the directive.

The directive applies only to whole products because it makes producers financially responsible for the environmentally sound end of life management of their products. A very large number of producers are affected by this legislation as it is, and adding consumables to the scope of the directive would have significantly increased the number of producers obligated by the legislation, making the directive significantly harder, if not impossible to enforce, as well as more costly.

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent assessment she has made of the implications for hazardous waste regulations arising from the bring-back requirements of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive. [152616]

**Mr. Morley:** The potential implications of the bring-back requirements of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive on the control of hazardous waste are being assessed in the on-going review of the special waste regulations. These issues will be explained in the forthcoming consultation on replacement hazardous waste regulations.

### Waste Implementation Programme

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what meetings she has had with ministerial colleagues from other departments to ensure that the Waste Implementation Programme has a co-ordinated approach with waste-related programmes in other Departments. [154243]

**Mr. Morley:** The Waste Implementation Programme (WIP) is putting England on the path to more sustainable waste management with measures to slow the growth in the amount of waste, investment in recycling infrastructure and support for new alternative waste management technologies. This new programme was explicitly created to provide clear responsibilities and accountabilities, and a strong focus at the centre of government to drive forward implementation in specific areas. The initial direction and implementation arrangements for WIP were overseen by a ministerial group answering jointly to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury.

Underpinning the programme are effective mechanisms for cross-government working. A Steering Committee, representing key interests engaged in waste management, has been established to drive forward the implementation of WIP workstreams. This group also provides strategic advice on the new programme, and reports direct to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Meetings are attended by representatives from several Government Departments. In addition, there are regular meetings with ODPM, DTI and HMT at official level.

### Water/Sewerage Charges

**Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with Ofwat and United Utilities about the decision to allow an increase in water and sewerage charges for the remaining year of the current price review period by more than the amount originally set by the regulator; and if she will review the safeguards in place to protect low income households. [154486]

**Mr. Morley** *[holding answer 12 February 2004]:* Price limits for water companies are set or modified independently by the Director General of Water Services. The Director General and United Utilities have kept me informed of this interim price determination that revises price limits for the charging year beginning on 1 April 2004.

I am considering the responses to the consultation on revisions to the Vulnerable Groups Regulations that provide protection to vulnerable metered households.

### Wildlife Management

**Mr. Gardiner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if her Department will make representations to the European Commission for the inclusion of the management of wildlife in the criteria for the definition of legality in the European Commission's proposal for an action plan on European Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade proposal. [153266]

**Mr. Morley:** The European Commission's Action Plan on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) includes proposals to prevent the import into the EU of illegally logged timber, through the voluntary licensing of timber exports from FLEGT partner countries. Under these voluntary agreements export permits would be granted only if the timber has been harvested in conformity with relevant national legislation.

The Government's view is that it is for each producer state to define legality in reference to the national laws and regulations of that state and for them to decide if the management of wildlife should be included in such a definition. It would not be appropriate to make representations to the European Commission concerning the criteria for defining legality. We would however be willing to work with individual countries to address this as a criteria.

### Wildlife Trade

**Mr. Olner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures the Government is taking to tackle illegal wildlife trade on the internet. [154013]

**Mr. Morley:** We monitor the major internet sales sites, and take enforcement action when possible illegal sales of wildlife items are identified. This is one of the areas that I am asking the National Wildlife Crime Intelligence Unit to focus on.

### Wind Turbines

**Dr. Murrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for what reason noise from wind turbines has been excluded from the study at Salford University into low frequency noise sponsored by her Department. [154767]

**Alun Michael:** The study being carried out by Salford University aims to provide a method for assessing low frequency noise. Salford University has been asked to identify a number of examples of different types of low frequency noise for detailed investigation to determine how assessment of such noises could be carried by Local Enforcement Practitioners. Salford University are due to report shortly on the examples recommended for detailed investigation.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### A-level Results

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of pupils in Northern Ireland achieved three grade As or above at A level in each of the last five years. [155426]

**Jane Kennedy:** The information requested is as follows:

| | *Percentage* |
|---|---|
| 1998–99 | 9 |
| 1999–2000 | 11 |
| 2000–01 | 11 |
| 2001–02 | 13 |
| 2002–03 | 12 |

### Academic Qualifications

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of Northern Ireland pupils left school with no qualifications in each of the last five years. [155427]

**Jane Kennedy:** Figures for 2002–03 are not yet available. The percentage of Northern Ireland pupils leaving school with no qualifications in each of the previous five years is as follows:

| *Year* | *Percentage* |
|---|---|
| 2001–02 | 5.2 |
| 2000–01 | 4.8 |
| 1999–2000 | 3.6 |
| 1998–99 | 2.7 |
| 1997–98 | 3.1 |

### Asbestos

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which Education and Library Boards in Northern Ireland have taken steps to manage asbestos by *(a)* undertaking a survey of all premises, *(b)* compiling a register indicating where asbestos is present and *(c)* preparing a plan for managing any associated risks. [154158]

**Jane Kennedy:** I understand from the Chief Executives of the Education and Library Boards that all five Boards are currently undertaking surveys of all premises to determine the location and condition of material likely to contain asbestos. As these surveys are completed, the Boards are compiling registers that record the location and condition of asbestos. Four Boards have completed asbestos management plans, while the fifth Board (Belfast) intends to complete its plan by the end of February 2004.

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* schools and *(b)* premises used by school children are assessed as properties with a (i) low, (ii) medium and (iii) high risk of asbestos having been used. [154159]

**Jane Kennedy:** Education and Library Boards are currently engaged in surveys of all schools and Board premises. The surveys should all be completed by May 2004 at which stage the information requested would be available.

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what measures are in place to train maintenance staff in the *(a)* management, *(b)* surveying and *(c)* sampling of asbestos in Education and Library Boards in Northern Ireland. [154160]

**Jane Kennedy:** I understand from the Chief Executives of the Education and Library Boards that all relevant maintenance staff have received training in the management, surveying and sampling of asbestos. The training has consisted of the following standard modules provided by the British Occupational Hygiene Society:

(1) P402—Building Surveys and Bulk Sampling for Asbestos

(2) P405—Managing Asbestos in Buildings.

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what work each Education and Library Board in Northern Ireland has carried out to inform schools in their area of procedures to safeguard children, staff and members of the public in relation to asbestos in schools and other board properties. [154161]

**Jane Kennedy:** All Education and Library Boards are organising awareness training for relevant staff at schools and other board properties aimed at providing them with sufficient knowledge to assist safely in asbestos management. This training is expected to be completed by all boards by May 2004. Asbestos management plans, which include details of the procedures to be followed in the management of asbestos, will be provided to schools and other board properties. Registers are also being drawn up as boards complete surveys of properties, which will include details of the location and condition of any asbestos. Individual properties will be provided with a copy of the register relevant to them.

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many asbestos leaks occurred in buildings owned by each of the Education and Library Boards in Northern Ireland in each year since records were kept; and where these leaks occurred. [154162]

**Jane Kennedy:** I understand from the Chief Executives of the Education and Library Boards that only the South Eastern Education and Library Board has recorded an asbestos leak. This was at the Board's Headquarters in 2002 when elevated fibre counts were detected as part of a routine monitoring programme during an asbestos removal project. In addition to this leak, the South Eastern Board has recorded five occasions involving disturbances of asbestos during the carrying out of maintenance work. These are:

| | *Education centre* |
|---|---|
| 1992 | Braniel Primary School |
| 1999 | Killyleagh Outdoor Education Centre |
| 2000 | Board Headquarters |
| 2001 | Castlewellan Library |
| 2003 | Ardnabannon Outdoor Education |

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Education and Library Boards in Northern Ireland have in place *(a)* an Asbestos Register and *(b)* an Asbestos Management Plan. [154414]

**Jane Kennedy:** I understand from the Chief Executives of the Education and Library Boards that all Boards are currently compiling asbestos registers as they complete surveys of premises. Four Boards have completed Asbestos Management Plans and the fifth (Belfast) intends to have its plan completed by the end of February 2004.

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he has taken to ensure that there is a recognised procedure in place to minimise the risk of exposure to asbestos in *(a)* schools and *(b)* premises used by schoolchildren in Northern Ireland. [154415]

**Jane Kennedy:** The Department of Education has issued guidance to all schools and education authorities on asbestos management and the requirements of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003. The Department has provided funding to enable the Education and Library Boards to survey all schools in Northern Ireland, including controlled, maintained, Voluntary Grammar, Grant Maintained Integrated Schools and any other relevant Board premises, to determine the location and condition of asbestos. The Asbestos Management Plans, which are currently being finalised, will outline the processes and actions required to contain and manage any risk from asbestos, where it has been detected. Education and Library Boards have also provided professional training to technical staff and will be organising awareness training for all relevant non-technical staff.

### Assets Recovery Agency

**Mr. Gregory Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what actions have been taken by the Assets Recovery Agency against *(a)* Republican and *(b)* Loyalist paramilitary groups. [153846]

**Jane Kennedy:** There are currently 17 cases under active investigation by the Agency in Northern Ireland with potential assets recoverable of over £7.5 million. These cases cover the whole range of organised crime among all groupings and areas across Northern Ireland.

The Agency determines which cases should be adopted from those cases referred by law enforcement and other agencies. Its objective is that, some 80 per cent. of cases to be pursued this year, will focus on property obtained by, or in the hands of, paramilitaries and other organised criminals.

### Asthma

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients *(a)* over and *(b)* under 45 years were admitted to hospital for asthma in the last 12 months for which figures are available. [154566]

**Angela Smith:** The information requested is in the following table.

*Number of patients admitted to hospital during 2002–03 where the primary diagnosis was asthma*

| *Age* | *Number of admissions*[1] |
|---|---|
| Over 45 | 756 |
| Under 45 | 1,785 |
| All Ages | 2,541 |

[1] Discharges and deaths are a proxy for admissions.
*Note:*
Figures include elective and emergency admissions.
*Source:*
Hospital Inpatients System

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many deaths from asthma there were in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [154567]

**Mr. Pearson:** Mortality statistics for 2003 have not been fully collated and therefore the latest available data relates to the five-year period 1998 to 2002. The following table gives the number of deaths resulting from asthma[1] registered in Northern Ireland in each year between 1998 and 2002.

[1] Cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) code 493 (1998–2000) and Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes J45 or 146(2001–2002).

*Number of registered deaths due to asthma by year in Northern Ireland (1998–2002)*

| | *Deaths* |
|---|---|
| 1998 | 44 |
| 1999 | 38 |
| 2000 | 33 |
| 2001 | 38 |
| 2002 | 36 |

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many asthma sufferers in the Province had their condition reviewed at least once in the last year for which figures are available. [154568]

**Angela Smith:** This information is not collected centrally and could be collated only at disproportionate cost.

### Barnett Formula

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the operation of the Barnett Formula as regards Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [155199]

**Mr. Pearson:** The Barnett formula has worked well over the years and continues to deliver high levels of public spending and investment to the people of Northern Ireland. I do not therefore propose to raise this matter with the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

### Breast Cancer

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the latest survival rate for breast cancer is in Northern Ireland. [154843]

**Angela Smith:** The most recent estimate of the five-year relative survival rate for female breast cancer patients, based on persons diagnosed in 1993–96, is 78 per cent.

The one-year relative survival rate, based on persons diagnosed in 1993–96, is 92 per cent.

### Cervical Screening

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has for introducing human papilloma virus testing for screening against cervical cancer; and if he will make a statement. [155418]

**Angela Smith:** The UK National Screening Committee (NSC) commissioned a pilot scheme to examine the role of human papilloma virus testing in cervical screening. The pilot ran for two years and an evaluation report to the NSC is expected in the near future. I will await the advice and recommendations of the NSC before making any decision about this matter.

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the liquid-based cytology cervical screening technique will be introduced within the NHS in Northern Ireland at the same time as in the rest of the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement. [156020]

**Angela Smith:** The other home countries are now in the process of rolling out the liquid based cytology technique. This is expected to take up to five years to complete. My Department has set up a regional group to advise, as soon as possible, on the introduction of this technology to N. Ireland. On receipt of the advice of this group the Department will be in a position to consider how best to take this forward and will seek then to identify funding. Roll-out here should be well within five years.

### Chiropody

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what chiropody service is available within the Ulster Community and Hospitals Trust Area, with particular reference to Ards and Bangor Community Hospitals. [155422]

**Angela Smith:** Chiropody services are provided at Ards and Bangor Community Hospitals and in nine other health facilities in the North Down and Ards area. A service is also provided to 40 nursing and residential homes, to training and resource centres, in GP based diabetic clinics and to the homes of patients who are housebound. An additional two podiatrists were recruited in January 2004.

Priority in the provision of services is given to patients whose medical conditions place feet and legs at risk of developing complications.

### Christian Education Movement

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what funding will be made available for the Christian Education Movement for 2004–07; and if he will make a statement. [156024]

**Jane Kennedy:** The Christian Education Movement has applied to the Department of Education for funding for the period April 2004—March 2007 under the Department's Community Relations Core Funding Scheme. All applications for such funding are currently under consideration and decisions will be announced in the near future.

### Cross-community Schools

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many pupils attend cross-community schools. [154839]

**Jane Kennedy:** The numbers of pupils attending integrated (i.e. cross-community) schools are as follows:

| | *Integrated enrolment* |
|---|---|
| Nursery schools | 0 |
| Primary schools | 6,417 |
| Post-primary schools | 10,077 |
| Total | 16,494 |

### Decommissioning

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which paramilitary organisations are formally engaged with the International Independent Commission on Decommissioning. [155576]

**Jane Kennedy:** The Provisional IRA remains in formal contact with the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning.

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to introduce legislation requiring full transparency in the decommissioning process. [155577]

**Jane Kennedy:** There are no plans to introduce legislation requiring full transparency. The scheme and Regulations allow for confidentiality at the request of those participating. Any loss of confidentiality would make it less likely that acts of decommissioning would take place.

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total amount of arms and ammunition so far decommissioned is under the supervision of the International Independent Decommissioning Commission. [155578]

**Jane Kennedy:** To date there have been four acts of decommissioning.

In 1998 the LVF carried out an act of decommissioning and the items were listed. PIRA has carried out three acts of decommissioning—2001, 2002 and 2003. The IICD made an inventory of the arms concerned, which will be provided to the two governments when its task is completed.

The Prime Minister has stated clearly that all arms must be put beyond use through the IICD.

### Demography

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the latest rate of population change is in Northern Ireland. [154847]

**Mr. Pearson:** Between mid-year 2001 and mid-year 2002 the estimated population of Northern Ireland increased by 0.43 per cent., from 1,689,300 to 1,696,600 people. This rate of population increase is in line with longer-term trends; on average over the decade from 1992 to 2002 the estimated population increased by 0.44 per cent. annually.

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent assessment he has made of future population trends in Northern Ireland; and how he expects public services in Northern Ireland to adapt to these trends. [155201]

**Mr. Pearson:** In line with the rest of the United Kingdom, the Government Actuary's Department published population projections for Northern Ireland on 18 December 2003. The population of Northern Ireland is projected to increase overall by 5 per cent. from a base of 1.697 million in 2002 to 1.788 million in 2017. Within this figure, the number of children aged under 16 is projected to decrease by 12 per cent., the population aged 16–64 is projected to increase by 6 per cent., and the population aged 65 and over is projected to increase by 32 per cent.

Northern Ireland's demographic trends are a key factor determining policy development and resource allocation. Although demographic changes have implications for all departments those most affected are the Department of Education and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

The Department of Education takes into account future population trends when deciding how many teachers will be needed. Similarly, population trends are recognised by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when drawing up Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland: a statistical profile and will inform the Regional Health Strategy currently in development.

### Dental Health

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to ensure socially disadvantaged young people are receiving appropriate dental care. [154597]

**Angela Smith:** Children living in the greatest deprivation have four times more tooth decay than the most affluent. My Department's Investing for Health Strategy sets a target to increase the levels of 5-year-old children with no dental decay to 55 per cent. and to reduce the gap between the best and worse decayed/missing/filled scores by 20 per cent. by 2010.

My Department's policy is to prevent oral disease. In the absence of fluoridation of water supplies, Health and Social Services Boards are taking forward and monitoring other methods of oral disease prevention. These include the provision of toothbrushes and toothpaste to young children in socially deprived areas, schemes to encourage registration from birth with a dentist and sealing permanent teeth with a protective resin to prevent decay. There are also schemes to promote the use of sugar free medicines and offer dietary advice to young mothers.

### Depression

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the *(a)* financial cost of treating depression in Northern Ireland and *(b)* the cost to the economy in terms of lost working hours in 2003. [154573]

**Angela Smith:** The information requested is not available.

### Disabled People (Workplace Participation)

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many projects in Northern Ireland received funding to promote participation by disabled people in the workplace in each year since 1997. [154157]

**Jane Kennedy:** From the information available the number of projects that received funding from Northern Ireland Government Departments to promote participation by disabled people in the workplace in each year since 1997 is contained in the following table.

| *Year* | *Number of Projects* |
|---|---|
| 1997–98 | 62 |
| 1998–99 | 67 |
| 1999–2000 | 71 |
| 2000–01 | 68 |
| 2001–02 | 42 |
| 2002–03 | 58 |
| 2003–04 | 50 |

The answer contains information on projects that provide a range of workplace participation including paid employment (full-time and part-time), voluntary work and work placements. The answer does not take account of disabled people working in Government Departments.

### Disabled Parking

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many orange disabled parking badges have been issued in each of the last five years in Northern Ireland. [154844]

**Mr. Spellar:** I have asked the Chief Executive of Roads Service to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question. A copy of the letter will be placed in the Library.

### Economic Growth

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the latest level of economic growth is in Northern Ireland. [154837]

**Mr. Pearson:** Figures for headline gross value added (GVA) provided by National Statistics estimate Northern Ireland growth of 3.8 per cent. in 2001.

Employment information is often used as a proxy for economic growth as more up to date figures are available. In September 2003, there were an estimated 669,470 (seasonally adjusted) employee jobs in Northern Ireland. This represents an increase of 0.8 per cent. since September 2002 (compared with a UK decline of 0.01 per cent.) and an increase of 8.4 per cent. (51,790 people) over five years, almost twice as fast as the UK average growth rate of 4.3 per cent.

### Football

**Kate Hoey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the money from the Soccer Strategy will be made available to the Irish Football Association. [154736]

**Angela Smith:** Money for the Soccer Strategy can be released to the Irish Football Association once the department is satisfied that the necessary Governance and Accountability arrangements have been agreed.

**Kate Hoey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he last met the Irish Football Association; and when he next plans to do so. [154737]

**Angela Smith:** There are on-going meetings with the Irish Football Association (IFA) at official level within the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure on a number of issues. The last of these took place on 12 February 2004. In addition, a DCAL working level group, which includes the Sports Council and IFA officials, meets to agree the details for taking forward the Soccer Strategy initiative. This group last met on 7 November 2003. The group will meet again in the very near future. I have also indicated my willingness to meet with the IFA after that meeting.

**Kate Hoey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to help improve Windsor Park. [154738]

**Angela Smith:** The future of Windsor Park is primarily a matter for the owners, Linfield Football Club, and the Irish Football Association, who use Windsor Park for Northern Ireland's home international fixtures under an agreement with Linfield FC. Both are considering their future facility needs as are the other main spectator sports and to assist them I have asked the Strategic Investment Board to commission the preparation of a business plan which will test the viability of the concept of a new purpose built multi-sport stadium. Discussions on Windsor Park must await the outcome of this work.

**Kate Hoey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to help pay for floodlight improvements at Windsor Park. [154739]

**Angela Smith:** Windsor Park is owned by Linfield Football Club and is used by the Irish Football Association as the venue for Northern Ireland's home international fixtures. To date I have not had any specific requests for funding for floodlighting improvements at Windsor Park. Any proposals for such improvements should first be discussed with the Sports Council, which has responsibility for the development of sport in Northern Ireland including the distribution of funds.

### Higher Education

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to offer additional financial support to Northern Irish higher education students to take into account the costs of travelling to universities in Great Britain. [154841]

**Jane Kennedy:** The student loan, which is available to Northern Irish students attending higher education institutions in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, is intended to meet students' living costs such as accommodation, food and travel. Northern Ireland students who study at institutions in Great Britain or the Republic of Ireland, or at institutions in Northern Ireland which are not within reasonable travelling distance of the parental home are currently able to access a higher rate of student loan than those students living in the parental home.

The Department has no plans to offer additional financial support to Northern Irish higher education students travelling to universities in Great Britain.

**Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent meetings he has held with *(a)* the Secretary of State for Education and *(b)* representatives from universities to discuss the implications of the Higher Education Bill for Northern Ireland's universities and students; and if he will make a statement. [154127]

**Jane Kennedy:** While the Higher Education Bill, does not, in the main apply to Northern Ireland, it has significant implications in view of the strong links between the HE Sectors and the level of student flows between Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

Since the publication of the White Paper, I have had discussions with the Secretary of State for Education on the potential implications of the proposals in the Bill for Northern Ireland, and I am fully aware of the respective views of the two universities.

It is my intention to bring forward proposals soon for the way forward in Northern Ireland, taking into account discussions with local stakeholders, including the universities and the student representative body the NUS/USI, and advice from the Northern Ireland Higher Education Council (NIHEC).

### Home Economics

**Mr. Donaldson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has received from home economics teachers about the proposal to teach this subject as a non-examinable component of the curriculum at Key Stage Three; and if he will make a statement. [155492]

**Jane Kennedy:** As part of the consultation process on the review of the curriculum, the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment received representations from Home Economics teachers as to the form that provision for this subject should take. The Council's proposals would make aspects of Home Economics a statutory entitlement for all pupils in Key Stage 3. I am currently considering the Council's proposals for the Key Stage 3 curriculum as a whole. No decisions have yet been taken.

### Inward Investment

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much inward investment Northern Ireland has attracted since the start of the peace process. [154838]

**Mr. Pearson:** Since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement Northern Ireland has attracted £242 million of New Inward Investment. In addition, during the same period expansions by externally owned companies totalled £936 million.

### Learning Disabilities

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made in improving education opportunities for those aged 16 to 19 years who have moderate learning disabilities. [154572]

**Jane Kennedy:** Through its Careers Service and enhanced funding for the Further Education sector, the Department for Employment and Learning provides a range of support services aimed at improving the provision for all students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

In addition, an Inter Departmental Working Group is examining the transition of all young people with statements of special educational needs to adult life. The group consists of representatives from the Departments of Education, Employment and Learning, and Health, Social Services and Public Safety. The group has consulted widely and plans to produce an Action Plan in Spring 2004.

### Maghaberry Prison

**David Burnside:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the prison authorities at Her Majesty's Prison, Maghaberry, negotiate with the leaders of the *(a)* Provisional IRA, *(b)* UDA and *(c)* UVF on conditions within the prison. [154804]

**Jane Kennedy:** The prison authorities do not negotiate with paramilitary leaders on conditions within the prison. It is important that control of the prison regime remains with the prison authorities.

**David Burnside:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost was of damage by prisoners to prison property and equipment in each of the last 12 months at Her Majesty's Prison, Maghaberry. [154866]

**Jane Kennedy:** The cost of damage by prisoners to prison property and equipment in each of the last 12 months at Her Majesty's Prison, Maghaberry was as follows:

| *Month* | *Total (£)* |
|---|---|
| February 2003 | 951 |
| March | 5,644 |
| April | 4,217 |
| May | 204 |
| June | 1,516 |
| July | 15,889 |
| August | 41,987 |
| September | 6,906 |
| October | 32,944 |
| November | 15,481 |
| December | 18,791 |
| January 2004 | [1]115,580 |

[1] A disturbance occurred in Bann House on 14 January 2004 resulting in damage estimated at £100,000. Repair work has commenced but invoices for the actual cost of repairs have not yet been received.

**David Burnside:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many prisoner officers, and what percentage of total staff, have been on sick leave in each of the last 12 months at Her Majesty's Prison, Maghaberry. [154869]

**Jane Kennedy:** The information requested is in the following table.

| *Month* | *Number of staff absent sick* | *Staff in post* | *Percentage of staff in post absent sick* |
|---|---|---|---|
| February 2003 | 113 | 842 | 13.42 |
| March 2003 | 97 | 842 | 11.52 |
| April 2003 | 91 | 841 | 10.82 |
| May 2003 | 92 | 837 | 10.99 |
| June 2003 | 90 | 836 | 10.77 |
| July 2003 | 101 | 831 | 12.16 |
| August 2003 | 115 | 828 | 13.89 |
| September 2003 | 100 | 829 | 12.06 |
| October 2003 | 99 | 825 | 12.00 |
| November 2003 | 97 | 823 | 11.79 |
| December 2003 | 102 | 821 | 12.42 |
| January 2004 | 87 | 820 | 10.61 |

### Manufacturing Industry

**Mr. Trimble:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his policy is on removing rate relief on manufacturing industries. [153831]

**Mr. Pearson:** The policy rationale for retaining industrial derating in Northern Ireland no longer exists. This view is supported by leading business and economic commentators and by the outcomes of various studies and an extensive consultation exercise in 2002. An assessment of the impact of removal on manufacturers concluded that any increase in costs would be limited and the impact significantly reduced by phasing it out in the manner announced in April 2003.

The phase out period will begin on 1 April 2005 and end on 1 April 2011. This means that manufacturers will have been given eight years to adjust and plan for paying full rates which is longer than the timeframe proposed by the former DFP and DETI Assembly Committees. They will have to pay only 15 per cent. of their full rates liability in 2005–06. This percentage will rise but on a very gradual basis over the next six years. This is a sensible, modernising reform measure that will bring Northern Ireland into line with the rest of the UK. There are other more effective ways of supporting businesses than retaining a blanket exemption for which there is no supporting rationale. Proposals for a hardship rate relief scheme for all businesses are being examined and will be published after consultation with Councils and business organisations.

**Mr. Trimble:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much revenue he estimates will be generated by the removal of rate relief on manufacturing industries. [153832]

**Mr. Pearson:** The estimated long-term yield from the rating of the manufacturing sector is around £55 million per year. This allows for possible valuation reductions as a result of appeals and is based on around 5,100 properties currently in the Valuation List becoming liable to full rates in 2011. Applying the 15 per cent. rate liability applicable in the first year (2005–06), the yield in that year is expected to be around £8 million. This additional revenue will be invested through the Reinvestment and Reform Initiative (RRI) to help fund a significant programme of major infrastructure projects in Northern Ireland over the next five years. Projects contained within the Strategic Investment Programme and totalling some £2.7 billion in value have already been announced. Investment in our public service infrastructure is essential for sustained economic growth and development. This scale of planned investment will significantly enhance Northern Ireland's prospects for long-term economic prosperity and future business success. The retention of industrial derating will not achieve these outcomes.

**Mr. Trimble:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps are being taken by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Industry and its agencies to ensure Northern Ireland's manufacturing industries are not disadvantaged by the enlargement of the European Union, with particular reference to the accession of low-wage economies in Eastern Europe. [153839]

**Mr. Pearson:** Invest NI is working with companies in the manufacturing and internationally-traded services sectors to help them increase their competitiveness in home and international markets. Early results of research commissioned into the impact of EU enlargement on the NI economy, indicate that the overall impact is likely to be relatively limited. They also suggest that enlargement will offer opportunities, particularly for sectors with the greatest prospects for high value-added growth.

Around 60 Northern Ireland companies are already doing business valued at approximately £100 million in the Accession States. Invest NI has been active in organising a number of trade-related activities, targeted at certain Accession States.

### Northern Ireland Assembly Members

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the ratio of Northern Ireland population to Northern Ireland Assembly members is. [154859]

**Mr. Pearson:** There are 108 elected members of the Northern Ireland Assembly and the estimated population of Northern Ireland at mid-year 2002 is 1,696,600 people. This gives a ratio of one Assembly member per 15,710 population.

### Nurses

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether there is a maximum age for nurses within the NHS in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [155428]

**Angela Smith:** There is no compulsory retirement age for nurses, although local employers may have their own policy regarding retirement age.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) does not place upper age limits in relation to fitness to practice and registration.

The NMC is currently consulting on a proposal that as from 1 April 2004 it will require registrants to make a declaration in relation to good health and good character as part of their application for renewal of the periodic three year renewal of registration.

### Nursing Vacancies

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* hospital and *(b)* community nursing vacancies there are within North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust. [155805]

**Angela Smith:** The information requested is in the following table.

*Number of hospital and community nursing vacancies (including long-term vacancies) within North and West Belfast HSS Trust as at 30 September 2003*

| *Headcount* | *WTE*[1] |
|---|---|
| *Hospital nursing vacancies* | |
| 0 | 0.00 |
| *Community nursing vacancies* | |
| 9 | 8.43 |

[1] Whole Time Equivalent

*Number of long-term (vacant more than three months) hospital and community nursing vacancies within North and West Belfast HSS Trust as at 30 September 2003*

| *Headcount* | *WTE*[1] |
|---|---|
| *Hospital nursing vacancies* | |
| 0 | 0.00 |
| *Community nursing vacancies* | |
| 3 | 2.04 |

[1] Whole Time Equivalent

### Obesity

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the cost

to the NHS of treating obesity in Northern Ireland for each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [155419]

**Angela Smith:** By extrapolating from figures in a National Audit Office report relating to England and Wales, it has been estimated that obesity may cost the HPSS £15 million-£20 million a year.

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action is being taken to combat increases in obesity; and if he will make a statement. [155420]

**Angela Smith:** Action to tackle obesity is being taken forward through programmes to promote a healthy diet such as the "Fresh Fruit in Schools" initiative and also through a range of initiatives to promote physical activity, including the "Get a life, get active" campaign.

Revised strategies and action plans on food and nutrition and physical activity are currently being developed by inter-sectoral working groups. Both documents will be issued for consultation later in the year. In addition, a task force to address the specific issue of childhood obesity is being established under the auspices of the Ministerial Group on Public Health, which I chair.

### Orthopaedic Surgeons

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to introduce a protected elective centre devoted solely to orthopaedic surgery. [154596]

**Angela Smith:** Musgrave Park Hospital, which is part of Green Park Health and Social Services Trust, serves as a protected elective centre for orthopaedic surgery and has recently been expanded by the building of two new modular theatres.

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many consultant orthopaedic surgeons there are in the Province; and for how many weekly NHS sessions each is employed. [154598]

**Angela Smith:** Number of consultant orthopaedic surgeons employed in the Province as at 31 December 2003 and the number of weekly NHS sessions they are employed for.

| *HSS Trust* | *Count* | *WTE* | *Number of weekly NHS sessions employed for* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Altnagelvin Group HSS Trust | 6 | 5.91 | 5 work 11 NHS sessions per week<br>1 works 10 NHS sessions per week |
| Greenpark Healthcare HSS Trust | 17 | 15.15 | 1 works 8.5 NHS sessions per week<br>7 work 10 NHS sessions per week<br>8 work 11 NHS sessions per week<br>1 works as and when required |
| Royal Group of Hosp. HSS Trust | [1]Not available | 8.09 | Total of 89 NHS sessions worked by consultants per week[2] |
| Ulster Comm. and Hosp. HSS Trust | 6 | 4.64 | 1 works 2 NHS sessions per week<br>1 works 2.5 NHS sessions per week<br>1 works 3 NHS sessions per week<br>1 works 4 NHS sessions per week<br>2 work 5 NHS sessions per week |
| Total | Not available | 33.79 | Total of 342 NHS sessions worked per week by consultant orthopaedic surgeons |

[1] Headcount figure for number of consultant orthopaedic consultants working in Royal Group of Hosp. HSS Trust was not available.
[2] It was not possible to breakdown the number of NHS sessions worked by consultant orthopaedic consultants in Royal Group of Hosp. HSS Trust.

### Osteoporosis

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to increase the availability of the osteoporosis drug Evista in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement on the treatment of osteoporosis in Northern Ireland. [155202]

**Angela Smith:** Evista (generic name Raloxifene) is one of a number of interventions used to prevent and treat osteoporosis. Raloxifene is available to patients on health service prescription in Northern Ireland.

The choice of any intervention in the treatment of osteoporosis is a clinical one taken in consultation with the patient and based upon the best evidence available. Key factors include the nature and stage of disease progression, the risk and benefits of treatment, the patient age and underlying co-morbidities.

Clinical Resource Efficiency Support Team (CREST) Guidelines on the Prevention and Treatment of Osteoporosis were issued to Health Service professionals in Northern Ireland in 2001. The guidelines identify evidence-based strategies for the prevention and treatment of osteoporosis, including population approaches to promote smoking avoidance, regular exercise and an adequate diet including calcium and Vitamin D. In addition, the guidelines promote selective case finding approaches to the identification and treatment of those at risk of osteoporosis as well as those with established disease.

### Pension Credit

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many pensioner households in Northern Ireland are in receipt of pension credit; and what steps he is taking to increase take-up. [155200]

**Mr. Spellar:** There are currently 82,000 households receiving pension credit. Between April 2003 and October 2004 the Social Security Agency will have written to every pensioner household where they are not already receiving pension credit to advise them about the new pension credit.

To maximise the benefit take-up, there is also a publicity campaign in local and national newspapers and also on television. In addition to this the Social

Security Agency has also appointed a Pension Adviser to each of its office areas to actively promote the take up of pension credit and other benefits.

**Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 2 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 720W, on pension credit, by what date he expects the current backlog of pension credit applications to be cleared; and how long he estimates it will take to process a new application for a pension credit. [155628]

**Mr. Spellar:** A recovery plan is being put in place and the situation is being addressed as a matter of urgency. Clearing the backlogs and improving the unsatisfactory standards of service to pensioners is the Social Security Agency's top priority.

It is estimated that it will take on average of 50 days to process a new application for pension credit.

### Personal Details

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* prison officers, *(b)* police officers, *(c)* political representatives and *(d)* others have been informed since October 2002 that their personal details were held by the Provisional IRA. [151219]

**Jane Kennedy:** Records researched by PSNI would indicate that since October 2002 some 2,841 persons have been informed that their details may be in the possession of the Provisional IRA. The breakdown is as follows:

(a) Prison officers: 1,427

(b) Police officers: 84

(c) Political representatives: 40

(d) Other: 1,340

Please note that notification is handled at regional level and therefore these figures may be subject to slight adjustment.

### Police Service

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Catholics have joined the Police Service of Northern Ireland since its creation. [154848]

**Jane Kennedy:** I am advised that as at 1 February of this year, 544 Catholics had been appointed to the Police Service of Northern Ireland as recruits since its creation.

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many successful applicants to join the Police Service of Northern Ireland are awaiting training. [154849]

**Jane Kennedy:** The Police Service of Northern Ireland is currently in the process of appointing candidates from its fifth recruitment campaign, which was launched in March 2003. Thirty nine candidates have been appointed and have commenced training. There are currently 861 qualified candidates from the fifth competition, although some applicants are still in the process of going through security vetting and this number may increase.

Up to around 270 recruits would be appointed in a six month period.

**Mr. Donaldson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many applications were received for recruitment to the Police Service of Northern Ireland in each of the recruitment campaigns held in 2003. [155503]

**Jane Kennedy:** I am advised that competition 5, which was launched in March 2003, attracted 6,044 applications; competition 6, which was launched in September 2003, attracted 5,419 applications.

**Mr. Donaldson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many applications were received from *(a)* Protestants, *(b)* Roman Catholics and *(c)* others in each recruitment campaign for the Police Service of Northern Ireland in 2003. [155504]

**Jane Kennedy:** Of the 6,044 applications received for competition 5, launched in March 2003, 3,747 were of a perceived Protestant background, 2,194 were of a perceived Catholic background and 103 were not determined.

Of the 5,419 applications received for competition 6, launched in September 2003, 3,406 were of a perceived Protestant background, 1,909 were of a perceived Catholic background and 104 were not determined.

**Mr. Donaldson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* Protestants, *(b)* Roman Catholics and *(c)* others were successful in entering the merit pool for each of the campaigns for recruitment to the Police Service of Northern Ireland in 2003; and how many applicants in each category were subsequently offered a place on the training course following completion of each recruitment campaign. [155505]

**Jane Kennedy:** 1,096 qualified candidates formed the pool for competition 5. Of this number, 778 were of a perceived Protestant background, 307 were of perceived Catholic background and 11 were not determined.

Appointments from competition 5 started in January 2004. So far, 83 qualified candidates have been appointed as police trainees. 45 of these appointments were of perceived Protestant background, 38 were of perceived Catholic background and none were classified as not determined.

The pool of qualified candidates for competition 6 will not be formed until April.

**David Burnside:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total cost to date is of implementing the Patten Report on policing in Northern Ireland. [154867]

**Jane Kennedy:** It is not possible to provide the precise total cost to date of implementing the Patten Report on policing in Northern Ireland. The costs associated with the police early retirement/severance scheme and implementation of specific projects related to some of the individual recommendations from 1 April 2000 to December 2003 amount to some £197 million. Moreover there would have been other costs, which cannot be exactly identified, incurred by PSNI from its grant in support of the implementation of Patten.

**David Burnside:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many officers of the full-time police reserve have been *(a)* killed and *(b)* injured (i) on duty and (ii) off duty in each year since its formation. [154868]

**Jane Kennedy:** The information requested is not available in the format requested. The following tables set out the statistic available.

*Full-time reserve officers who were killed or died on duty*

| | Reason | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Death accident gun shot* | *Death by terrorist* | *Death non-terrorist* | *Death traffic accident* | *Grand total* |
| 1975 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 1976 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| 1977 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 1978 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 1979 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 1981 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 1982 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 1983 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| 1984 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 1985 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| 1986 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| 1987 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 1988 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 1989 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| 1990 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 1992 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 1993 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 1994 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 1997 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 2000 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 2003 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |

*Full-time reserve officers who were killed or died off duty*

| | Reason | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Death accident gun shot* | *Death accident* | *Death by terrorist* | *Death non-terrorist* | *Death traffic accident* | *Total* |
| 1976 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 1978 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 1979 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 1980 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 1981 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 1986 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| 1987 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| 1988 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 6 |
| 1989 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| 1990 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| 1993 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| 1994 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 1995 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 1999 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 2000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 2003 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |

*Note:*
If a year is not listed it is because no officer was killed or died in that particular year

*Full-time reserve officers injured on duty*

| | *Number injured on duty* |
|---|---|
| 1986 | 3 |
| 1987 | 3 |
| 1988 | 11 |
| 1989 | 7 |
| 1990 | 76 |
| 1991 | 361 |
| 1992 | 401 |
| 1993 | 426 |
| 1994 | 344 |
| 1995 | 474 |
| 1996 | 509 |
| 1997 | 529 |
| 1998 | 570 |
| 1999 | 616 |
| 2000 | 609 |
| 2001 | 640 |
| 2002 | 455 |
| 2003 | 221 |
| Total | 6,255 |

It should be noted that records were computerised in the late 1980's and the PSNI can only stand over the figures from 1991.

### Post-primary Education

**Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what *(a)* data and *(b)* methodology were used to produce the statistical tables which appear in the Costello Report. [154125]

**Jane Kennedy:** The information in the statistical tables in the Costello Report was drawn from a variety of sources including the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, the Department of Education, the Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment, and the Programme for International Student Assessment (OECD).

### Provisional IRA/Sinn Fein

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to his answer of 8 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 470W, in what ways the Provisional IRA and Sinn Fein are inextricably linked; and on what evidence he judges that they are so linked. [154664]

**Jane Kennedy:** As I made clear to the hon. Member for South Antrim (David Burnside), the Government do not comment on intelligence matters.

### Recruitment Advertising

**Pete Wishart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his Department's expenditure on recruitment advertising was in each of the last three years, broken down by publication; and what proportion of such expenditure was *(a)* to advertise vacant posts and *(b)* in the form of other general recruitment advertising. [155525]

**Mr. Pearson:** Information on expenditure by NIO is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Expenditure by the Recruitment Service on advertising vacant posts in the Northern Ireland Civil Service is as follows:

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 2001 | 0.5 |
| 2002 | 0.5 |
| 2003 | 0.5 |

Information broken down by publication is not held but most recruitment advertising is placed in the Belfast Telegraph, News Letter and Irish News.

### Regeneration

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action is being taken to regenerate under-populated residential areas. [154846]

**Mr. Spellar:** There a number of policies, both specific and general, designed to help regenerate under populated residential areas.

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive actively seeks to revitalise areas that have experienced population loss and which may also suffer from unfit or vacant housing stock by the use of statutory powers to designate Redevelopment Areas and Urban Regeneration Areas, together with programmes of Renovation Grant activity. The NI Housing Executive is also currently engaged in developing a range of strategies and programmes which seek to facilitate regeneration and sustainable communities such as:

Empty Homes Strategy.

The Rural Strategy.

Estate Renewal, Neighbourhood Renewal and Community Development Strategies.

Living over the shop and town centre living.

Arterial Routes Studies.

Additionally, the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland has the objective of creating sustainable communities and regenerating urban areas. It requires that 60 per cent. of future new build housing be sited within the existing urban footprint. The NI Housing Executive contributes to the Policy Planning Strategy 12 document in respect of Housing Need Assessments that are to be completed as part of each Development Plan. These highlight the housing needs required to achieve sustainable and affordable housing within settlements across Northern Ireland.

In addition, while not specifically targeting under-populated areas, the Department for Social Development's tools for regeneration clearly impact on such areas, and in particular, Northern Ireland's most disadvantaged communities. The Department's wide range of strategies and programmes such as the Urban Development Programme, Urban Development Grant, Environmental Improvement Schemes, and the recently launched Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, aim to revitalise areas of slower growth, promote social cohesion, and help build more socially, economically and environmentally sustainable neighbourhoods.

### Regional Rates

**Mr. Gregory Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the percentage increases to the regional rate in Northern Ireland were in each of the past five years. [153844]

**Mr. Pearson:** The percentage increases to the regional rate in Northern Ireland for the past five years is as follows.

*Percentage*

| | *Non-domestic* | *Domestic* |
|---|---|---|
| 1998–99 | 3.2 | 5.9 |
| 1999–2000 | 5.5 | 8 |
| 2000–01 | 4.6 | 8 |
| 2001–02 | 3.3 | 7 |
| 2002–03 | 3.3 | 7 |

### Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many operations were performed at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children by surgeons from *(a)* the Republic of Ireland and *(b)* Great Britain in each of the last five years. [155421]

**Angela Smith:** This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### Sports Funding

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much funding has been provided from *(a)* central Government funds, *(b)* European funds and *(c)* other public funds to (i) football, (ii) rugby, (iii) hockey, (iv) cricket and (v) Gaelic games in Northern Ireland in each financial year since 2000–01. [154154]

**Angela Smith:** Funding provided from *(a)* central Government funds, *(b)* European funds and *(c)* other public funds to (i) football, (ii) rugby, (iii) hockey, (iv) cricket and (v) Gaelic games in each financial year from 2000–01 is as follows:

*(a) Central Government Funds*

£

| | *2000–01* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Football | 1,264,009 | [1]951,803 | [1]981,188 | 3,197,000 |
| Rugby | 152,843 | 157,551 | 92,536 | 402,930 |
| Hockey | 27,464 | 61,225 | 54,902 | 143,591 |
| Cricket | 20,000 | 22,000 | 26,330 | 68,330 |
| Gaelic games | 652,085 | 381,333 | 557,676 | 1,591,094 |
| Totals | 2,116,401 | 1,573,912 | 1,712,632 | 5,402,945 |

[1] These figures include £100,000 and £500,000 allocated to Soccer from the Football Development Centre Programme for 2001–02 and 2002–03.

*(b) European Funds*

The following table provides information on European Funds administrated by DFP and DARD to football, rugby, hockey, cricket and Gaelic games for each financial year from 2000–01.

£

| | *2000–01* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Football | 915 | 0 | 10,800 | 11,715 |
| Rugby | 0 | 939 | 0 | 939 |
| Hockey | 0 | 0 | 0 | — |
| Cricket | 4,067 | 0 | 0 | 4,067 |
| Gaelic games | 18,557 | 1,885 | 5,594 | 26,036 |
| Totals | 23,539 | 2,824 | 16,394 | 42,757 |

DFP has also provided European funding (Peace II) to numerous sports which include, football, rugby, hockey, cricket and Gaelic games. This funding was for projects that included more than one of the above sports, the details are as follows.

| | Numerous sports (£) |
|---|---|
| 2000–01 | 0 |
| 2001–02 | 0 |
| 2002–03 | 3,906 |
| Total | 3,906 |

*(c) Other Public Funds*

The following table details the amount of Sports Lottery funding that has been allocated to football, rugby, hockey, cricket and Gaelic games for financial years 2000–01, 2001–02 and 2002–03 by the Sports Council for Northern Ireland.

£

| | 2000–01 | 2001–02 | 2002–03 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Football | 942,492 | 642,710 | 609,131 | 2,194,333 |
| Rugby | 312,053 | 144,000 | 76,860 | 532,913 |
| Hockey | 47,625 | 199,850 | 68,800 | 316,275 |
| Cricket | 282,500 | 57,202 | 16,000 | 355,702 |
| Gaelic games | 1,694,182 | 1,025,420 | 689,962 | 3,409,564 |
| Totals | 3,278,852 | 2,069,182 | 1,460,753 | 6,808,787 |

## Special Educational Needs

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many children are registered as having special needs in Northern Ireland. [154845]

**Angela Smith:** The information requested is not available.

## Waiting Lists/Times

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when a patient referred on 9 February by his or her family doctor can expect to have *(a)* an initial out-patient assessment and *(b)* routine elective surgery in orthopaedics. [154588]

**Angela Smith:** This information is not available in the form requested.

It should be noted, that over 80 per cent. of in-patients for trauma and orthopaedics and 90 per cent. of out-patients are seen in less than 12 months.

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients have been waiting for *(a)* less than six months, *(b)* six to 12 months, *(c)* one to two years, *(d)* two to three years and *(e)* more than three years to have an (i) in-patient admission and (ii) initial out-patient assessment in orthopaedic surgery. [154589]

**Angela Smith:** Waiting list statistics are submitted to the Department at specialty level. The information in this answer relates to people waiting in the trauma and orthopaedics specialty at 30 September 2003 (the most recent information available). Waiting list statistics are collected in three-month time bands for all patients waiting up to 24 months. Patients waiting 24 months or more are grouped together within one category therefore patients waiting two to three years and more than three years cannot be separately identified.

| | Number awaiting in-patient admission | Number awaiting initial out-patient assessment |
|---|---|---|
| <6 months | 2,748 | 8,871 |
| 6–12 months | 1,780 | 3,750 |
| 1–2 Years | 1,121 | 3,646 |
| 2+ years | 604 | 3,352 |

*Source:*
CH1 and CH3

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to tackle waiting lists in orthopaedic surgery; and if he will make a statement. [154599]

**Angela Smith:** A number of initiatives are being taken to reduce the length of time people are waiting for orthopaedic surgery. These include:

Increasing the number of trainees in this specialty.

A review of acute trauma services, which is underway at present. This review is expected to make recommendations for improvements in the delivery of trauma services and will provide strategic direction in the future development of the orthopaedic/fracture service.

The building of two new modular theatres for Musgrave Park Hospital. This has increased theatre capacity, which will improve fracture services, stabilise and reduce waiting lists and facilitate the mix of elective, trauma and out-patient work of consultant orthopaedic surgeons.

The appointment earlier this year at Green Park Health and Social Services Trust of a waiting list manager and the establishment of a centralised waiting list team.

The increase in waiting times in recent years reflects a general rise in demand on the orthopaedic service and there is a considerable commitment and determination to deal with it.

## Wayleave Compensation

**Mr. McGrady:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what Government policy is in relation to wayleave compensation payable to landowners affected by measures to facilitate the provision of public services; and what recent changes there have been relating to payments for wayleaves. [154579]

**Mr. Pearson:** The primary legislation governing compensation for the acquisition of pipeline wayleaves in Northern Ireland is The Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1973. The rules for assessing any compensation payable under this Order are contained in the Land Compensation (Northern Ireland) Order 1982. The principal thrust of this legislation and the associated case law decisions has been to ensure that compensation is based on the actual loss in every case.

The legal basis of compensation has therefore not changed but each individual case must be looked at on its merits with the aim of establishing what the actual loss is.

The Valuation and Lands Agency (VLA) act on behalf of Water Service in the assessment of wayleave compensation. In most cases the compensation amount is agreed between VLA and the landowner or his agent. If agreement is not possible the landowner then has the option of referring the matter to the Lands Tribunal for Northern Ireland.

## EDUCATION AND SKILLS

### CAFCASS

**John Mann:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures are undertaken by the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service to ensure that full medical and psychiatric reports of a parent who is not a UK citizen are examined when making their report. [152401]

**Margaret Hodge:** CAFCASS officers are able to make inquiries of health and psychiatric services if it is deemed necessary to take such information into account to ensure the best interests of the child are met when preparing their reports.

If the circumstances require, CAFCASS officers are able to seek a direction from the Court to request relevant information. They are also able to contact International Social Service, or the relevant consulate to obtain necessary documents from abroad.

**John Mann:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what procedures are followed by the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service in cases where one parent is a non-UK resident. [154080]

**Margaret Hodge:** The role of CAFCASS is professionally and impartially to inquire into individual cases, in order to assist the court in reaching decisions that are in the best interests of the children who are the subject of court proceedings.

The same procedures are followed by CAFCASS in cases where one parent may be a non-UK resident. In addition to collecting and assessing documentation for each case, CAFCASS officers are able to contact International Social Service, or the appropriate consulate, to obtain relevant documentary information from abroad.

### Adoption and Children Act

**Dr. Tonge:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when he expects to implement the provisions of the Adoption and Children Act 2002; and if he will publish a timetable for implementation. [148913]

**Margaret Hodge:** The Government have already implemented the following key provisions of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (the Act):

1 June 2003: restrictions on adoptions from overseas;

31 October 2003: adoption support for adoptive families; and

1 December 2003: parental responsibility for unmarried fathers who jointly register the birth of their child with the mother.

The first phase of the independent review mechanism, which will cover prospective adopters whose adoption agency is minded not to approve them, will become operational on 30 April 2004.

We expect the provisions on Independent Reviewing Officers to come into force in September 2004.

Consultation documents have been published on provisions in the Act regarding advocacy services for children and young people; the review of children's cases; arranging adoptions and assessing prospective adopters; and adoption reports and adoptions with a foreign element. Copies are available in the Library. The Government will be consulting on the remaining provisions over the next few months.

The regulations, court rules and guidance required to implement the core of the Act should be in place by the end of 2004. After a period for preparation and training, we expect the legislation to come into force in September 2005.

The provisions on domestic violence and the definition of harm are being considered separately and the Government will make an announcement on these provisions in due course.

### Adult Learning

**Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many courses for adult learning have been made available in each year since 1997; [154232]

(2) how many courses are provided for adult learning in 2003–04 in the whole of England and Wales. [154233]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** Information on the number of courses made available for adult learning is not held centrally. What is held centrally, is information on the number of adults actually participating in further and adult education courses. Figures for *(a)* the number of adults aged 19 and over participating in LSC funded further education in sector colleges and external institutions and *(b)* the number of enrolments on adult education courses offered by local education authorities (LEAs), are set out separately as follows. Data on the number of learners participating in 2003/04 are not yet available.

*Adult learners (in thousands) on FE provision funded by the LSC in colleges and external institutions in England: 1997/98 to 2002/03*

| | *Adult learners* |
|---|---|
| 1997/98 | 2,774.6 |
| 1998/99 | 2,669.5 |
| 1999/2000 | 2,611.6 |
| 2000/01 | 2,777.4 |
| 2001/02 | 3,220.8 |
| 2002/03 | 3,234.9 |

*Source:*
LSC Statistical First Release ILR/SFR02

*Enrolments by learners aged 19 and over (in thousands) on adult education courses offered by LEAs at 1 November 1997 to 2002*

| *1 November* | *Enrolments* |
|---|---|
| 1997 | 1,014.7 |
| 1998 | 1,055.9 |
| 1999 | 1,007.2 |
| 2000[1] | 983.8 |
| 2001[2] | 1,015.4 |
| 2002 | 993.2 |

[1] Revised estimate: enrolments were over reported by some LEAs in this year

[2] Revised estimate: enrolments were inaccurately reported by some LEAs in this year, overall there was a net under-reporting

*Source:*
Local education authorities

**Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding will be made available for adult learning in further education colleges for 2003/04. [154235]

**Alan Johnson:** The Department allocates funds for education and training in the post-16 learning and skills sector to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). In the 2003/04 academic year the LSC's planned allocation for adult learning in further education colleges is £1.923 billion. This figure includes planned funding for Additional Learner Support.

**Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many adults have been trained at local colleges in each year since 1997. [154236]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** The numbers of Learning and Skills Council (formerly Further Education Funding Council) funded adult learners (aged 19 and over) enrolled in further education sector colleges in each year since 1997/98 are shown in the following table.

*Adult learners (in thousands) on FE provision funded by the Council in colleges in England: 1997/98 to 2002/03*

| | *Learners* |
|---|---|
| 1997/98 | 2,480.1 |
| 1998/99 | 2,383.4 |
| 1999/2000 | 2,316.1 |
| 2000/01 | 2,441.8 |
| 2001/02 | 2,832.7 |
| 2002/03 | 2,844.5 |

*Source:*
LSC Statistical First Release ILR/SFR02

### Adult Learning Grant

**Stephen Hesford:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many adults are entitled to adult learning grant; and what steps his Department is taking to promote take-up. [154560]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** We estimate that some 6,000 adults may be eligible for the grant in the 10 pilot areas. So far there have been over 2,600 applications.

We are working with the Learning and Skills Council, Further Education colleges, and advice and guidance agencies in the 10 pilots to promote this new grant. At this stage, the main focus is on promoting the grant to new learners who started courses during January 2004 and to existing learners who may be eligible but have not applied.

### Arts and Humanities Research Council

**Chris Grayling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the subject remit of the Arts and Humanities Research Council will be. [152634]

**Mr. Charles Clarke:** The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) will cover the same broad range of areas of the arts and humanities as currently covered by the Arts and Humanities Research Board.

### Asylum Seekers (Education)

**Chris Grayling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate he has made of the number of places in *(a)* further and *(b)* higher education provided to (i) asylum seekers and (ii) their children in the last year for which figures were available. [143647]

**Alan Johnson:** The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) estimate that about 41,000 asylum seekers participated in LSC funded further education in 2001/02. It is not possible to identify how many learners were children of asylum seekers.

Data collected by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) covering students on higher education courses does not separately identify asylum seekers.

### Basic Skills Training

**Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding will be made available for basic skills training for adults in each year from 2003 to 2006. [154974]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** Spending Review 2002 ensured that we are able to continue to support the Skills for Life strategy to enable 1.5 million adults to improve their literacy and numeracy skills by 2007. Over £1.6 billion has been made available to deliver the Skills for Life strategy for the three years to 2005–06 across Government Departments.

**Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many adults he plans should participate in basic skills training in each year from 2003 to 2006; and what the figures were for each year from 1997 to 2003. [154975]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** The following table shows the number of adults participating in basic education in the Further Education sector from 1997 to 2001.

| | *Learners (Thousand)* |
|---|---|
| 1997–98 | 158 |
| 1998–99 | 182 |
| 1999–2000 | 270 |

The number of learners participating each year in Skills for Life programmes since the launch of the strategy in April 2001 are shown in the following table.

| | *Learners (Thousand)* |
|---|---|
| 2000–01 | 449 |
| 2001–02 | 655 |
| 2002–03[1] | 664 |

[1] Includes an estimated component due to incomplete enrolment data.

We expect this level of participation to continue enabling us to meet our targets of improving the skills of 750,000 adults by 2004 and 1.5 million adults by 2007.

### Benefit Fraud

**Mr. Webb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many staff in his Department have been *(a)* investigated, *(b)* suspended, *(c)* dismissed, *(d)* prosecuted and *(e)* convicted for involvement in benefit fraud in each of the last six years; and what amounts were involved in each case. [153207]

**Mr. Charles Clarke:** One member of staff from my Department (formerly The Department for Education and Employment) was investigated and suspended for allegedly claiming benefit while working during this

period. Following an investigation the Department was satisfied that there was no benefit fraud involved. We do not have records of the amounts involved.

No staff were dismissed, prosecuted, or convicted for involvement in benefit fraud in each of the last six years.

### Child Deaths

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many cases of parents gaoled for shaking their babies to death are to be reviewed in the light of the Angela Cannings appeal judgement. [152133]

**The Solicitor-General:** I have been asked to reply.

Since the release of Angela Cannings by the Court of Appeal and its published judgment, the Attorney General has instigated a number of measures. A total of 258 convictions over the last 10 years for the murder, manslaughter or infanticide of a child under two by its parent have been identified. Of those, a total of 72 relate to persons still serving a custodial sentence. These will be accorded the utmost priority. Currently, some 365 boxes of evidence relating to 52 high priority cases have been recovered from central storage and dispatched to CPS areas for them to conduct an initial review. The remaining high priority cases are being recovered from the areas themselves.

Once the review becomes fully under way, the offences comprising the 258 convictions and the issue at trial will become clearer. Once that stage has been reached and more information is known on these cases it will be possible for me to write further to you with additional information.

### Child Removals

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children have been removed from their parents following a younger sibling's death, without evidence that one of the parents was responsible beyond reasonable doubt for the death of the first child, in the past 10 years. [152028]

**Margaret Hodge:** The information requested is not held centrally.

### Children's Fund

**Norman Lamb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when his Department will confirm final allocation of funds for 2004–05 in respect of the Children's Fund. [153464]

**Margaret Hodge:** I expect to announce the Children's Fund allocations for 2004–05 shortly.

### Children's Social Services

**David Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent discussions he has had about the provision of children's social services in England. [152939]

**Margaret Hodge:** As the Minister for Children, Young People and Families I meet regularly with a range of people to discuss the provision of children's social services in England.

### Connexions

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of time Connexions personal advisers have spent with young people from each socio-economic class, broken down by Connexions partnership. [154780]

**Margaret Hodge:** Information about the proportion of time Connexions personal advisers spend with young people from each socio-economic class is not collected by Connexions Partnerships.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what examinations and assessments of existing services for young people were carried out in each region before Connexions partnerships were established; and what the nature of such assessments was. [154784]

**Margaret Hodge:** All Connexions partnerships were subject to a rigorous assessment process before "going live" to ensure they were ready to provide a high quality service. As part of developing their business plans, partnerships were expected to undertake a local needs assessment to draw out the key needs of young people, the extent to which existing provision met those needs, and to identify gaps in services.

The Connexions Service National Unit provided a mapping tool to assist this process. Partnerships also drew upon local mapping information collected for other purposes.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the budget allocation is for each Connexions partnership for 2004–05. [154785]

**Margaret Hodge:** The budget allocation for each Connexions Partnership for 2004–05 is as follows:

£

| *Connexions partnership* | *2004–05 allocation* |
|---|---|
| *South East* | |
| M. Keynes, Oxfordshire and Bucks | 10,595,357 |
| Berkshire | 6,669,629 |
| Surrey | 8,110,651 |
| Kent and Medway | 13,144,292 |
| Sussex | 11,229,894 |
| South Central | 14,247,867 |
| *London* | |
| West London | 12,661,008 |
| Central London | 15,338,641 |
| North London | 10,026,144 |
| East London | 22,055,084 |
| South London | 10,574,964 |
| *East of England* | |
| Norfolk | 6,508,049 |
| Cambridgeshire and Peterborough | 5,981,683 |
| Suffolk | 5,408,558 |
| Bedfordshire and Luton | 5,070,064 |
| Hertfordshire | 7,913,832 |
| Essex, Southend and Thurrock | 12,848,412 |
| *South West* | |
| Gloucestershire | 4,512,252 |
| Wiltshire and Swindon | 4,979,619 |
| West of England | 8,089,632 |
| Somerset | 3,951,306 |
| Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole | 5,060,675 |
| Cornwall and Devon | 12,513,950 |

£

| Connexions partnership | 2004–05 allocation |
|---|---|
| *West Midlands* | |
| Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin | 3,841,302 |
| Staffordshire | 9,236,197 |
| Black Country | 11,473,924 |
| Birmingham and Solihull | 13,045,649 |
| Coventry and Warwickshire | 7,199,993 |
| Hereford and Worcester | 5,652,538 |
| *East Midlands* | |
| Derbyshire | 8,009,441 |
| Nottinghamshire | 9,644,783 |
| Lincolnshire and Rutland | 5,413,738 |
| Leicestershire | 8,351,533 |
| Northamptonshire | 5,759,611 |
| *Yorks and the Humber* | |
| York and North Yorks | 5,392,793 |
| West Yorkshire | 20,546,411 |
| Humber | 8,689,130 |
| South Yorkshire | 12,385,536 |
| *North West* | |
| Cumbria | 4,281,199 |
| Lancashire | 12,712,765 |
| Greater Manchester | 26,256,913 |
| Greater Merseyside | 17,411,643 |
| Cheshire and Warrington | 6,850,581 |
| *North East* | |
| Northumberland | 3,011,745 |
| Tyne and Wear | 11,667,484 |
| County Durham | 4,829,615 |
| Tees Valley | 7,143,913 |
| Total England | 446,300,000 |

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research has been carried out into the proportion of young people who are aware of the Connexions service in each partnership area, broken down by *(a)* ethnicity, *(b)* age and *(c)* gender. [154786]

**Margaret Hodge:** Information on the awareness of young people of the Connexions service has been obtained from two recent Department for Education and Skills research studies.

In 2002, the Youth Cohort Study found that 51 per cent. of young people were aware of a Connexions service in their area. Of those, slightly more females said they were aware of a Connexions Service in this area (53 per cent. compared to 50 per cent. of males). Just over one-third of non-white respondents claimed awareness (36 per cent.) compared with 53 per cent. of white respondents.

In 2003, a customer satisfaction survey of 16,000 young people found that awareness of Connexions was generally high. 92 per cent. of both male and female respondents contacted said they had heard of the service. For minority ethnic groups, awareness levels were 88 per cent. compared with 93 per cent. for white respondents. Young people aged 16–17 had the highest levels of awareness (94 per cent.), followed by 13 to 15-year-olds (92 per cent.) with those over 18 (89 per cent.) being the least aware of the service.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what qualifications and training Connexions' personal advisers are expected to have on *(a)* working with young offenders and *(b)* health matters; and what proportion are trained to this level within each area partnership. [154787]

**Margaret Hodge:** Detailed information on specific qualifications held by PAs working with young offenders and with individuals who have health concerns is not collected.

Connexions Personal Advisers are drawn from a broad range of professional backgrounds including youth justice, social work, probation, youth work and career guidance. To be fully qualified Connexions Service personal advisers are required to have an NVQ level 4 or equivalent in a relevant professional discipline and have undertaken Connexions specific training.

Connexions Personal Advisers are not expected to be experts in all areas but are trained to broker and refer to specialists where appropriate.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of Connexions' personal advisers within each area partnership have *(a)* a Qualification in Careers Guidance, *(b)* NVQ Level 4 in Advice and Guidance, including specified units and *(c)* a Diploma in Careers Guidance. [154788]

**Margaret Hodge:** My department does not collect data on the proportion of specific specialist qualifications held by Connexions personal advisers.

In our guidance to Partnerships we require that any Personal adviser responsible for providing young people with in-depth career guidance must hold a Qualification in Career Guidance, NVQ4 in Advice and Guidance (including specified units) or the Diploma in Careers Guidance. Connexions Partnerships are responsible for ensuring that this requirement is met.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of Connexions personal advisers within each area partnership are qualified to give guidance on all advisory services. [154789]

**Margaret Hodge:** To be fully qualified, Connexions PAs are required to have a NVQ level 4 or equivalent in a relevant professional discipline and have undertaken Connexions specific training in delivering a wide range of support services to young people. Connexions training equips personal advisers to recognise the boundaries of their existing professional competence and refer to specialist services where necessary.

We do not collect information in the form requested. However, we expect that by April 2005 all Connexions personal advisers will have completed Connexions specific training.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what safeguards exist to ensure that young people are given in-depth advice only by properly qualified Connexions personal advisers. [154790]

**Margaret Hodge:** The safeguards are through training and supervision. Connexions personal advisers are either qualified to NVQ level 4 or equivalent in a relevant professional discipline or they are actively working to a level 4 qualification. They are also required

to complete or be actively working towards Connexions specific training which equips them to recognise the boundaries of their own professional competence.

All Connexions Service Partnerships have in place professional supervision arrangements.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how the quality of advice given by Connexions personal advisers is monitored. [154791]

**Margaret Hodge:** The quality of advice given by Connexions personal advisers is monitored on three levels:

1. It is a condition of grant that every Connexions partnership has effective procedures in place to evaluate the professional practice of personal advisers and takes appropriate steps to improve individual performance. Partnerships are also required to have robust professional supervision arrangements in place for all personal advisers.

2. Connexions partnerships undertake a comprehensive annual self-assessment of their performance which is based on the document "Connexions Partnerships: A Framework for Inspection—April 2002". One of the key criteria addressed is the overall quality of advice given by personal advisers. Areas for improvement are identified and addressed by improvement actions in the following year's business plan. Currently progress against these improvement actions is monitored on a quarterly basis by the Government Office.

3. The independent element of scrutiny of personal advisers' practice is provided by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) over a four-yearly cycle. Ofsted make judgements about the partnership, using the seven key questions within the Ofsted inspection framework. Within this framework Key Question 4 assesses the effectiveness of Connexions practice, assessment, support, teaching and guidance and contains a specific quality statement that addresses the quality of impartial information, advice and guidance provided to young people by personal advisers. Following the report of Ofsted's findings, partnerships are required to address any issues arising from the inspection in an action plan. Progress against this action plan is again monitored by the Government Office.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how *(a)* parents' and *(b)* clients' complaints against the service provided by Connexions are dealt with. [154792]

**Margaret Hodge:** Connexions partnerships are required to put in place a complaints procedure, which is the primary mechanism for all complaints from parents and clients. Should complaints not be resolved at that stage, the local Government office and Connexions teams within DfES investigate and provide support both to the public and partnerships to continually improve the level of service Connexions provides to clients and their families.

Partnerships are required to have strategies to ensure young people are involved in the design, delivery, evaluation and continuous improvement of the service. This, in part, ensures the number of complaints is reduced. They must respond positively to any complaints made by young people and are required to publish a Youth Charter explaining what Connexions is and offers; its standards of service; and how to complain.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills by what criteria Ofsted assess the performance of a Connexions partnership. [154794]

**Margaret Hodge:** This is a matter for Ofsted. HM Chief Inspector, David Bell, will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of his letter in the Library.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of Connexions personal advisers within each area partnership has undergone Criminal Records Bureau checks. [154795]

**Margaret Hodge:** Although Connexions Partnerships provide us with the numbers of personal advisers they have recruited, they are not required to provide data on the numbers who have been subject to List 99 and Criminal Records Bureau checks. To do so would serve no purpose as it is a legal requirement for employers to ensure that personal advisers have been subjected to completed List 99 checks before they can come into direct contact with young people. We also require Partnerships to ensure a Criminal Records Bureau check is completed for all Connexions staff working with young people.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much time has been spent by Connexions personal advisers upon each advisory service. [154796]

**Margaret Hodge:** It is not possible to provide the information requested. Connexions advisers offer a broad range of advice on many issues. We do not ask them to account for their time by category of advice.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps are being taken to ensure that Connexions works effectively with the voluntary sector. [154797]

**Margaret Hodge:** In October 2002, we published our first strategy for engaging the Voluntary and Community Sector [VCS] in Connexions. We have made considerable progress since then in working with the VCS:

Connexions Partnerships awarded more than £10 million in grants and contracts to the VCS in 2002–03.

There has been an increase in the number of personal advisers based within, or coming from, the VCS. Recent figures show that around 13 per cent. of Connexions personal advisers came from the VCS.

Nearly every partnership board and local management committee now has VCS representation.

Most partnerships have at least one full-time VCS co-ordinator or development worker.

A working group, composed of representatives from the VCS, has been working with the Connexions Service National Unit advising on operational issues as they affect the sector, and sharing good practice.

An updated strategy, "Involving the Voluntary and Community Sector in Connexions: Strategy and Guidance 2004–05" will be published later this month. This document was developed jointly with the VCS and is endorsed by the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services.

From April 2004, Connexions Partnerships will also be required to work with local VCS partners and other organisations to develop a clear and systematic local strategy for the involvement of the VCS in service design, planning, delivery and evaluation.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assistance is provided to voluntary organisations by Connexions in *(a)* ensuring staff undergo Criminal Records Bureau checks, *(b)* applying for funding and *(c)* ensuring they fulfil requirements. [154798]

**Margaret Hodge:** Connexions Partnerships are required to ensure enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks are completed for all staff they recruit, including those who are employed through a subcontractor or voluntary agency. Connexions Service Partnerships are encouraged to provide assistance to voluntary organisations when they apply for funding and are committed to keeping procedures simple. Partnerships are able to provide grant funding and in-kind support to voluntary organisations who might otherwise be able to engage with Connexions.

It is the responsibility of contractors—including voluntary organisations—to ensure they fulfil contractual requirements, which partnerships monitor to ensure compliance.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total cost of the Connexions Card scheme has been. [154799]

**Margaret Hodge:** My Department has so far spent £35,884,000 on the Connexions Card scheme.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many young people have Connexions cards within each partnership area. [154800]

**Margaret Hodge:** The number of young people who have a Connexions Card in each Connexions Partnership area is as follows:

| *Connexions Partnership* | *Number of young people who have a Connexions Card* |
|---|---|
| Bedfordshire and Luton | 8,502 |
| Berkshire | 6,981 |
| Birmingham and Solihull | 4,075 |
| Black Country | 8,213 |
| Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole | 3,816 |
| Cambridgeshire and Peterborough | 6,318 |
| Central London | 6,084 |
| Cheshire and Warrington | 4,507 |
| Cornwall and Devon | 18,267 |
| County Durham | 6,740 |
| Coventry and Warwickshire | 7,877 |
| Cumbria | 3,771 |
| Derbyshire | 4,194 |
| East London | 19,156 |
| Essex, Southend and Thurrock | 14,304 |
| Gloucestershire | 2,255 |
| Greater Manchester | 19,619 |
| Greater Merseyside | 14,938 |
| Herefordshire and Worcestershire | 1,434 |
| Hertfordshire | 8,235 |
| Humber | 16,653 |
| Kent and Medway | 19,560 |
| Lancashire | 4,294 |
| Leicestershire | 11,887 |
| Lincolnshire and Rutland | 6,986 |
| Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire | 6,938 |
| Norfolk | 6,198 |
| North London | 14,506 |
| Northamptonshire | 8,421 |
| Northumberland | 4,138 |
| Nottinghamshire | 10,455 |
| Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin | 3,015 |
| Somerset | 1,562 |
| South Central | 10,109 |
| South London | 11,533 |
| South Yorkshire | 7,127 |
| Staffordshire | 6,142 |
| Suffolk | 2,905 |
| Surrey | 10,759 |
| Sussex | 8,277 |
| Swindon and Wiltshire | 5,429 |
| Tees Valley | 20,052 |
| Tyne and Wear | 18,897 |
| West London | 8,396 |
| West of England | 8,738 |
| West Yorkshire | 11,857 |
| York and North Yorkshire | 3,721 |
| Total | 417,841 |

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many young people used Connexions Direct, on average, in each of the last six months broken down by *(a)* age and *(b)* ethnic origin. [154801]

**Margaret Hodge:** In the past six months (August 2003 to January 2004) Connexions Direct advisers handled an average of 16,000 contacts per month. In addition there were 70,000 visits per month to the Connexions Direct website.

Many young people choose to remain anonymous when they contact Connexions Direct. Of those that chose to provide information, around 14 per cent. were aged 13 to 14, 39 per cent. 15 to 16 and 38 per cent. 17 to 19. Of those remaining around 1 per cent. were under 13 and the remainder were over 19. Information about ethnic origin is not available as reports over the past six months show no disclosure from young people.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how complaints from *(a)* parents and *(b)* young people about Connexions Direct are dealt with. [154802]

**Margaret Hodge:** All complaints from parents and young people are logged and investigated. If the complaint is during a call or webchat, the Connexions Direct duty manager will take over and deal with it immediately.

In the past six months 15 complaints and 68 praise calls have been logged.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money has been spent on the *(a)* purchase and *(b)* rental of buildings by each Connexions area partnership in each year since its establishment. [154803]

**Margaret Hodge:** The information requested is provided in the following table.

| | | Spend (£s) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 2001–2002 | | 2002–2003 | |
| *Partnership* | *Start date* | *Purchase of buildings* | *Rental of buildings* | *Purchase of buildings* | *Rental of buildings* |
| Bedfordshire and Luton | September 2002 | | | 0 | 0 |
| Cambridgeshire and Peterborough | April 2002 | | | 0 | 257,825 |
| Essex Southend and Thurrock | September 2002 | | | 0 | 0 |
| Hertfordshire[1] | April 2002 | | | 0 | 0 |
| Norfolk[1] | January 2003 | | | 18,000 | 0 |
| Suffolk[1] | September 2001 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Derbyshire | September 2002 | | | 0 | 0 |
| Leicestershire | September 2002 | | | 0 | 135,192 |
| Lincolnshire and Rutland | April 2001 | 0 | 128,177 | 0 | 143,298 |
| Northamptonshire | September 2002 | | | 0 | 147,410 |
| Nottinghamshire | April 2002 | | | 0 | 199,197 |
| Central London[1] | June 2002 | | | 0 | 0 |
| East London | April 2002 | | | 0 | 94,000 |
| North London | April 2001 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| South London | April 2001 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| West London | September 2002 | | | 0 | 24,000 |
| County Durham[1] | April 2002 | | | 0 | 0 |
| Northumberland | April 2003 | | | 0 | |
| Tees Valley | September 2002 | | | 0 | 0 |
| Tyne and Wear[1] | April 2002 | | | 0 | 0 |
| Cheshire and Warrington | April 2001 | 183,037 | 304,372 | 53,307 | 238,600 |
| Cumbria | April 2001 | 0 | 123,950 | 0 | 137,269 |
| Gtr Manchester | September 2002 | | | 0 | 88,208 |
| Gtr Merseyside | September 2001 | 195,770 | 242,436 | 1,324,924 | 319,245 |
| Lancashire | April 2002 | | | 98,000 | 338,000 |
| Berkshire | January 2003 | | | 0 | 21,840 |
| Kent and Medway | November 2002 | | | 0 | 28,000 |
| Milton Keynes Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire | April 2001 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14,000 |
| South Central | September 2002 | | | 0 | 24,500 |
| Surrey | November 2002 | | | 0 | 0 |
| Sussex | September 2002 | | | 0 | 29,820 |
| Bournemouth Poole and Dorset | April 2002 | | | 0 | 140,286 |
| Cornwall and Devon | April 2001 | 0 | 313,000 | 0 | 334,000 |
| Gloucestershire | April 2002 | | | 175,273 | 181,570 |
| Somerset | April 2002 | | | 44,229 | 225,351 |
| West of England | April 2001 | 62,000 | 0 | 4,000 | 331,000 |
| Wiltshire and Swindon | September 2002 | | | 0 | 10,750 |
| Birmingham and Solihull | September 2002 | | | 274,356 | 402,500 |
| Black Country | April 2001 | 0 | 0 | 478,000 | 36,000 |
| Coventry and Warwickshire | April 2001 | 0 | 0 | 208,605 | 360,060 |
| Hereford and Worcester | April 2002 | | | 0 | 157,221 |
| Shropshire Telford and Wrekin | April 2001 | 0 | 88,470 | [2] | [2] |
| Staffordshire | April 2002 | | | 0 | 264,500 |
| Humberside | September 2001 | 0 | 23,375 | 0 | 23,375 |
| South Yorkshire | April 2001 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 18,850 |
| West Yorkshire | October 2002 | | | 0 | 0 |
| York and North Yorkshire | September 2002 | | | 8,647 | 0 |

[1] These are Lead Body Partnerships for which we have separate accounting arrangements that do not require details of rental expenditure
[2] Accounts are not submitted yet

*Note:*
A zero indicates that a Partnership did not incur any expenditure on buildings (e.g. because it took over existing premises). The absence of any figure for 2001–02 means that the Partnership did not start until 2002–03

*Source:*
Partnerships' Annual Statutory Accounts

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what qualifications are required of Connexions personal advisers who give drugs counselling to clients. [154805]

**Margaret Hodge** *[holding answer 12 February 2004]:* To be fully qualified Connexions Service personal advisers are required to have an NVQ level 4 or equivalent in a relevant professional discipline and have undertaken Connexions specific training in delivering and brokering a wide range of support for young people. This includes information on drugs and alcohol issues. Connexions training equips advisers to recognise the boundaries of their existing professional competence and to refer to specialist services when necessary. In 2003–04, £1 million has been made available to Connexions Service Partnerships to provide additional training to personal advisers on drugs related issues.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding has been distributed to voluntary organisations through the Connexions service in each year since its establishment. [154806]

**Margaret Hodge** *[holding answer 12 February 2004]:* Connexions Partnerships make both grant awards and contract payments to voluntary organisations. In

2001–02 these totalled £2.2 million, in 2002–03 £10.1 million and in the first six months of 2003–04 (the latest data available) £4.3 million.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average salary of a Connexions personal adviser is in *(a)* each area partnership and *(b)* England. [154807]

**Margaret Hodge** *[holding answer 12 February 2004]*: My Department does not keep any data on the average salaries of Connexions personal advisers. Under their financial memorandum, partnerships are able to set their own salary rates taking account of qualification levels and local labour market factors.

### Contact and Residence Disputes

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what assessment he has made of whether a legal presumption of contact as a principle to the consideration of contact and residence disputes would generally be in the best interests of the child; [152997]

(2) what assessment he has made of whether a legal presumption of contact would contradict the best interest principle of the Children Act 1989. [152998]

**Margaret Hodge:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave on 5 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 67W. The Government support the view that, in general, children benefit from a continuing relationship with both parents following parental separation, where it is in the best interests of the child and safe for all family members. The fundamental principle of the Children Act 1989 is that

> "the child's welfare shall be the court's paramount consideration".

There is no automatic "right" to contact for either fathers or mothers, but in practice the courts have taken the view that, in most cases, the child's welfare is best served by contact with both parents.

### Education Funding

**Mr. Dorrell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total *(a)* schools funding spending share, *(b)* school pupil numbers and *(c)* schools funding spending share per pupil was in (i) Leicestershire, (ii) Leicester City, (iii) Lincolnshire, (iv) Nottinghamshire, (v) Derbyshire and (vi) Northamptonshire for (A) 2003–04 and (B) 2004–05. [155400]

**Mr. Miliband:** The figures requested are shown in the following table. The Schools Formula Spending Share (SFSS) formula comprises a basic entitlement for each pupil, which is the same across the country, plus a top-up for each pupil with additional educational needs, which is again the same across the country, plus top-ups for areas where it costs more to recruit and retain teachers and for areas which are sparsely populated. Local education authorities with a greater proportion of pupils with additional educational needs or higher average earnings or with significant sparsity will receive a higher level of funding per pupil.

| | *SFSS (£ millions)* | *3 to 15 pupil numbers used in SFSS calculation* | *SFSS per pupil (£)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *2004–05* | | | |
| Leicestershire | 261.260 | 94,914 | 2,753 |
| Leicester City | 154.136 | 46,910 | 3,286 |
| Lincolnshire | 290.926 | 100,708 | 2,889 |
| Nottinghamshire | 332.137 | 115,506 | 2,875 |
| Derbyshire | 322.361 | 113,154 | 2,849 |
| Northamptonshire | 298.063 | 102,153 | 2,918 |
| *2003–04* | | | |
| Leicestershire | 246.965 | 94,898 | 2,602 |
| Leicester City | 145.959 | 47,196 | 3,093 |
| Lincolnshire | 271.211 | 99,652 | 2,722 |
| Nottinghamshire | 314.974 | 116,298 | 2,708 |
| Derbyshire | 302.640 | 113,297 | 2,671 |
| Northamptonshire | 282.783 | 102,576 | 2,757 |

### Educational Achievement

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of pupils left school with no qualifications in each of the last five years. [155424]

**Mr. Miliband:** The information requested is as follows:

| *Academic year* | *Percentage of 15 year old pupils with no GCSE/GNVQ passes* |
|---|---|
| 1999 | 6.0 |
| 2000 | 5.6 |
| 2001 | 5.5 |
| 2002 | 5.4 |
| 2003 | 5.2 |

### Environmental Education

**Mrs. Helen Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what changes will be made to the sources of funding for environmental education in schools when the landfill tax credit scheme is amended. [154460]

**Mr. Miliband:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Guildford (Sue Doughty) on 29 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 525–26W.

### Further Education

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many new *(a)* sixth forms, *(b)* sixth form centres and *(c)* sixth form colleges have opened in each London borough under the London Challenge Planning since May 2003. [153092]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** Since May 2003, the following new provision for 16–19 year olds has opened:

*(a) Sixth forms:*

Brent: Capital City Academy (11–18 Academy), replacing Willesden High School (11–18 school).

Ealing: West London Academy (11–18 Academy), replacing Compton High School and Sports College (11–18 school).

Lambeth: new sixth form at Dunraven School.

Lambeth: new sixth form at St. Martin in the Fields High School.

Southwark: The Academy at Peckham (11–18 Academy), replacing Warwick Park (11–16 school).

*(b) Sixth form centres:*

Ealing: new sixth form centre as part of Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College in Southall.

Islington: new sixth form centre as part of City and Islington College at the Angel.

Southwark: new sixth form academy as part of Southwark College at Waterloo.

*(c) Sixth form colleges:*

No sixth form colleges have opened since May 2003.

### Golden Hellos

**Geraldine Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to introduce golden hellos that write off tuition fees for graduates taking up public service careers in areas where there are shortages of personnel. [154108]

**Alan Johnson** *[holding answer 12 February 2004]:* I stated in the House on 27 January that I was commissioning a report to examine the gateways into the professions. On 12 February I was pleased to inform the House that Sir Alan Langlands, Vice Chancellor of the University of Dundee has agreed to lead this work.

The report will examine how the public sector and the professions can sustain and improve recruitment opportunities for graduates, especially those who do not qualify for the full £3,000 support. Sir Alan will be reporting to us by mid-2005.

However, the Government is already spending in excess of £700 million to support the recruitment and retention of graduates into the public services, for example teachers, dentists and social workers. Part of Sir Alan's work will be to examine this current support and analyse its effectiveness. Additionally he will research current practice in the private sector with a view to determining how employers might respond in a variable fee environment.

### Holiday Prices

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will discuss with the travel industry the differential pricing of holidays out of school term time. [152073]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** My Department has an on-going relationship with the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA), with whom we are in discussion on the issue of holiday pricing. ABTA advises that if parents book early, discounts may be made available for holidays out of term time. We also know that some local education authorities work in partnership with local tour operators to offer incentives to parents to take their children on holiday outside term time. Good practice on this issue is available at: www.dfes.gov/schoolattendance I am currently considering how this good practice could be implemented in all areas.

The Office of Fair Trading has the power to look into holiday pricing if there is evidence of anti-competitive behaviour. At present, they have no such evidence.

### Independent Schools

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many independent schools have applied for conversion to state schools since 1997; how many of these applications have been accepted; and what reasons have been given when applications have been declined. [154818]

**Mr. Miliband:** Since 1997, 22 independent schools have applied to become maintained schools; of these 19 have been approved. Where approval was not given the reasons included a lack of basic need; surplus places in the area; questions on the longer term education and financial viability of the proposed schools; and being dissatisfied about the school's ability to deliver the full range of the National Curriculum.

### Individual Learning Accounts

**Mr. Wilshire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average waiting time has been for claims for payment from the terminated individual learning accounts to be assessed and paid. [154339]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** Since the closure of the Individual Learning Account (ILA) programme on the 23 November 2001, due to serious potential fraud and abuse, the average waiting time for payment of ILA incentives, in cases where validation checks to confirm the propriety of payments from public funds are straightforward, is 20 days. The average waiting time for payment to learning providers in cases where validation checks have proved complex is some 17 months. This takes into account procedures for obtaining sufficiently robust evidence from both learning providers and learners to ensure the propriety of payments from the public purse and lengthy settlement negotiations.

Where registered learning providers have submitted a claim following the Ombudsman's Report into ILAs of 10 April 2003, the average waiting time for payment, including validation checks, is a little under 5 months.

**Mr. Wilshire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps he is taking to ensure that claims for payment to training providers are settled promptly from the terminated individual learning accounts. [154340]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** To ensure the propriety of payments and to protect public funds the Department requires registered learning providers to supply appropriate evidence to support all Individual Learning Account (ILA) claims. This evidence is subject to thorough validation checks before payments are made. Since closure of the ILA programme on 23 November 2001, due to serious potential fraud and abuse, to the end of January 2004 the Department's process for validating claims has resulted in £12.9 million being paid to 3,420 registered learning providers.

Where we have unresolved complaints or there are other on-going concerns, payments continue to be withheld pending the outcomes of inquiries and investigations. Currently, following closure, £14.8 million is withheld.

### Information Sharing

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how the new information referral and tracking system protocols and technical developments will interrelate with the wider e-Government programme; and how they will be integrated to ensure that local authorities are not unduly burdened. [155074]

**Margaret Hodge:** Any new systems will conform to the e-GIF (e-Government Interoperability Framework) and we are working with the Office of e-Envoy to ensure that those requirements are met.

We are consulting other Government Departments on potential links with their e-Government developments and also liaising with ODPM colleagues in regard to the local e-Government programme. Our proposals in this area would only be commenced subject to a proper assessment of impact on local authorities and their capacity to deliver.

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much additional funds will be available to support the implementation of new information referral and tracking systems. [155075]

**Margaret Hodge:** Funding for the implementation of our proposals on information sharing systems will depend on the outcome of the 2004 spending review.

### Research Grants

**Chris Grayling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what his policy is on the regional dimension of future research grant allocation. [152639]

**Alan Johnson:** The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) allocates research funding selectively to universities by a formula according to the quality and volume of their research activity. The funding formula has no explicit regional element. The Government's policy is to target available resources on the highest quality research wherever it exists to ensure our global competitiveness.

The report of the Lambert Review of Business-University Collaboration in December 2003 recommends that there should be a new stream of funding for business-led collaborative research, which should be delivered at a regional level through Regional Development Agencies. The Government expect to respond fully to the report this summer.

### Learning and Skills Councils

**John Mann:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what criteria are set for dispute resolution within learning and skills councils. [154860]

**Alan Johnson:** This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, will write to my hon. Friend with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

**John Mann:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what criteria he uses in determining value for money from learning and skills councils; and what account he takes of value for money from councils when deciding upon re-appointment of council *(a)* directors and *(b)* board members. [154861]

**Alan Johnson:** The Learning and Skills Council Remit Letter, issued in November 2000, places a duty on the LSC to make the best use of its resources. It requires the Council to take account of the findings from individual provider and area inspection reports, and the assessments of the Inspectorates about whether the financial resources made available to providers are managed effectively and used in ways which provide value for money.

The appointment of directors to the LSC is an operational matter for the LSC. Over 600 local Council 'board' members bring a wealth of knowledge, skills and expertise to bear on the delivery of the skills agenda at the local level. They make this commitment on a voluntary basis (which clearly yields excellent value for money). Appointments of Council members is in line with the Nolan principles of fair and open competition and operated in accordance with the guidance issued by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Reappointments are a matter for the LSC. Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, will write to my hon. Friend with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

### Learning Disabilities

**Mr. Nigel Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on education provision for *(a)* children and *(b)* adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities. [153785]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** The Education Act 1996 places duties on local education authorities (LEAs) and all LEA-maintained schools to identify, assess and make suitable provision to meet children's special educational needs (SEN), including the SEN of children with profound and multiple learning difficulties. In doing so, maintained schools and LEAs must have regard to the SEN Code of Practice, which gives practical guidance on identifying and meeting children's SEN, covering all areas of need—communication and interaction; cognition and learning; behaviour, emotional and social development and sensory and physical needs.

The Government's new SEN Strategy "Removing Barriers to Achievement", launched on 11 February, will build on the improvements to the statutory framework brought about by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act and the SEN Code of Practice, both 2001. Children with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities will benefit particularly from the proposals in the Strategy to improve early support for children with special needs from birth, to improve multi-agency working throughout education and in the transition to adult life, and to transform special schools, giving them an important role to play in providing education for children with the most severe and complex needs and sharing their specialist skills and knowledge with mainstream schools to provide children with a range of inclusive experiences.

My Department has strengthened the rights of people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), including those with profound and multiple learning

disabilities, to appropriate post-16 provision through a combination of legislative change and collaborative work with key organisations representing disabled learners. Under Section 13 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has a specific responsibility to help young people and adults with LDD. Although the LSC does not develop policies relating to specific groups of learners, its broad remit means that it can fund a wide range of provision to ensure these learners have access to suitable provision which meets their needs and, where appropriate, the additional support they require to undertake it.

### Lifelong Learning

**Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the paper from the National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education on the implementation of lifelong learning. [155691]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** I have only recently received the paper which NIACE is circulating to key partners in advance of the Government's forthcoming Spending Review. The Government will consider the submission during the Spending Review.

### Mathematics Degrees

**Mr. Willis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list, for the most recent year for which information is available, the *(a)* first degree subjects studied and *(b)* first degree classifications achieved by those completing PGCEs in mathematics; and if he will make a statement. [154928]

**Mr. Miliband:** Information on the first-degree subjects studied by students on Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) courses is not collected centrally. However, all candidates training to teach secondary school pupils in England must, by law, demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of their subject at a standard equivalent to degree level before Qualified Teacher Status may be awarded.

Of those candidates who successfully completed PGCE courses in mathematics in 2001/02, the latest year for which data are available, and whose first-degree classification is known, 10 per cent. held First-class Honours; 31 per cent. Upper Second-class Honours; 37 per cent. Lower Second-class Honours; and 13 per cent. Third-class Honours. A further 8 per cent. held Ordinary degrees.

### Modern Apprenticeship (Sporting Excellence)

**Dr. Iddon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if he will trial the modern apprenticeship in sporting excellence scheme before it is introduced to all relevant sporting organisations; [146458]

(2) how the more academically gifted young footballers' academic requirements will be taken into account when the modern apprenticeship in sporting excellence scheme is introduced; [146459]

(3) if he will delay the introduction of the modern apprenticeship in sporting excellence scheme until full consultation has been possible with all those involved; [146460]

(4) if he will allow sporting organisations more flexibility than provided for in the proposed modern apprenticeship in sporting excellence scheme to adapt the scheme to allow progression in careers other than sport. [146461]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** It was the intention to introduce the new Modern Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence MA SE for football from August 2004. I have decided that the current football scholarship will be available for a further year while work to develop a Modern Apprenticeship framework appropriate for football is continued. We ensure that all relevant football interests are consulted about the design of the framework. The scholarship will then be phased out from 2005.

### Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many fathers have been imprisoned in the last 30 years based on expert witness evidence of Munchausen syndrome by proxy. [152114]

**The Solicitor-General** *[holding answer 30 January 2004]:* I have been asked to reply.

Neither the prison service nor the Crown Prosecution Service keeps records of cases in accordance with the type of expert evidence given at trial.

Since the release of Angela Cannings by the Court of Appeal and its published judgment, the Attorney General has instigated a number of measures. Over the last 10 years, a total of 258 convictions over the last 10 years for the murder, manslaughter or infanticide of a child under two by its parent have been identified. Of those, a total of 72 relate to persons still serving a custodial sentence. These will be accorded the utmost priority. Currently, some 365 boxes of evidence relating to 52 high priority cases have been recovered from central storage and dispatched to CPS areas for them to conduct an initial review. The remaining high priority cases are being recovered from the areas themselves.

Once the review becomes fully underway, the offences comprising the 258 convictions and the issue at trial will become clearer. Once that stage has been reached and more information is known on these cases it may be possible for me to write further to you with additional information that you seek.

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when he received a letter from Jan Loxley-Blount warning of the occurrence of misdiagnosis of Munchausen syndrome by proxy and subsequent miscarriages of justice. [152029]

**Margaret Hodge:** The first correspondence from Jan Loxley-Blount that the Department for Education and Skills has on record is dated 17 May 2000.

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when the term Munchausen syndrome by proxy changed to fabricated or induced illness; and what the reasons for the change were. [152030]

**Margaret Hodge:** The consultation document: "Safeguarding Children in Whom Illness is Fabricated or Induced" issued in June 2001 addressed this issue at paragraph 1.4:

> "The use of terminology to describe the fabrication or induction of illness in a child has been the subject of considerable debate between professionals. These differences of opinion may result in a loss of focus on the welfare of the child. In order to keep the child's safety and welfare as the primary focus of all professional activity, this Guidance refers to the 'fabrication or induction of illness in a child by a carer' rather than using a particular term. If, as a result of a carer's behaviour, there is concern that the child is likely to suffer significant harm, this guidance should be followed. The key issue is not what term to use to describe this type of abuse, but the impact of fabricated or induced illness on the child's health and development, and consideration of how best to safeguard the child's welfare."

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what measures he intends to put in place to reduce the numbers of parents wrongly accused of Munchausen syndrome by proxy; [152032]

(2) what measures he intends to put in place in social services to reduce the number of parents wrongly accused of Munchausen syndrome by proxy. [152132]

**Margaret Hodge:** The Government Guidance "Safeguarding Children in Whom Illness is Fabricated or Induced" was published in August 2002. It is supplementary guidance to "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (1999), the Government's interagency guidance on child protection. The Guidance sets out a clear process for all agencies to follow in relation to cases involving fabricated or induced illness in a child. It requires evidence-based decisions to be taken at each stage of the process by a multi-agency, multi professional team.

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children have been removed from their parents since changes to social services guidance in 1998 which made reference to Munchausen syndrome by proxy. [152015]

**Margaret Hodge:** The Government did not issue any guidance to social services in 1998 in relation to Munchausen syndrome by proxy. In February 1998 it issued a consultation paper entitled "Working Together to Safeguard Children: New Government Proposals For Inter-Agency Co-operation". This document did not contain any reference to Munchausen syndrome by proxy. Following the consultation, "Working Together to Safeguard Children" was issued in 1999. Subsequently, supplementary guidance, "Safeguarding Children in Whom Illness is Fabricated or Induced", was issued in August 2002.

We do not hold information about the numbers of children looked after where they have had illness fabricated or induced. However, statistics from the Department of Health's statistics of Children Looked After by Local Authorities for the Year Ending 31 March 2002, about all children who started to be looked after in each year from 1998 to 2002, are as follows:

*Children who started to be looked after during the years ending 31 March 1998 to 2002 by legal status on starting[1]—England*

| | *Numbers* | | | | | *Percentages* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Legal status* | *1998* | *1999* | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* | *1998* | *1999* | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* |
| *All children*[2] | 29,700 | 28,400 | 28,600 | 25,100 | 24,600 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Care order | 4,200 | 4,300 | 4,300 | 4,300 | 4,100 | 14 | 15 | 15 | 17 | 17 |
| Interim care order | 3,300 | 3,500 | 3,800 | 3,900 | 3,800 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 15 | 16 |
| Full care order | 910 | 880 | 510 | 450 | 270 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| *Youth Justice legal statuses* | 1,600 | 1,400 | 1,300 | 840 | 720 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 3 |
| On remand or committed for trial | 1,400 | 1,200 | 1,200 | 760 | 680 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Detained under PACE[3] | 200 | 180 | 150 | 60 | 40 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Supervision order | 10 | 10 | 20 | 20 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| *Detained for child protection* | 3,100 | 3,300 | 3,300 | 2,700 | 3,000 | 11 | 12 | 12 | 11 | 12 |
| Police protection | 1,500 | 1,500 | 1,600 | 1,500 | 1,600 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 7 |
| Emergency protection order | 1,600 | 1,800 | 1,700 | 1,300 | 1,400 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 6 |
| Under child assessment order | — | 10 | 0 | 10 | 20 | — | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| *Freed for adoption* | 80 | 110 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| *Voluntary agreement under S20 CA 1989 (single placements)* | 20,500 | 19,100 | 19,500 | 17,200 | 16,700 | 69 | 67 | 68 | 68 | 68 |
| *Others legal status* | 140 | 160 | 70 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

[1] Only the first occasion on which a child started to be looked after in the year has been counted.
[2] Figures for children looked after in this table exclude agreed series of short-term placements.
[3] Children detained in local authority accommodation under section 38(6) of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act.

## Muslim School Children

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools have been assessed as having more than (i) 50, (ii) 75 and (iii) 90 per cent. of pupils who are classified as Muslim; and for how many of these schools this is a consequence of admissions criteria based on religious denomination. [154817]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** Information on the religion of pupils is not collected centrally.

In January 2003 there were 1,647 primary schools and 115 secondary schools reporting selective intake where the main criterion for offering a place was based on religion. This is equivalent to 9.2 per cent. of maintained primary schools and 3.3 per cent. of maintained secondary schools.

The religious character of two primary schools and two secondary schools was Muslim (as at January 2003).

### Post-16 Education

**John Mann:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions he has had with the Learning and Skills Council on engagement with industry in post-16 education. [154538]

**Alan Johnson:** As a member of the national Skills Alliance the Learning and Skills Council has a major part to play in securing the effective implementation of our Skills Strategy. The Strategy sets a new framework for tackling our long-standing skills gaps and meeting the needs of industry.

### Savings Schemes (Secondary Schools)

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what savings account schemes operate in secondary schools; and what steps his Department is taking to encourage and support the development of such schemes. [154944]

**Mr. Miliband:** The Department does not hold information about savings account schemes operating in secondary schools and has no plans to support the development of such schemes.

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what provisions there are in the national curriculum to provide education on the management of personal finances and savings to secondary school pupils. [154946]

**Mr. Miliband:** Personal finance education, which includes budgeting and saving, is provided in the curriculum through the framework of personal, social and health education. There is also provision for schools to teach financial management through other subjects such as mathematics.

Personal Finance Education Guidance for schools was produced by the Department in July 2000.

## EDUCATION

### School Construction

**Mr. Collins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list the new schools to be built in *(a)* Bassetlaw, *(b)* Birmingham, Northfield, *(c)* Birmingham, Perry Barr, *(d)* Blaydon, *(e)* Blyth Valley, *(f)* Bootle, *(g)* Bradford, West, *(h)* Braintree, *(i)* Burton, *(j)* Coventry, North-West, *(k)* Coventry, South, *(l)* Dover, *(m)* Ealing, North, *(n)* Eltham, *(o)* Feltham and Heston, *(p)* Forest of Dean, *(q)* Gateshead, East and Washington, West, *(r)* Hammersmith and Fulham, *(s)* Hendon, *(t)* Hornsey and Wood Green, *(u)* Ilford, North, *(v)* Kettering, *(w)* Knowsley, South, *(x)* Lancaster and Wyre, *(y)* Leeds, North-East, *(z)* Leeds, West, *(aa)* Leicester, East, *(bb)* Lewisham, Deptford, *(cc)* Liverpool, Riverside, *(dd)* Loughborough, *(ee)* Manchester, Withington, *(ff)* Milton Keynes, North-East, *(gg)* Northampton, South, *(hh)* North-West Leicestershire, *(ii)* Reading, East, *(jj)* Reading, West, *(kk)* Rugby and Kenilworth, *(ll)* Sheffield, Attercliffe, *(mm)* Sheffield, Hillsborough, *(nn)* Sittingbourne and Sheppey, *(oo)* Stevenage, *(pp)* Stockton North, *(qq)* Stoke-on-Trent, *(rr)* Stourbridge, *(ss)* Thurrock, *(tt)* Tyne Bridge, *(uu)* Wallasey, *(vv)* Wansbeck, *(ww)* Waveney, *(xx)* West Lancashire, *(yy)* Wirral, West, *(zz)* Wolverhampton, North-East and *(aaa)* Wolverhampton, South-East; and when the decision was taken to build them. [153776]

**Mr. Miliband:** The following annex lists the schools and academies that, to our knowledge, are being built or are scheduled to be built in the near future.

However, as the majority of capital funding is now allocated to local education authorities by formula, so that they can fund locally agreed priorities, the Department does not collect detailed information about all new schools being built within an authority. Therefore additional information on this should be held locally.

Overall capital investment is set to rise from £3.8 billion this year to over £5 billion in 2005–06, compared to under £700 million in 1996–97. Within the overall funding for 2003–04, £512 million has been allocated on the basis of demonstrated basic need (new pupil places). However, it is for local education authorities to decide whether or not they need to build a new school in order to accommodate all pupils in their area.

The hon. Member will be aware that we have just announced successful projects for the first wave of the Building Schools for the Future programme, which aims to rebuild or renew all secondary schools within a 10–15 year period.

*List of schools being built or due to be built in the near future*

| *Constituency* | *School name* |
|---|---|
| *(a)* Bassetlaw | Bassetlaw post 16 and community learning centre—December 2002 |
| | Bircotes and Harworth Community Secondary School—December 2002 |
| | Hartland Comprehensive School—December 2002 |
| | Portland Comprehensive—December 2002 |
| | Retford Oaks High—December 2002 |
| | The Elizabethan High School—December 2002 |
| | The King Edward VI School—December 2002 |
| | Tuxford Comprehensive School—December 2002 |
| | Valley Comprehensive School—December 2002 |
| *(c)* Birmingham, Perry Bar | Kingsland Primary School—March 2003 |
| | St. James CE JI School (VC)—March 2003 |
| *(k)* Coventry, South | St. Mary's and St. Benedict's Catholic Primary—2002 |
| *(m)* Ealing, North | West London Academy—December 2002 |
| *(q)* Gateshead, East and Washington, West | St. Edmund Campion Roman Catholic—2003 |
| *(s)* Hendon | Akiva—2004 |
| *(y)* Leeds, North-East | Allerton Grange—November 2003 |
| | Carr Manor new High School—November 2003 |
| *(bb)* Lewisham, Deptford | Ashmead Primary School—April 2002 |
| | Childeric Primary School—April 2002 |
| | Lewisham 2 Haberdashers—March 2004 |
| | Crofton School—April 2002 |
| | Gordonbrock Primary School—April 2002 |
| *(cc)* Liverpool, Riverside | Shorefields School—June 1999 |
| | Vauxhall VA Primary School—June 1999 |
| | Liverpool 2 Kensington—August 2003 |
| *(ff)* Milton Keynes | Christ the Sower—2003 |
| | St. Bernadettes—2002 |
| *(gg)* Northampton, South | Delapre Middle School—December 2002 |
| | Duston Upper School—December 2002 |
| | St. Crispins Primary—December 2002 |
| *(ll)* Sheffield, Attercliffe | Westfield School—November 2002 |
| *(rr)* Stourbridge—Dudley | Colley Lane Primary School—June 2000 |
| *(xx)* West Lancashire | Guerdon Church—2003 |

### School Deficits

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will the list the deficit for each school as at 31 March 2003, broken down by local education authority. [154605]

**Mr. Miliband:** The information requested is not yet available. The Department is awaiting a complete dataset relating to the 2002–03 financial year from a number of local education authorities. I shall write to the hon. Member when all of the information for 2002–03 is to hand.

### School Funding

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what *(a)* financial and *(b)* other assistance is available to help schools adapt to the change in funding they receive as a result of falling rolls. [152134]

**Mr. Miliband:** The minimum funding guarantee, which is part of the package of measures to restore stability and certainty to school funding over the next two years announced by the Secretary of State on 29 October, specifically recognises that schools with falling rolls have fixed costs for items such as cleaning, repairs and heating which do not reduce when pupil numbers go down. Such schools are guaranteed a per pupil funding increase in 2004–05 of more than 4 per cent., which is our guaranteed increase for schools where numbers do not change. In addition, LEAs can have safety nets in their local funding formulae to assist schools with falling rolls, and the mechanism which provides revenue support grant to authorities has one year data lag built into it designed to assist LEAs with overall falling rolls in their schools.

### School Meals

**Mr. Hurst:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the net cost of the provision of school meals was to Essex county council in each year from 1990 to 2003. [150910]

**Mr. Miliband:** My Department does not collect this information from schools or local education authorities.

**David Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money on average was spent per pupil per day on school meals by East Riding of Yorkshire local education authority in each of the last three years in *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools. [153284]

**Mr. Miliband:** My Department does not collect this information from schools or local education authorities.

**Bob Russell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many local authorities have delegated the school meals service to primary schools; and if he will make a statement. [151764]

**Mr. Miliband:** My Department does not collect this information.

### Schools (Nottingham)

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what advice his Department gave to the City of Nottingham on its bid under the Building Schools for the Future programme; and if he will make a statement on the quality of the bid. [152954]

**Mr. Miliband:** In July 2003, we announced guidance on the Building Schools for the Future programme which invited all authorities to apply for funding in the first wave of the programme, or to express an interest in inclusion in later waves. My officials then held a series of road shows around the country, to which all authorities were invited, where they were able to discuss the programme and the guidance in open sessions and also in one-to-one sessions with my officials.

Proposals for inclusion in the first wave of funding from 2005–06 have now been rigorously appraised against the criteria for prioritisation in the guidance, and we are shortly to make an announcement. Announcements on subsequent wave funding will be made later this year.

We propose to give detailed feedback to authorities which are not successful in applications for wave one funding.

### Schools for the Future

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the criteria are for his decisions on the allocation of money for Schools for the Future; and if he will place a copy in the Library. [154604]

**Mr. Miliband:** I refer my right hon. Friend to the answer I gave on 15 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 896W. We published our criteria for prioritisation in the Building Schools for the Future Programme in July 2003, and is available for reference in the Libraries of the House.

### Secondary Schools

**Helen Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps he is taking to improve educational attainment in the early years of secondary school; and if he will make a statement. [154657]

**Mr. Miliband** *[holding answer 12 February 2004]*: The Government are committed to improving the attainment of all 11 to 14-year-olds through the Key Stage 3 National Strategy which is central to our wider plans for transforming secondary education. The strategy aims to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom by investing in teachers' professional development.

The strategy is starting to make a significant impact on standards after only one full year of implementation. The 2003 Key Stage 3 test results stand as the best ever on record with improvements in every subject and at every level. OFSTED have also endorsed the positive impact of the strategy and that it has been welcomed by teachers. Our priority is to build on the gains so far by further embedding the strategy, tackling under performance and supporting teachers in tailoring teaching and learning to better meet the needs of pupils and so personalise their learning experience.

### Sir Roy Meadow/David Southall

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions he has had with the General Medical Council about Professor Sir Roy Meadow. [152016]

**Margaret Hodge:** I have not spoken to the General Medical Council, but my officials sought confirmation from GMC officials in autumn last year of press reports that Professor Sir Roy Meadow was under GMC investigation.

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when *(a)* he, *(b)* his Ministers and *(c)* officials in his Department last met (i) Sir Roy Meadow and (ii) David Southall. [154403]

**Margaret Hodge:** As far as we can tell from available records, no Minister or official from this Department has ever met with either in an official capacity.

### Skill Shortages

**Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which region had the highest proportion of vacancies as a result of skill shortages in 1997. [154237]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** We can not say which region had the highest proportion of vacancies as a result of skill shortages in 1997 as this data were not reported in the employer survey of that time.

**Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many job vacancies he estimates are unfilled as a result of skill shortages. [154238]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** We do not know how many job vacancies are unfilled as a result of skill shortages. It is estimated that 135,000 job vacancies were hard to fill for skill-related reasons at the time of the Learning and Skills Council's National Employer Skills Survey but this does not mean that the vacancies will go unfilled.

### Special Educational Needs

**Mr. Laurence Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total cost is of providing special needs education in *(a)* mainstream and *(b)* special schools in Gloucestershire in 2003–04; what percentage this forms of the total education budget; and if he will make a statement. [153405]

**Mr. Miliband** *[holding answer 6 February 2004]*: The information requested is given in the table:

*Total cost of providing special needs education in both mainstream and special schools in Gloucestershire in 2003–04*

| | £ |
|---|---|
| SEN element of schools budget[1] | 9,320,818 |
| SEN element of LEA budget[2] | 1,830,229 |
| ISB for special schools[3] | 12,223,481 |
| Funding delegated to primary and secondary schools identified as "Notional SEN"[4] | 10,176,629 |
| Cost of providing special needs education[5] | 33,551,157 |
| Total education budget[6] | 286,597,291 |
| Cost of providing special needs education as a percentage of total education budget | 12 |

[1] As recorded in lines 1.1.1 to 1.1.5 of Table 1 of the budget statement.
[2] As recorded in line 2.2.6 of Table 1 of the budget statement.
[3] As recorded in line 1.0.1 of Table 1 of the budget statement.
[4] As recorded on Table 2 of the budget statement (figures are only indicative of the amount that might be spent by schools on SEN).
[5] Sum of 1 to 4.
[6] As recorded on line 3 of Table 1 of the budget statement.

*Note:*
The data are taken from 2003–04 Section 52 Budget Statements as reported by Gloucestershire LEA.

**Mr. Hague:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent assessment he has made of the comparative employment prospects of pupils with special needs educated in *(a)* mainstream schools and *(b)* special schools. [155999]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** No central record is kept of the outcomes for all young people with special educational needs (SEN) who attended mainstream or special schools. However, my Department has commissioned a longitudinal study of the post-16 transitions of young people with SEN. Wave one, which took place between January 2000 and September 2001 when the young people in the study were still aged 15–16, found that more mainstream school pupils with SEN wanted to look for a job at the end of their compulsory schooling than special school pupils (28 per cent. as against 16 per cent.). The results from wave two of the study will be published in the spring and a wave three has been commissioned. These waves will show the development of any differential employment outcomes as between mainstream and special school pupils.

The new SEN strategy "Removing Barriers to Achievement", launched on 11 February, announced cross-Government action to improve the opportunities for progression beyond school for young people with SEN. A multi-agency group has been established to take this work forward and promoting employment as an aim in planning for the futures of almost all young people with SEN is one of the main objectives of this group. The group's work will take account of the findings of the SEN longitudinal study.

### Special Measures

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions he had with the Chief Inspector of Schools about the publication of the list of schools in special measures. [154834]

**Mr. Miliband:** My right hon. Friend has frequent discussions with HM Chief Inspector of Schools, David Bell, about a range of matters relating to standards in schools.

### Specialist Schools

**Mr. Willis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many selective schools are also specialist schools; what arrangements are in place for pupils who fail the entry tests to these schools to be able to attend a school with a similar specialism; and if he will make a statement. [154932]

**Mr. Miliband:** 98 of the 1,686 designated specialist schools are selective grammar schools. On the basis of the latest collated information, 40 specialist schools have chosen to select a proportion of their pupils by aptitude.

The admissions process for specialist schools is the same as for all other maintained schools. Applicants must be considered against the school's published admission arrangements, including, where applicable, selection.

If a parent is refused a place for their child because the child fails an entry test to a selective maintained school, they have the right to appeal against that decision to an independent appeal panel.

Local education authorities have a duty to ensure that they provide sufficient schools for the children living in their area who need one. There is no duty to provide schools with a particular specialism.

### Student Finance

**Chris Grayling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the Government's figures for the cost of student loan subsidies include an element for *(a)* administration and *(b)* bad debt. [152790]

**Alan Johnson:** The Government's figures for the cost of student loan subsidies do include a provision for bad debt and for loans not recovered from borrowers meeting the criteria for cancellation of the outstanding debt. The costs for administering student loans is not included but are accounted for separately and, are recorded annually in the Departmental Report.

**Mr. Frank Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many one-and two-parent households will be eligible for the maximum combined up-front university grant for academic year 2006/07. [154012]

**Alan Johnson:** We expect around 30 per cent. of students will be eligible for a full combined grant of £2,700 in 2006/07, of which we expect around two thirds to be dependent students (who may be from one or two-parent households). Future numbers and proportions of students receiving grants will depend on changes in demand for higher education.

**Mrs. Calton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many former students have outstanding loan accounts; how many of these are being repaid; how many are not being repaid because of the low income of the borrower; and what factors, apart from income, are taken into account when repayment is demanded. [153825]

**Alan Johnson:** Most borrowers who started their course from the 1998/99 academic year will repay income-contingent loans. Loans for those who started their course before 1998/99 are repayable on a mortgage-style basis. There are differences in the repayment terms for the two types of loan.

Borrowers enter repayment status in the April following graduation or otherwise upon leaving their course. There were 1,492,000 student loan borrowers in the United Kingdom in repayment status at the end of the end of the financial year 2002–03. Of these, some 815,000 borrowers had mortgage-style accounts that were up to date with repayments, or income-contingent accounts which are repaid through the tax system.

Some 559,000 borrowers who had mortgage-style loan accounts which they were liable to repay had been granted deferment because their income was below the threshold (£21,022 per annum from 1 September 2002, £21,364 from 1 September 2003).

No repayments are collected from income-contingent borrowers whose income falls below £10,000 per annum. Repayments of income-contingent loans are collected through the tax system and are notified to the Student Loans Company after the end of the tax year for reconciliation with their records. Therefore the data on the number of borrowers with income-contingent loans, where repayments have not been deducted because the borrower's income is below the repayment threshold, are not yet available.

The income-contingent loan repayment system takes into account whether the borrower is in receipt of disability related benefits, and whether they are covered by the Repayment of Teacher Loans scheme. Loans are cancelled: when the borrower reaches 65 years of age; if the borrower is in receipt of a disability related benefit and is permanently unfit for work; or if the borrower dies.

The mortgage-style loan repayment system takes into account whether the borrower is in receipt of disability related benefits; whether they are covered by the Repayment of Teacher Loans scheme; and the number of loans taken out. Loans are cancelled: after 25 years or when the borrower reaches the age of 50 (60 if the borrower was aged over 40 when he/she last borrowed), whichever is the earlier; if the borrower is in receipt of a disability related benefit and is permanently unfit for work; or if the borrower dies.

**Mr. Clappison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate he has made of what the cost of providing maintenance loans to students from 2006/07 would be *(a)* under existing arrangements and *(b)* under the proposals in the Higher Education Bill. [154763]

**Alan Johnson:** The Department's future spending plans on maintenance loans under existing arrangements and under the proposals in the Higher Education Bill will depend on the outcome of Spending Review 2004.

As stated in the Regulatory Impact Assessment published on 8 January, the resource cost[1] of raising the maximum rate of maintenance loan to match the basic living costs expenditure of the mid-range student is estimated at £65 million in 2006/07 terms. This is the resource cost to the Government of both the additional amount of maintenance loan advanced and the resulting impact on the repayments of fee loans.

[1] Estimates of the resource cost of the loans represent the real economic cost to the Government of providing the loans and take into account the forecast loan repayments, the cost of charging an interest rate below the government's cost of funds and any loan write offs

### Higher Education

**Mr. Peter Duncan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students at higher education institutions in England and Wales are ordinarily resident in Scotland; and if he will make a statement. [145687]

**Alan Johnson:** In 2002/03, there were 5,833 full-time undergraduate students ordinarily resident in Scotland who were enrolled at English and Welsh HE institutions.

**Mr. Peter Duncan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students from England and Wales are studying at higher education institutions in Scotland; and if he will make a statement. [145688]

**Alan Johnson:** In 2002/03, there were 14,238 full-time undergraduate students ordinarily resident in England and Wales who were enrolled at Scottish HE institutions.

### Teachers

**Mr. Willis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether teachers employed under Schedule 2 of SI 2003 No.1663 are required to register with the General Teaching Council for England; and if he will make a statement. [154929]

**Mr. Miliband:** All teachers with qualified teacher status who are employed in maintained and non-maintained special schools in England are required to register with the General Teaching Council for England. None of the persons referred to in Schedule 2 to The Education (Specified Work and Registration) (England) Regulations 2003 are qualified teachers and so are not eligible to register with the Council. The Education Act 2002 provides for a new category of provisional registration which by regulation can be applied to teachers who are not qualified and can be made compulsory. These provisions are not yet in force.

**Mr. Willis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list the local education authorities where the number of unqualified teachers employed in January 2003 was greater than in January 1998. [154930]

**Mr. Miliband:** The number of full-time equivalent regular teachers without Qualified Teacher Status rose in all local education authorities in England between January 1998 and January 2003. Over the same period, the number of full-time equivalent regular teachers with Qualified Teacher Status also rose in all local education authorities except the City of London.

**Mr. Willis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the General Teaching Council for England can discipline a teacher who has not paid its subscription; and if he will make a statement. [154931]

**Mr. Miliband:** The General Teaching Council has two sets of powers in relation to non-payment of the registration fee. It can remove a teacher's name from the register which would prevent the teacher from teaching in a maintained or non-maintained special school. However, the Council also has powers to require an employer to deduct the fee from a teacher's salary. Its policy is to use these powers wherever possible, providing it holds employment data on the teacher.

### Tuition Fees

**Diana Organ:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what assessment he has made of the ability of *(a)* Birkbeck College, University of London and *(b)* the Open University to compete with other higher education institutions once the new proposals for tuition fees and funding are in place in 2006; [154645]

(2) what investment plans he has assessed for *(a)* Birkbeck College, University of London and *(b)* the Open University; and whether these are included in the Higher Education Bill. [154647]

**Alan Johnson:** The proposals for variable fees in the Higher Education Bill relate to full-time undergraduate students. The Government do not impose restrictions on the fees that may be charged for part-time undergraduate students, such as those attending Birkbeck College and the Open University. The Higher Education Funding Council for England will shortly be conducting a comprehensive review of how their funding for teaching is allocated. In accordance with the statement by my right hon. friend the Secretary of State to the House on 8 January 2004, a major focus of this review will be how the funding system might further support the development of part-time study.

**Jim Dowd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much income was generated from fees paid by students for courses in colleges of further education in each of the past five years. [155219]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** Information from the Learning and Skills Council shows that tuition fee income collected by further education institutions from Council funded adult students, their employers or other sources was as follows for the last three years:

| *Year* | *£m* |
|---|---|
| 2000–01 | [1]153 |
| 2001–02 | 159 |
| 2002–3 | 171 |

[1] Includes income from some 16 to 18-year-olds on part-time courses.

Data for earlier years on a consistent basis are not available without disproportionate cost.

### University Access

**Chris Grayling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how he will define non-traditional backgrounds for students when replacing the postcode premium. [152780]

**Alan Johnson:** The "postcode premium" formed part of the widening access and improving retention funds distributed by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) via the teaching grants awarded to higher education institutions (HEIs). For 2004/05 HEFCE has advised HEIs that the distribution of widening access funding will be based on a method that weights:

young (under 21 on entry) full-time undergraduate new entrants according to higher education (HE) participation by ward; and

part-time and mature full-time undergraduates according to average educational achievement by ward.

In addition, weightings of 8 per cent. for inner London and 5 per cent. for outer London are incorporated in the funding formula. These refinements will result in a more transparent funding formula that better reflects levels of educational disadvantage, as well as allowing for additional costs of institutions operating in London.

### University Attendance

**Mr. Hepburn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) which local education authority had the highest number of school leavers attending university in each year since 1996; and what percentage this represented of the total number of school leavers in these local education authorities; [148445]

(2) which constituency had the highest number of people attending university in each year since 1996; [148446]

(3) which constituency had the highest number of school leavers attending university in each year since 1996; and what percentage these were of the total number of school leavers in those constituencies. [148447]

**Alan Johnson:** Figures by constituency are not available centrally.

The available figures by local education authority (LEA) are given in the table. They currently only hold figures for entry into higher education at 18.

*LEAs with the highest proportion of 18-year-olds accepted for entry to full-time undergraduate courses via the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)*

| *Year of entry* | *LEA* | *Number of 18-year-olds accepted to HE courses* | *Percentage of 18-year-olds in LEA* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1996 | Hampshire | 3,714 | 20.5 |
| 1997 | Kent | 3,983 | 20.0 |
| 1998 | Surrey | 3,549 | 26.1 |
| 1999 | Kent | 3,628 | 21.7 |
| 2000 | Kent | 3,575 | 22.1 |
| 2001 | Kent | 3,622 | 22.0 |
| 2002 | Kent | 3,863 | 23.4 |

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many people attended university from *(a)* Chorley and *(b)* Lancashire in each year since 1997; and what percentage this represents of the number of school leavers; [149170]

(2) how many people attended universities from Chorley in each year since 1996. [151272]

**Alan Johnson:** Numbers and participation rates at constituency level are not held centrally. The available information by local education authority (LEA) is taken from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and covers 18-year-old applicants who were accepted to full-time undergraduate courses in the UK. Figures for Lancashire LEA for the years since 1996 are shown in the table.

*Numbers and participation rates of 18-year-olds from Lancashire LEA accepted through UCAS*

| *Year of entry* | *Number* | *Participation rate (percentage)* |
|---|---|---|
| 1996 | 3,237 | 19.6 |
| 1997 | 3,902 | 21.8 |
| 1998 | 3,256 | 21.9 |
| 1999 | 3,296 | 22.6 |
| 2000 | 3,303 | 23.0 |
| 2001 | 3,418 | 23.1 |
| 2002 | 3,511 | 23.7 |

*Source:*
UCAS.

**Mrs. Humble:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people attended university from the Blackpool North and Fleetwood constituency in each year since 1996. [151084]

**Alan Johnson:** Figures by constituency are not held centrally.

The available information is taken from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). It covers 18-year-old applicants, domiciled in Lancashire Local Education Authority (LEA), who were accepted to full time undergraduate courses in the UK and is given in the table.

*Number of 18-year-old applicants, domiciled in Lancashire[1] LEA, accepted to HE courses through UCAS*

| | *Year of Entry* | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *LEA* | *1996* | *1997* | *1998* | *1999* | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* |
| Lancashire | 3,237 | 3,902 | 3,256 | 3,296 | 3,303 | 3,418 | 3,511 |
| Blackburn | n/a | n/a | 297 | 360 | 384 | 368 | 375 |
| Blackpool | n/a | n/a | 240 | 250 | 263 | 254 | 272 |

[1] Prior to entry In 1999, figures were recorded as Lancashire LEA. Due to Local Government re-organisations, figures for 1999 entry onwards for Lancashire LEA were split into three LEAs: Lancashire, Blackburn and Blackpool.
*Source:*
UCAS

### Vocational Training

**Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what schemes other than the Modern Apprenticeship scheme are in place for the provision of skills and vocational training. [154970]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** The aim of the national Skills for Life strategy is to improve adult literacy, language and numeracy skills. The target is to improve the basic skills of 1.5 million adults by 2007. From September this year, we will be phasing in an entitlement to free provision for level 2 learning for adults who do not already have a qualification at this level. For those already in the workforce, there are 12 Employer Training Pilots testing ways of encouraging employers to train low-skilled workers to a first level 2 or basic skills qualification. A further six pilots will begin in September this year.

Entry to Employment (E2E) is a new work-based programme for young people aged 16–18. It will enable those with few or no qualifications to make a successful transition into a Modern Apprenticeship, sustained employment or further vocational learning opportunities. The Increased Flexibility for 14–16 year olds programme is providing vocational courses for around 90,000 pupils at Key Stage 4.

**Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding per capita will be provided for vocational education training schemes other than the Modern Apprenticeship in each year from 2003 to 2006. [154971]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom, the council's chief executive, will write to the hon. Gentleman with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

**Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding will be provided for Modern Apprenticeship schemes in each year from 2003 to 2006. [154972]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, will write to the hon. Gentleman with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

**Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding per capita will be provided for *(a)* skills-based learning, *(b)* vocational education, *(c)* evening classes run by colleges, *(d)* skills and vocational training and *(e)* skills training run by colleges for employers in each year from 2003 to 2006. [154973]

**Alan Johnson:** The Department allocates funds for education and training in the post-16 learning and skills sector to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Neither the Department nor the LSC allocate separate funding to the specific areas identified at *(a)* to *(e)* above. Funding for these specific areas will be drawn from funds allocated to the LSC for either Work Based Learning or Further Education.

The Average in Learning cost for Work Based Learning in 2003–04 is £2,687 for those in the 16–18 age range, and £2,361 for those aged 19 and above. Based upon indicative budgets these figures are expected to rise to £2,896 and £2,552 respectively in 2004–05; and to £2,967 and £2,608 respectively in 2005–06.

Assumed total funding per full time equivalent student in further education allocated to the LSC is £4,240 in 2003–04; £4,460 in 2004–05; and £4,650 in 2005–06.

## CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

### 1911 Census

**Mr. Alan Duncan:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if his Department will agree to the early release of the 1911 Census data. [155844]

**Mr. Leslie:** I refer the hon. Member to the answers I have given to the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Carmichael) on 10 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 457W, and on 18 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 1112W.

### Independent Advocacy

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how his Department is ensuring that people with sensory, physical, communication and profound and multiple impairments are able to access appropriate independent advocacy provision. [155033]

**Mr. Lammy:** The legal professional bodies with advocacy provision are the Law Society; the General Council of the Bar; and the Institute of Legal Executives. Each of these bodies have made provisions under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to ensure that people with sensory, physical, communication and profound multiple impairments have access to the appropriate independent advocacy provisions. In addition, the Government established the Partnership Initiative Budget, as part of the Community Legal Service, which funds innovative projects designed to improve services for vulnerable groups, including the disabled.

### Damages Claims

**Mr. Todd:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what representations he has received concerning the regulation of those businesses which collect damages claims for processing by solicitors. [155574]

**Mr. Lammy:** The Department received representations on regulating claims intermediaries in response to the consultation paper 'Simplifying CFAs' published in June 2003. A summary of the responses will be published in the spring.

The Government have commissioned Sir David Clementi to review the regulatory framework of the legal services industry. Sir David announced in October 2003 that he will consider unregulated providers and regulatory gaps as part of his review. Sir David is expected to issue a consultation paper shortly and is due to report by December 2004.

### Data Sharing

**Mr. Todd:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps he is taking to ensure local authorities are fully acquainted with his Department's guidance, Public Sector Data Sharing: Guidance on the Law; and if he will make a statement. [155228]

**Mr. Leslie:** The legal guidance, Public Sector Data sharing: Guidance on the Law was published in November 2003. On publication, a press notice was issued and two copies were sent to all local authority Chief Executives in England and Wales. The guidance is also available on the Department's website at http://www.dca.gov.uk/foi/sharing/toolkit/lawguide.htm. An electronic alert containing this link has been issued to local authority legal services, clerks to police, and joint fire and transport authorities by the Local Government Association. It has also been referred to at a number of conferences for local authority staff where DCA officials have spoken on data sharing issues. The guidance was widely anticipated by local authorities and I am confident that it has been made accessible to them.

### Hutton Inquiry

**Mr. Sanders:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the cost of the Hutton Inquiry was. [154704]

**Mr. Leslie:** The full cost to Government is still being determined, and we will publish the figure once it is available.

### Immigration Adjudicators

**Mr. Hawkins:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what plans he has to change the basis upon which immigration adjudicators are employed; and if he will make a statement; [154885]

(2) if he will make a statement on his plans to terminate the current judicial appointment contracts for immigration adjudicators and issue new terms of contract equivalent to Civil Service terms and conditions. [154886]

**Mr. Lammy:** The Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Bill provides for the existing judicial members of the Immigration Appellate Authority (IAA) to form the judicial complement in the proposed single tier Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT).

The terms of appointment to the AIT will continue to safeguard the independence of judicial office holders and will not be amended to reflect equivalent terms and conditions of employment in the Civil Service.

### Land Registry

**Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make a statement on progress on the Land Registry Quinquennial Review proposals regarding beneficial ownership of land. [155084]

**Mr. Lammy:** The report on the Land Registry's Quinquennial Review, published in June 2001, recommended that consideration be given to including details of the beneficial or true ownership of land on the land register for England and Wales. In response to a question from the hon. Member for Truro and St. Austell (Matthew Taylor) on 24 June 2002, *Official Report*, column 709W, it was announced that the Land Registry and the then Lord Chancellor's Department would jointly consider and consult other Government departments on the recommendation by autumn 2003. Depending on the outcome of that consultation and ministerial agreement consultation with stakeholders and the public on the principles and details would follow.

This work has been deferred pending a review of the consultations to be carried out by the Land Registry, including those jointly with the Department for Constitutional Affairs, in the light of the difficulties of multiple simultaneous consultations. I have asked my officials to complete this review and to report to me by summer 2004 with their recommendations as to when the several consultations, including that relating to beneficial or true ownership, should be carried out.

### Mr. Balwant Singh

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the letter sent by the hon. Member for Leicester, East to Miss Fitzmaurice on 2 December 2003, what progress has been made in finding the file of Mr. Balwant Singh. [151575]

**Mr. Lammy** *[pursuant to his answer, 2 February 2004, Official Report, c. 726W]:* The previous answer stated that checks with the Immigration Nationality Directorate (IND) had confirmed that IND had not received the appeal papers for Mr. Balwant Singh. Following further checks with IND the appeal papers have been located and are currently being processed by IND before being lodged with the Immigration Appellate Authority for a substantive hearing.

### Public Guardianship Office

**Mr. David:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans he has to improve the efficiency of the Public Guardianship Office. [154816]

**Mr. Leslie:** The Public Guardianship Office (PGO) expects to meet almost all of its key service delivery targets this financial year, and plans to set more challenging measures for next year so that, among other things, it answers a higher percentage of correspondence within target and deals with applications more efficiently. During 2004–05, the PGO will focus on quality improvement further to increase customer satisfaction in its services. A review of how complaints are handled has recently been initiated.

**Mr. David:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment he has made of the efficiency of the Public Guardianship Office. [154822]

**Mr. Leslie:** The Public Guardianship Office (PGO) experienced severe service delivery problems during 2002–03 resulting in a large number of complaints (1,338 for the year) and key performance measures being missed. It has addressed these problems, so that this year numbers of complaints are well below those from the previous year (456 to end December 2003) and the PGO is on track to achieve almost all of its key performance measures at the end of March 2004.

### Regional Assemblies

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make a statement on constitutional changes necessary for the transfer of powers to regional assemblies. [154392]

**Mr. Raynsford:** I have been asked to reply.

Voters in a region will first need to vote "yes" in a referendum under the Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Act 2003. An Act of Parliament will then be needed to establish elected regional assemblies, allow elections to take place, set out their constitution and transfer powers to them.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will do its best to publish before the first referendums a draft Regional Assemblies Bill addressing these issues.

### Sentencing

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will list the benches in England and Wales which have not yet signed up to the Magistrates National Sentencing Guidelines; and what percentage of benches this figure represents. [154759]

**Mr. Leslie:** The information requested is not collected or held centrally.

The Judicial Studies Board incorporated the revised Magistrates Court Sentencing Guidelines into the Adult Court Bench Book that was recently issued to all magistrates and their legal advisers via their Magistrates Courts' Committees. The guidelines will therefore be available within every magistrates court in England and Wales.

In court lay magistrates sit with their Justices' Clerk or a legal adviser. The Justices' Clerk has a statutory duty to provide advice to the magistrates on questions of law, practice and procedure. This will include advice on applying any case law and relevant Court of Appeal judgments when making decisions on sentence.

### Small Claims Track

**Vera Baird:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) in how many small claims track cases the power to remit or waive court fees was exercised in 2002–03; [155376]

(2) how many times the power under article 6 of the county court rules to excuse payment of fees for exceptional financial hardship was used in 2002–03. [155378]

**Mr. Leslie:** Information concerning the use of the powers mentioned above is not collected centrally. Information concerning the number of applications made for exemption or remission of court fees is collected but not in a manner that would enable it to be broken down as requested. During 2002–03 there were 234,872 such applications made in the county courts of England and Wales.

**Vera Baird:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs in what percentage of cases in the small claims track *(a)* the complainant and *(b)* the defendant was legally represented in 2002–03. [155380]

**Mr. Leslie:** During 2002–03 there were 56,988 small claims cases dealt with in the county courts of England and Wales. Based on sample data collected centrally, in just over 41 per cent. of these cases the complainant was legally represented while the comparative figure for the defendant was nearly 32 per cent.

**Vera Baird:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs when the fee bands for cases in the small claims track were fixed; and what plans there are to change them. [155382]

**Mr. Leslie:** The fee bands for claims in the small claims track (claims up to £5,000) were last fixed on 1 April 2003. My Department has no plans to change the fee bands for these claims.

### Tied Agricultural Property

**Mr. Flook:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many owners of properties with agricultural ties there are, broken down by land registry office area. [155173]

**Mr. Lammy:** Her Majesty's Land Registry does not hold information on agricultural ties.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### EU Enlargement

23. **Sir Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to restrict the admission of residents of the east European states which will be admitted to the EU in May. [155767]

**Beverley Hughes:** From 1 May nationals of the Accession States have the right to free movement through all member states. The United Kingdom welcomes those who can contribute to our economy but will not allow people here purely to claim benefits. We will take the necessary action to ensure the United Kingdom is not open to abuse and will be announcing further details.

### Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc) Bill

**Annabelle Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent discussions he has had with Scottish Ministers about the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc) Bill. [155765]

**Beverley Hughes:** Officials have been in contact with officials in the Scotland Office and the Scottish Executive as appropriate.

### Correspondence

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will ensure that the letter of 4 December 2003 from the hon. Member for Castle Point on the future contracts for housing asylum seekers is answered within five days. [153486]

**Beverley Hughes:** I wrote to the hon. Member on 9 February 2004.

**Mr. Salmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he intends to reply to the letter dated 8 December 2003 from the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan regarding his constituent, Mr. C. Ming of Fraserburgh. [149783]

**Beverley Hughes:** I wrote to the hon. Member on 16 February 2004.

**Mr. Clelland:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Tyne Bridge of 8 January 2004. [151906]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer 30 January 2004]:* My hon. Friend the Member for Slough (Fiona Mactaggart) wrote to my hon. Friend on 29 January 2004.

**Mr. Kaufman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) when he intends to reply to the letter to him dated 15 December 2003 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Shaikh Ijaz Ahmed; [152643]

(2) when he will reply to the letter to him dated 15 December 2003 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton, with regard to Shaikh Ijaz Ahmed. [155843]

**Mr. Blunkett:** I wrote to the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton on 17 February 2004.

**Mr. Kaufman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter to him dated 1 December 2003 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton, with regard to Mrs. S. Ahmed. [153254]

**Mr. Blunkett:** I wrote to the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton on 12 February 2004.

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter of the hon. Member for the Isle of Wight to the Immigration and Nationality Directorate, dated 13 December 2003, reference A485596; and what the reason is for the delay in responding to this inquiry. [154750]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer 12 February 2004]:* I wrote to the hon. Member on 12 February 2004.

### Sex Offenders

**Mr. Mahmood:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to increase the protection of the public from known sex offenders living in the community. [155750]

**Paul Goggins:** Provisions in both the Criminal Justice Act and the Sexual Offences Act will help to strengthen public protection from known sex offenders. These include enhancing the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements, tightening sex offender registration requirements, introducing new orders to prevent sex offenders from committing further offences and making the prosecution of sexual offences easier.

### Gun Crime

**Mr. Clapham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures he is taking to support communities in the fight against gun crime. [155761]

**Caroline Flint:** We recognise the importance of supporting local communities to resist gun crime and gun culture. This is why we have provided support for the Disarm Trust to work directly with affected communities, and have allocated 1.2 million of recovered assets money to support community action in the most affected areas. We also hosted a major gun crime community engagement conference in January bringing together local community groups, voluntary organisations and others to help identify what more can be done.

### Civil Liberties

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what mechanism is in place to ensure that respect for civil liberties is considered at each stage of his Department's policy-making process. [155763]

**Fiona Mactaggart:** The Human Rights Act ensures that all legislation complies with the European convention on human rights. For all proposed legislation, section 19 of the Act requires the Minister to make a statement as to the compatibility with the convention. Throughout the policy making process we assess the effects on individuals and society through discussions with independent and representative bodies and where appropriate full public consultation.

### Acceptable Behaviour Contracts

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many acceptable behaviour contracts were issued in *(a)* York and *(b)* North Yorkshire; and if he will make a statement. [155764]

**Ms Blears:** The Home Office does not routinely collect statistics on the use or otherwise of acceptable behaviour contracts (ABCs). ABC schemes, also known as acceptable behaviour agreements, are voluntary and have been developed by a range of agencies whose role it is to prevent such behaviour.

Research conducted in April 2002 showed that there were 173 ABC schemes running in England and Wales, with 1,868 contracts signed. A Home Office RDS publication on the evaluation of an ABC Scheme in the London borough of Islington was published on 20 January this year.

### Asylum Amnesty

**Ross Cranston:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many families he expects to fall within the asylum amnesty. [152463]

**Beverley Hughes:** We expect up to 15,000 families to qualify under the ILR exercise.

### Asylum Policy

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the measures his Department is taking to ensure there is a co-ordinated asylum policy across EU member states. [146542]

**Beverley Hughes:** The UK Government are engaged in the on-going negotiations to ensure that European measures on asylum allow member states to deal effectively with applications while retaining flexibility to respond to the particular circumstances they face domestically.

The UK has participated actively in negotiations on all EU asylum initiatives to date, and for example, played a major role in shaping the Eurodac and Dublin II Regulations, which have helped us identify and return asylum shoppers to EU countries where they first arrived or claimed asylum. We retain the right to opt in to European asylum measures on a case-by-case basis, and will do so where it is in the United Kingdom's interests.

For further details on the measures taken, I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Crosby on 17 November 2003, *Official Report*, columns 673–74W.

### Asylum Seekers

**Mr. Clappison:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Iraqi asylum seekers *(a)* have been refused asylum or other legal status to remain in the UK and *(b)* exhausted their rights of appeal in each year since 1997. [150620]

**Beverley Hughes:** The tables show the available information, relating to the outcomes of initial decisions, including refusals of leave to remain, and grants of asylum and the outcome of appeals at the IAA, for Iraqi nationals, who have applied for asylum in the United Kingdom, for each year from 1997 to September 2003. Data by nationality are not available for outcomes at the other levels of appeal.

Information on the numbers of asylum applications by nationality and on the outcome of appeals is published in quarterly web pages and in the annual statistical bulletin Asylum Statistics United Kingdom, available from the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html. The next quarterly publication, covering the fourth quarter of 2003 and provisional full year data, will be published on 24 February.

*Initial decisions on applications received for asylum in the United Kingdom[1], 1997-September 2003, Nationals of Iraq*

*Number of principal applicants*

| | | *Cases considered under normal procedures[3]* | | | | | *Backlog clearance exercise[4]* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Initial decisions[2]* | *Granted asylum* | *Granted exceptional leave to remain* | *Granted humanitarian protection* | *Granted discretionary leave* | *Refused* | *Granted asylum or exceptional leave to remain under backlog criteria* | *Refused under backlog criteria[5]* |
| 1997 | 665 | 255 | 295 | [6]— | [6]— | 110 | — | — |
| 1998 | 1,100 | 510 | 500 | [6]— | [6]— | 90 | — | — |
| 1999 | 745 | 315 | 320 | [6]— | [6]— | 100 | 5 | [7]— |
| 2000 | 5,530 | 845 | 2,455 | [6]— | [6]— | 2,220 | 10 | [7]— |
| 2001[8] | 9,035 | 830 | 1,885 | [6]— | [6]— | 6,315 | — | — |
| 2002[9] | 11,905 | 715 | 8,195 | [6]— | [6]— | 2,995 | — | — |
| January to March 2003[9] | 2,915 | 65 | 2,105 | [6]— | [6]— | 770 | — | — |
| April to June 2003[9] | 335 | 5 | [6]— | [7]— | [7]— | 330 | — | — |
| July to September 2003[9] | 1,790 | [7]— | [6]— | — | 15 | 1,775 | — | — |

[1] Figures rounded to the nearest 5,
[2] Information is of initial decisions, excluding the outcome of appeals or other subsequent decisions.
[3] Cases considered under normal procedures may include some cases decided under the backlog criteria.
[4] Cases decided under measures aimed at reducing the pre-1996 asylum application backlog.
[5] Includes some cases where the application has been refused on substantive grounds.
[6] Not applicable
[7] Equals 1 or 2
[8] Revised figures
[9] Provisional figures

*Outcome of appeals[1,2] determined by adjudicators of the Immigration Appellate Authority, excluding dependants, nationals of Iraq, 1997-September 2003*

*Number of principal appellants*

| | *Appeals determined by adjudicators* | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *Allowed* | | *Dismissed* | | *Withdrawn* | |
| | *Total determined* | *Total* | *As percentage of total determined* | *Total* | *As percentage of total determined* | *Total* | *As percentage of total determined* |
| 1997[3] | 15 | 10 | 64 | [4]— | 14 | 5 | 21 |
| 1998[3] | 45 | 15 | 29 | 25 | 51 | 10 | 20 |
| 1999 | [5]— | [5]— | [5]— | [5]— | [5]— | [5]— | [5]— |
| 2000 | [5]— | [5]— | [5]— | [5]— | [5]— | [5]— | [5]— |
| 2001 | 1,655 | 445 | 27 | 1,065 | 64 | 145 | 9 |
| 2002[6] | 4,570 | 1,130 | 25 | 2,970 | 65 | 470 | 10 |
| January to March 2003[6] | 1,355 | 280 | 21 | 910 | 67 | 160 | 12 |
| April to June 2003[6] | 205 | 40 | 20 | 145 | 69 | 20 | 10 |
| July to September 2003[6] | 1,220 | 50 | 4 | 1,040 | 85 | 130 | 10 |

[1] Figures rounded to nearest 5 (except percentages). Figures may not add up due to independent rounding.
[2] Figures include cases withdrawn by the Home Office, as well as the appellant.
[3] Figures are based on the cases for which information is recorded on the Refugee Index.
[4] Equals 1 or 2
[5] Not available.
[6] Provisional figures

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which defences are under statute not to be considered as reasonable causes for asylum seekers no longer in possession of relevant documents. [152842]

**Beverley Hughes:** For the purpose of the offence set out in clause 2 of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Bill, whether or not an excuse for failing to have a document is reasonable will depend on the circumstances of the particular case.

However, the offence explicitly rules out deliberate destruction or disposal as an excuse, unless that destruction or disposal is for a reasonable cause or beyond the control of the person concerned. Certain behaviour does not amount to a reasonable cause, namely if the destruction or disposal was with a view to delaying or enhancing a claim or on the instructions or advice of a facilitator.

As I said during Committee stage of the Bill, we are looking at the defences in clause 2. If we consider any amendments to be necessary, we intend to table them at Report stage.

**Mr. Tom Harris:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers living in Glasgow were granted refugee status in the last year for which figures are available. [153201]

**Beverley Hughes:** Initial decision outcomes are not available relating to persons living in particular areas of the UK. The requested information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost by examination of individual case records.

Information on the numbers of initial decisions on asylum applications by nationality and on the outcome of appeals is published in quarterly web pages and in the annual statistical bulletin 'Asylum Statistics United Kingdom', available from the Home Office website at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html. The next quarterly publication, covering the fourth quarter of 2003 and provisional full year data, will be published on 24 February.

**Dr. Cable:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers who were qualified doctors have applied to work in the UK as doctors in each of the last five years; how many applications were *(a)* accepted and *(b)* rejected; and how many rejections were overturned on appeal. [153617]

**Beverley Hughes:** Generally speaking asylum seekers are not allowed to work in the United Kingdom while their claim for asylum is being processed. The Government are aware that some applicants use the asylum system as an alternative route for economic migration and we believe it is vital to discourage this and to send out a message that we will not tolerate abuse of the asylum system.

Until 23 July 2002 asylum seekers who had not received an initial decision on their asylum claim within six months of its being lodged could seek exceptional permission to work under the terms of the employment concession. No detailed statistics were kept on the number of asylum seekers given permission to work under the terms of the concession and the type of job they wished to undertake.

This concession has now been withdrawn. It is our policy to speed up the length of time asylum seekers are awaiting a decision on their status. The latest published figures show that 81 per cent.[1,2] of applications received in the period April to June 2003 had initial decisions reached and served within two months[3], compared with 75 per cent. for the previous quarter. Proposals in the Asylum and Immigration Bill currently before Parliament will simplify and speed up the appeals process. In this context, we feel it is inappropriate for asylum seekers of any occupation to work.

[1] *Source:*
A-CID database as at 31 October 2003.

[2] Excludes withdrawals and third country cases which may be the responsibility of other EU member states under the Dublin Convention. Home Office's Public Service Agreement target for 2001–02 was 60 per cent. and for 2002–03 was 65 per cent. The target for 2003–04 is 75 per cent. Details of the targets are given in the 2000 Spending Review Public Service Agreements White Paper at http://www.treasury.gov.uk/. Excludes asylum applications lodged by Iraqis between 1 February and 31 May 2003.

[3] "Two months" is defined as 61 days.

**Mr. Tom Harris:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers resident in Glasgow were granted refugee status in the last year for which figures are available; and what proportion of all applications this represents. [153733]

**Beverley Hughes:** Initial decision outcomes are not available relating to persons residing in particular areas of the UK. The requested information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost by examination of individual case records.

Information on the numbers of initial decisions on asylum applications by nationality and on the outcome of appeals is published in quarterly web pages and in the annual statistical bulletin "Asylum Statistics United Kingdom", available from the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html. The next quarterly publication, covering the fourth quarter of 2003 and provisional full year data, will be published on 24 February.

**Mr. Tom Harris:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of applications for refugee status were successful in the latest period for which figures are available. [153752]

**Beverley Hughes:** There were 14,210 initial decisions on asylum applications in the period July to September 2003, the latest published figures, of which 5 per cent. of the decisions were grants of refugee status. A further 6 per cent. were granted discretionary leave and a minimal number (less than one per cent.) humanitarian protection. Information on appeals relating to initial decisions made in this period is unavailable but a percentage may be allowed.

Information on the numbers of initial decisions on asylum applications is published in quarterly web pages and in the annual statistical bulletin "Asylum Statistics United Kingdom", available from the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html. The next quarterly publication, covering the fourth quarter of 2003 and provisional full year data, will be published on 24 February.

**Mr. Betts:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department from which countries, other than Iraq, Zimbabwe and Somalia, asylum seekers can claim hard case support if their claims are refused on appeal. [154336]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer 12 February 2004]:* As a matter policy accommodation under section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (hard case support) may be provided to failed asylum seekers who are unable to leave immediately due to circumstances entirely

beyond their control. Currently accommodation will be provided to Kurds from the Kurdish Autonomous Zone of Iraq because until recently there was no viable route of return. Now that Kurds from Iraq can leave under the Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme the policy of providing accommodation is being reviewed. It is possible for nationals of Zimbabwe and Somalia to make a voluntary return and accommodation will be provided only where they are seeking to return but cannot do so immediately. No other countries are routinely provided with accommodation if their claims for asylum are finally refused.

**Mr. Betts:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether there is a time frame in which failed Iraqi asylum seekers are expected to return home. [154337]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer12 February 2004]:* Failed Iraqi asylum seekers are expected to return to Iraq voluntarily once they have exhausted the appeal process; they can do so through the Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme operated by the International Organisation for Migration. We are currently working on proposals for enforced return.

**Mr. Viggers:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what factors he is taking into account before deciding whether to proceed with a possible accommodation centre for asylum seekers at the Daedalus site in Lee-on-the-Solent. [151616]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer 29 January 2004]:* All prospective sites for accommodation centres are evaluated against a set of criteria including size, configuration, location, technical characteristics and planning considerations.

I announced on 3 February that we have decided not to seek planning approval to develop an accommodation centre for asylum seekers at HMS Daedalus. Following a careful evaluation, we have concluded that the difficulties associated with the conversion of historic buildings and the creation of a suitable access point make the site unsuitable for the purposes of the trial.

### Bail Hostels

**Mrs. Helen Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what criteria are used to decide which sex offenders from outside the city are sent to Peterborough Bail Hostel. [153237]

**Paul Goggins** *[holding answer 6 February 2004]*: The decision to admit anyone to an approved probation and bail hostel is only taken after a careful consideration of risk. Peterborough Approved Premises is part of a national estate of 100 premises managed by the National Probation Service of England and Wales. From time to time offenders are released from custody who cannot return to their home area for a variety of reasons, including victim issues. As part of a national service, Peterborough Approved Premises, having taken into careful consideration all the relevant risks, will accept "out of area" referrals.

**Mrs. Helen Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what arrangements are made to protect vulnerable young residents of bail hostels from residents who are known sex offenders. [153238]

**Paul Goggins** *[holding answer 6 February 2004]*: There are 100 approved premises (approved probation and bail hostels) managed by the National Probation Service for England and Wales. As a general rule, none of these approved premises admit anyone under the age of 18 years as a resident. In exceptional circumstances they may do so for short periods, but only if there were no Schedule I offenders at the approved premises at that time. The decision to admit anyone to an approved probation and bail hostel is only taken after a careful consideration of risk. This includes the risk to other residents.

**Mrs. Helen Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what records are kept of the number of sex offenders resident in bail hostels; [153239]

(2) how many sex offenders there were in Peterborough Bail Hostel in the last month for which figures are available; what percentage of the hostel's inmates this represented; and what the average percentage of sex offenders in bail hostels in England was in the last month for which figures are available. [153240]

**Paul Goggins** *[holding answer 6 February 2004]*: No published data is available on the numbers of offenders convicted or charged with sexual offences who are resident in approved premises.

### Cannabis

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research the Department is carrying out into cannabis-related psychosis. [152708]

**Caroline Flint:** None. We rely upon the advice of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs. The Council's advice is based upon a wide-ranging review of the available research. The Council will continue to monitor the research carefully.

The Department of Health has commissioned research projects during 2002 and 2003 relating to cannabis and other substance misuse and harmful effects. Accordingly, I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Miss Melanie Johnson), on 27 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 317W.

### Centre for the 3Rs

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the recommendation in the House of Lords report on Animals in Scientific Procedures for a Centre for the 3Rs, with particular regard to its projected *(a)* terms of reference and *(b)* budget. [154277]

**Caroline Flint:** In its report published in July 2002, the House of Lords Select Committee on animals in scientific procedures recommended the establishment of a United Kingdom centre for research into the 3Rs—the replacement of animal use, reduction of the number of animals used and the refinement of the procedures

involved to minimise suffering—consisting of a small, administrative hub co-ordinating research unit embedded in existing centres of scientific excellence.

In its response to the Select Committee's report, published in January 2003, the Government accepted this recommendation in principle and undertook to explore the case for such a centre. The Inter-Departmental Group for the 3Rs led by the Home Office, and including officials from the Department of Health, the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Department of Trade and Industry, the Office of Science and Technology, the Food Standards Agency, the Health and Safety Executive, and other agencies, was tasked with taking this work forward.

The Inter-Departmental Group reported to me on its initial findings in September 2003 and I expect to receive its final report shortly. including advice on the possible activities of a centre and funding issues. Subject to that advice, we will announce how we intend to proceed with the Select Committee's recommendation in the next few weeks.

### Child Curfew Orders

**David Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many child curfew orders have been issued in England and Wales, broken down by local authority area. [152474]

**Paul Goggins:** Figures broken down by local authority areas are not available. The available information relating to the number of persons aged 10 to 17 years who have received a curfew order at court, by police force area, England and Wales 2002, is contained in the table.

Statistics on court proceedings for 2003 will be published in the autumn.

*Number of persons aged 10 to 17 years sentenced to a curfew order at all courts for all offences, by police force area: England and Wales 2002*[1]

| *Police force area* | *Sentenced to a curfew order* |
|---|---|
| Avon and Somerset | 67 |
| Bedfordshire | 20 |
| Cambridgeshire | 40 |
| Cheshire | 12 |
| Cleveland | 64 |
| Cumbria | 9 |
| Derbyshire | 37 |
| Devon and Cornwall | 17 |
| Dorset | 39 |
| Durham | 44 |
| Essex | 33 |
| Gloucestershire | 13 |
| Greater Manchester | 309 |
| Hampshire | 97 |
| Hertfordshire | 28 |
| Humberside | 14 |
| Kent | 75 |
| Lancashire | 87 |
| Leicestershire | 53 |
| Lincolnshire | 6 |
| London, City of | — |
| Merseyside | 29 |
| Metropolitan Police | 293 |
| Norfolk | 31 |
| Northamptonshire | — |
| Northumbria | 38 |
| North Yorkshire | 16 |
| Nottinghamshire | 48 |
| South Yorkshire | 68 |
| Staffordshire | 43 |
| Suffolk | 25 |
| Surrey | 8 |
| Sussex | 45 |
| Thames Valley | 89 |
| Warwickshire | 10 |
| West Mercia | 61 |
| West Midlands | 143 |
| West Yorkshire | 177 |
| Wiltshire | 5 |
| Dyfed Powys | 4 |
| Gwent | 11 |
| North Wales | 58 |
| South Wales | 87 |
| England and Wales | 2,353 |

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

### Constituency Case

**Kate Hoey:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when his officials will make a decision on the application of a constituent of the hon. Member for Vauxhall (HO Ref: T1129612). [155580]

**Beverley Hughes:** The Home Office received the application on 27 January 2004. Officials will aim to make a decision on the application within the published 13 week target date.

### Crime and Disorder Partnerships

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* anti-social behaviour orders, *(b)* acceptable behaviour contracts, *(c)* child curfew orders and *(d)* injunctions have been issued in the County of Denbighshire in each year since 1998. [154313]

**Ms Blears:** The information requested is as follows:

*Anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs).* No notifications have been received by the Home Office of ASBOs issued within the county of Denbighshire since their introduction from 1 April 1999 up to 30 September 2003 (latest available).

*Acceptable behaviour contracts (ABCs).* Data on the number of ABCs are not collected centrally.

*Child curfew Orders.* Data extracted from the Home Office Court Proceedings Database shows that, of juveniles (aged 10 to 17) sentenced to a curfew order, at all courts for all offences, in the Denbighshire Petty Sessional Area, between the years 1998 to 2002, there was one imposed in 2000 and six in 2002.

*Injunctions.* Data are not collected centrally by my Department on the number of injunctions issued.

### Criminal Justice Act

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the sentencing arrangements in the Criminal Justice Act 2003. [152849]

**Paul Goggins:** The Criminal Justice Act 2003 introduced wide changes to the sentencing powers of the courts;

For the first time, we have made explicit the purposes of sentencing and put them into statute. They are: public protection, punishment, crime reduction and reparation and the reform and rehabilitation of offenders.

We have also put in place key principles to guide the Court when determining the seriousness of the offence and the severity of the resulting sentence. The most important of these is that previous convictions (where they are recent and relevant) should be treated as an aggravating factor when determining sentence severity.

The courts must treat offences as aggravated, for sentencing purposes, where the victim's race, religion, sexual orientation or disability has been a contributing factor.

The Act establishes a new Sentencing Guidelines Council whose role will be to promote consistent sentencing and which will be responsible for issuing guidelines on sentencing for the range of criminal offences.

Magistrates will be able to sentence offenders for terms of imprisonment of up to 12 months instead of the current six months maximum.

The Act provides a new indeterminate sentence for dangerous offenders, which means such an offender can be kept in custody until the Parole Board assesses him as presenting a risk which is manageable in the community.

We are transforming the structure of short prison sentences so that they will be more effective at addressing the needs of offenders. New custodial sentences of less than 12 months will consist of a short 'custodial period' of between two weeks and three months followed by a 'licence period' of at least six months.

The Act introduces intermittent custody for low risk offenders where the term of imprisonment is between 28 and 51 weeks duration. Intermittent custody allows for the sentence to be served either during weekdays or weekends, so that offenders can maintain jobs and relationships that contribute to rehabilitation.

The generic community sentence will allow sentencers a much greater degree of flexibility in putting together tough community sentences that will be tailored to the needs of offenders at any level of seriousness. Where a court decides to impose a community sentence this can be tailored to fit the individual and may include an order to perform unpaid work or specific activities. It may also include exclusion orders or orders for treatment for drug or alcohol abuse.

### Czech Migrants

**David Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will make a statement on the content of the advertising campaign his Department commissioned from the International Organisation for Migration regarding immigration from the Czech Republic to Britain; [154151]

(2) how much his Department has paid to the International Organisation for Migration to launch an advertising campaign in the Czech Republic regarding migration to Britain; and if he will make a statement; [154152]

(3) for what reasons his Department asked the International Organisation for Migration to launch an advertising campaign in the Czech Republic; and whether such campaigns have been considered for other countries joining the European Union on 1 May. [154153]

**Beverley Hughes:** We will make an announcement on these matters shortly.

### Departmental Relocation

**Ms Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many staff in his Department work in *(a)* the West Midlands and *(b)* North Staffordshire. [146909]

**Fiona Mactaggart:** In January 2004, the number of staff employed by the Home Office in the West Midlands was 5,856 and North Staffordshire was 176.

### Disclosure Notices

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many notices imposing a disclosure requirement have been made under section 49 of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000. [155053]

**Caroline Flint:** None. Part III of Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, which includes the provision for giving notices under section 49, has not yet been implemented.

### Driving Convictions

**Mr. Milburn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many convictions for *(a)* causing death by dangerous driving, *(b)* dangerous driving and *(c)* careless driving there were in each of the last five years. [154333]

**Ms Blears:** Information for England and Wales from the years 1997 to 2001 is given in the table. 2002 data will be available in the spring.

*Findings of guilt at all courts for specific offences, England and Wales, 1997–2001*

*Number of offences*

| *Offence* | *1997* | *1998* | *1999* | *2000* | *2001* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Causing death by dangerous driving[1] | 237 | 235 | 190 | 210 | 273 |
| Dangerous driving[2] | 5,926 | 5,742 | 5,243 | 5,184 | 5,375 |
| Careless driving[3] | 55,758 | 52,144 | 46,763 | 41,326 | 36,939 |

[1] Offence under the Road Traffic Act 1988, s1 as amended by the Road Traffic Act 1991 s1 and Criminal Justice Act 1993 s67.
[2] Offence under the Road Traffic Act 1988 s2 as amended by the Road Traffic Act 1991 s2.
[3] Offence under the Road Traffic Act 1988 s3, ss 12(1), 26(2), 33(3) & 168; Road Vehicles (Construction & Use) Regulations 1986 Regs. 19, 104–107 & 109.
*Note:*
Figures amended since publication of the Home Office 'Offences relating to motor vehicles England and Wales 2001 Supplementary tables'.

### Eulisa de Freitas

**Mr. Steen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 18 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 1057W, on Miss Eulisa de Freitas, and following receipt of new information provided to her by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Saint Helena and disclosure that Miss de Freitas' father, holds a British passport, if the Minister of State (Citizenship, Immigration and Counter-terrorism) will now meet the hon. Member for Totnes to discuss the renewal of Miss Eulisa de Freitas' British passport for a further period. [146656]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer 12 January 2004]:* I refer the hon. Member to my letter of 27 January 2004.

### Fear of Crime

**Dr. Murrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are being taken to combat the fear of crime among elderly people. [153817]

**Ms Blears:** We are committed to reducing the levels of fear of crime among older people. We are addressing the misperceptions about crime by promoting the facts about crime levels and common sense precautions which individuals can take to prevent becoming a victim. In order to do this we have been working with charities such as Help the Aged and Age Concern to find new and better ways of tackling fear among the older population, as well as tackling the crimes committed against them.

A Fear of Crime Toolkit was published on the Home Office Crime Reduction website in May 2003 to provide best practice to all the practitioners who are working towards reducing fear of crime within communities and vulnerable groups.

### Firearms

**Mr. Paice:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will ensure, following his decision not to renew the Firearms Consultative Committee, that account will be taken of the interests of legal owners of firearms for sporting purposes in his review of firearms legislation; and what measures he proposes to ensure that these interests will be represented on a future firearms advisory body. [155308]

**Caroline Flint:** We are currently considering the establishment of a new consultative structure and will certainly wish to ensure that all interested parties, including sports shooters, are properly represented.

### Georgia

**Tom Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assistance his Department has offered to the new President of Georgia in reforming its police force; and if he will make a statement. [154469]

**Ms Blears:** The UK, together with its international partners, is presently considering what assistance we can provide to Georgia. My Department has not yet offered any assistance to the new President of Georgia in reforming its police force. However, I will give careful consideration to any future requests for either bilateral police assistance, or policing assistance through the international community, that my Department receives.

### Hillingdon Judgment

**Mr. Malins:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what decision has been made regarding increased funding for local authorities affected by the Hillingdon judgment of 2003; and if he will make a statement; [153014]

(2) how much extra funding has been *(a)* earmarked for and *(b)* paid (i) to each local authority which has a UK port or airport and (ii) specifically in respect of (A) Heathrow airport, (B) Gatwick airport, (C) Stansted airport and (D) the ports of Dover and Folkestone following the Hillingdon judgment of 2003. [153015]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer 5 February 2004]:* The Hillingdon judgment mainly concerns the availability of leaving care services for former unaccompanied asylum seeking children who have turned 18. Funding for leaving care services is provided by the Department for Education and Skills. My right hon. friend, the Secretary of State for Education and Skills announced on 19 November 2003 that an additional £10 million would be made available from 2004–05 to top up the existing funding for care leavers.

The Home Office provides funding for the support of unaccompanied asylum seeking children aged under 18 through an annual grant to local authorities. The unit cost rates for 2003–04 were announced in a letter from the Director of NASS to local authorities on 15 January. For those aged 16 and 17 the rate is £300 per child per week. This represents a 15 per cent. increase over the previous year. For those aged 15 and under the rate is £670 per child per week, an increase of 17 per cent.

The arrangements announced on 15 January also allow for authorities who believe they have incurred significant additional costs to seek to have their level of grant considered under special circumstances arrangements. It is not possible to specify the amounts any authority will receive until these processes are complete. I would expect authorities receiving higher numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children, for example those with major air or sea ports in their area, to seek additional funding under these arrangements.

### Illegal Immigrants

**Mr. Lilley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people who originally entered the UK illegally in 2002 and previous years were *(a)* granted asylum, *(b)* granted exceptional leave to remain and *(c)* removed in 2002. [152861]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer 4 February 2004]:* The information requested is not available. Information is not collated centrally on how many asylum applicants

enter the UK illegally in any given year. The available information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost by examination of individual case records and would be unreliable.

Overall it is estimated that 42 per cent. of total asylum applications made in 2002 resulted in grants of asylum (10 per cent.), or of exceptional leave to remain (23 per cent.) or in allowed appeals (10 per cent.), including outcomes occurring after 2002. Corresponding information on the numbers of failed asylum seekers who applied in 2002 and have subsequently been removed is not available and could be produced only at disproportionate cost by examination of individual case files.

Information on the outcomes of asylum-related initial decisions, and appeals, and removals is published in the annual statistical bulletin 'Asylum Statistics United Kingdom 2002', a copy of which is available from the Library, and quarterly on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html. The next publication will be available on 24 February 2004.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of how many illegal immigrants will be prevented from entering the UK in a year by photocopying air passengers' passports. [153125]

**Beverley Hughes:** A requirement for carriers to provide copies of travel documents would enable quicker determination of genuine identity, thereby speeding up processing times for asylum claims, which reduces detention and support costs. This would also assist with the redocumentation and removal process for those passengers who subsequently make unfounded asylum claims. The application of such a power should also deter a number of unfounded asylum applicants and illegal entrants from travelling to the UK in the first place. The proposed targeted approach of this power would allow effort to be concentrated on routes and areas of greatest concern. We are discussing with the airlines proposals for a voluntary trial scheme, whose results will help to establish how the new power would be most effective.

## Immigration (Wales)

**Mr. Wiggin:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* asylum applicants, *(b)* failed asylum applicants, *(c)* successful asylum applicants and *(d)* settled asylum seekers there are in Wales; and what the estimated number of illegal immigrants is in Wales, broken down by (i) police force, (ii) constituency and (iii) local authority area for each year since 1997. [151737]

**Beverley Hughes:** The information is not available in the form requested.

Statistics on the location of asylum seekers in the UK are linked to the available information on the support that the asylum seeker receives. Asylum seekers currently in the UK are either in receipt of support from the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) or from local authorities, or are supporting themselves.

Information on numbers of asylum applications and decision outcomes relating to asylum seekers in particular areas of the UK is unavailable as are statistics regarding the location of asylum seekers not in receipt of NASS support. There are no reliable figures available on the refugee or illegal immigrant population.

The following table shows the number of asylum seekers (including dependants) accommodated by MASS and receiving subsistence only support in Wales as at the end of each quarter since December 2001.

| *As at end:* | *In receipt of subsistence only support* | *Supported in MASS accommodation* |
|---|---|---|
| December 2001 | 140 | 700 |
| March 2002 | 160 | 1,020 |
| June 2002 | 175 | 1,150 |
| September 2002 | 180 | 1,405 |
| December 2002 | 180 | 1,585 |
| March 2003 | 185 | 1,870 |
| June 2003 | 175 | 2,130 |
| September 2003 | 160 | 2,350 |

*Note:*
Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.

Information on NASS supported asylum seekers can be broken down to local authority level and parliamentary constituency level.

The following table shows the numbers of asylum seekers in Wales at local authority level (available from December 2002).

| *As at end:* | *Cardiff* | *Neath Port Talbot* | *Newport* | *Swansea* | *Wrexham* | *Other*[1] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *December 2002* | | | | | | |
| Subsistence | 70 | — | 25 | 15 | — | 70 |
| Accommodation | 1,000 | * | 115 | 410 | 55 | — |
| *March 2003* | | | | | | |
| Subsistence | 75 | — | 20 | 20 | — | 70 |
| Accommodation | 1,105 | 5 | 135 | 585 | 45 | — |
| *June 2003* | | | | | | |
| Subsistence | 65 | — | — | 25 | — | 85 |
| Accommodation | 1,165 | 5 | 200 | 710 | 50 | — |
| *September 2003* | | | | | | |
| Subsistence | 60 | — | — | 20 | — | 75 |
| Accommodation | 1,230 | 5 | 280 | 790 | 45 | — |

[1] Local authorities with fewer than 20 asylum seekers in receipt of subsistence only support are grouped as 'other'.

*Note:*
Figures are rounded to the nearest 5 with * = 1 or 2.

The following table shows the number of asylum seekers in Wales at parliamentary constituency level (available only as at end September 2003).

| | *In receipt of subsistence only support* | *Supported in NASS accommodation* |
|---|---|---|
| Aberavon | 5 | 5 |
| Alyn and Deeside | 5 | — |
| Caerphilly | 10 | — |
| Cardiff Central | 25 | 530 |
| Cardiff North | 5 | 85 |
| Cardiff South and Penarth | 20 | 420 |
| Cardiff West | 10 | 200 |
| Clwyd South | — | 5 |
| Clwyd West | 5 | — |
| Conwy | 5 | — |
| Cynon Valley | 5 | — |
| Gower | 5 | 15 |
| Llanelli | 5 | — |
| Newport East | 5 | 115 |
| Newport West | 10 | 165 |
| Swansea East | 5 | 470 |
| Swansea West | 10 | 305 |
| Torfaen | 5 | — |
| Wrexham | 5 | 40 |

*Note:*

Figures are rounded to the nearest five and parliamentary constituencies with one or two asylum seekers resident are excluded from the table. The parliamentary constituency boundaries have been created using the November 2003 Office for National Statistics definitions.

### Immigration and Asylum Fingerprint System

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many times the Immigration and Asylum Fingerprint System has been accessed by *(a)* Interpol, *(b)* the National Criminal Intelligence Service, *(c)* the anti-terrorism branch of the Metropolitan police and *(d)* metropolitan and provincial forces. [151411]

**Beverley Hughes:** Locally held Immigration Service records show that the following requests were made for access to the Immigration and Asylum Fingerprint System (IAFS) between January and December 2003:

| | *Number of requests for access to IAFS* |
|---|---|
| Interpol/NCIS | 132 |
| Anti terrorist branch (Metropolitan police) | 664 |
| Metropolitan and provincial forces | 230 |

In November 2003 an electronic link was established between the police fingerprint database (NAFIS) and the Immigration and Asylum Fingerprint System. The Police IT Organisation (PITO) have provided the following figures for searches made following the establishment of this link:

November 2003: 177 (of which 23 were made by the metropolitan and provincial forces)

December 2003: 181 (of which 57 were made by metropolitan and provincial forces)

January 2004: 394 (of which 43 were made by metropolitan and provincial forces).

We are unable to specify the number of searches requested by NCIS, Interpol or the Anti Terrorist branch of the Metropolitan police without detailed examination of the cases concerned which would be at a disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Sri Lankan authorities have accessed fingerprints taken from visa applicants under the six-month pilot scheme, *(a)* directly through the UK authorities and *(b)* indirectly through Interpol. [151412]

**Beverley Hughes:** The Sir Lankan authorities have not accessed fingerprints taken from visa applicants under the six-month pilot scheme, either *(a)* directly through the UK authorities or *(b)* indirectly through Interpol.

### Immigration and Crime

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research has been conducted into links between *(a)* legal immigration, *(b)* illegal immigration and *(c)* failed asylum bids and levels of (i) violent crime, (ii) property crime and (iii) car crime. [153099]

**Beverley Hughes:** The Research, Development and Statistics Directorate of the Home Office commissions and undertakes a broad programme of research on asylum and immigration. Within this, research is currently being developed which will explore the links between legal and illegal migration.

At present there is no evidence to suggest that asylum seekers are more likely to commit crime than any other person living in the United Kingdom.

### Immigration and Nationality Directorate

**Mr. Love:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what training is available to Immigration and Nationality Directorate caseworkers before they begin work processing asylum applications. [153701]

**Beverley Hughes:** All new asylum caseworkers receive intensive training, comprising an initial 11-day course on all aspects of asylum work, 13 days in a special mentoring unit, and a 3-day intensive interviewing course (which is followed up by a consolidation workshop after 3 months in post). They receive continual support and mentoring from more experienced colleagues in a team working environment where the sharing and pooling of acquired expertise is actively encouraged. They also receive any additional training or mentoring necessitated by changes in legislation, policy and procedures, and attend developmental presentations or seminars provided by organisations such as UNHCR and the Medical Foundation. The effectiveness of the training is regularly evaluated to ensure that it continues to match the induction and development needs of new caseworkers.

### Immigration Service (Child Detainees)

**Mrs. Brooke:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many children are being detained in centres run by the Immigration Service. [151862]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer 29 January 2004]:* The Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) internal management information indicates that on 26 January 2004, 35 children were in detention.

Information on the number of people detained solely under Immigration Act powers at 27 December 2003 is due to be published on 24 February 2004 in the Asylum Statistics: 4th Quarter 2003 publication on the Home Office website: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

### Khat

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of how much crime is committed by people under the influence of khat. [154856]

**Caroline Flint:** Khat is not a controlled drug and no routine statistics are collected about its use to enable a quantitative exploration of the extent of link with crime. However, the Home Office is in the process of commissioning a small-scale study, to report in the first half of next year, which will look at khat use in specific communities and explore qualitatively whether there may be a link with use of controlled drugs or offending behaviour.

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to ban khat. [154857]

**Caroline Flint:** The Government have no plans at present to ban khat or to control it under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, but the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, which advises on these matters, keeps its legal status under review.

The Government are also considering ways to address the problems of khat misuse as part of a wider diversity initiative to ensure that the national drug strategy meets the needs of all our communities. This will include the development of appropriate drug prevention materials and information to raise awareness about khat misuse.

### Marriages

**Mr. Malins:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it is his policy to permit persons to marry in this country without both parties satisfying the authorities, prior to the marriage ceremony, as to their immigration status; and if he will make a statement. [143215]

**Beverley Hughes:** In order to marry in the United Kingdom, a couple must demonstrate that they have the legal capacity to marry and are not of a blood relationship. The immigration status of a person is not a legal impediment to them marrying here.

A person will only be granted leave to remain in the United Kingdom on the basis of marriage if the requirements of the Immigration Rules relating to marriage are met.

The Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, places a statutory duty on registrars to report to the Home Office those marriages where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the marriage will be a sham.

Last year there were around 2,700 reports of suspicious marriages from registrars. On receipt, the reports are examined to ensure that the suspicions warrant further investigation. If appropriate, the papers are passed to whichever office is in the best position to deal with it. This would normally be the local Immigration Service enforcement office.

Action has led to the successful apprehension of immigration offenders. Several "professional" spouses, and their prospective husbands and wives, have gone to prison for sentences ranging from three to nine months.

### Metropolitan Police

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many firearms are *(a)* in use and *(b)* on order by the Metropolitan police. [155050]

**Ms Blears:** The Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis informs me that there are *(a)* 2,965 firearms owned by the Metropolitan Police Service and *(b)* a further 40 firearms on order.

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans the Metropolitan police has to increase the number of trained firearms officers. [155051]

**Ms Blears:** The Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis informs me that the number of trained firearms officers is constantly kept under review to ensure that sufficient officers are available to provide an appropriate response and to meet contingencies, perceived risk and anticipated threat levels.

### Migrant Workers

**Angela Eagle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps his Department is taking to tackle illegal exploitation of migrant workers; and what steps his Department is taking to improve coordination with the Department of Work and Pensions on this issue. [154631]

**Beverley Hughes:** We are pursuing our policy of managed migration so that those who want to apply to come and work in the United Kingdom lawfully to meet the country's economic needs can do so on the basis of informed choice and with access to the rights and freedoms available to other workers. In combination, we are strengthening action against illegal working. The Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants) Bill, currently before Parliament, will create a new offence of trafficking for exploitation, including forced labour, with a maximum penalty of 14 years. We intend to strengthen the document checks employers are required to carry out under section 8 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996. We have been active tackling issues related to gangmasters and support the objectives set out in the Gangmasters (Licensing) Bill introduced by the hon. Member for West Renfrewshire (Jim Sheridan). We are increasing the number of illegal working operations generally and are targeting organised traffickers under the auspices of the Reflex taskforce.

The Immigration Service already has close working-level contacts with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), and regularly carries out joint

enforcement operations with officials from that Department. We have established a joint intelligence cell with the DWP National Identity Fraud Unit to facilitate closer co-ordination.

### Ministerial Meetings

**Richard Ottaway:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it is his Department's policy to make notes of *(a)* meetings and *(b)* telephone conversations involving Ministers; and under what circumstances no notes would be made. [149805]

**Mr. Blunkett:** My Department follows the central "Guidance on the Management of Private Office Papers" which makes clear that good record management procedures are necessary, not least to ensure accountability and provide an audit trail. Among the records covered by the guidance are Ministers' meetings and telephone conversations.

### Murder Cases

**Kevin Brennan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many murder cases were brought to trial in each police force area in England and Wales between 1982 and 2003 which resulted in *(a)* conviction, *(b)* acquittal and *(c)* conviction later overturned on appeal. [152535]

**Paul Goggins:** The latest figures for England and Wales are given in Home Office Statistical Bulletin number 01/04, "Crime in England and Wales 2002–03: Supplementary Volume 1: Homicide and Gun Crime", a copy of which is available from the House of Commons Library or internet site: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/hosbpubs1.html

Information on appeals is not held centrally.

In England and Wales from January 1982 to March 2003, 13,897 suspects were indicted for homicide. Of these, 10,387 were convicted of homicide and 2,666 were acquitted.

### National Offender Management Service

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how he will ensure that links with criminal justice boards, crime reduction partnerships and multi-agency public protection panel arrangements are retained under the arrangements for the National Offender Management Service. [151622]

**Paul Goggins** *[holding answer 4 February 2004]:* Inter-agency work to protect the public and encourage rehabilitation will be a central element of the work of the National Offender Management Service.

The details of the National Offender Management Service and its links with Criminal Justice Boards, Crime Reduction Partnerships and Multi Agency Protection Panels will be developed as part of the implementation of the Reducing Crime-Changing Lives reforms.

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what lines of accountability will lie between local offender managers and regional offender managers under the arrangements for the National Offender Management Service. [151623]

**Paul Goggins** *[holding answer 4 February 2004]:* The structure of the National Offender Management Service is yet to be finalised. As part of the implementation of the Reducing Crime—Changing Lives reforms the implementation team will consider the lines of accountability between local offender managers and regional offender managers which will be subject to full consultation with staff and unions.

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether human resource and finance facilities for probation areas will be provided at regional level under the arrangements for the National Offender Management Service. [152204]

**Paul Goggins** *[holding answer 4 February 2004]:* The structure of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), including the human resource and finance facilities, is not yet finalised. The implementation team will work closely with staff and unions to get the structure of NOMS right. No decisions have been made at this stage about changes to numbers terms of service or work locations and there will be full consultation on any proposed changes.

### Nurses

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what reasons nurses working in the UK with a work permit are barred from registering with a nursing agency. [153102]

**Beverley Hughes:** Work permits are not issued to employment agencies and similar businesses for any employment because we wish to ensure that the employer is directly responsible for the duties of the post for which the work permit is issued. Work supplementary to that for which the permit is issued is also subject to this restriction. Overseas nurses are free to use the services of employment agencies and similar types of business to search for further employment opportunities, but it is for the employer, not the agency, that should apply for the work permit.

### Operation Puma

**Mr. Hawkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the *(a)* policing and *(b)* criminal justice implications of the collapse of the London City Bond and Operation Puma cases. [154654]

**Caroline Flint** *[holding answer 12 February 2004]:* Her Majesty's Customs and Excise are implementing the recommendations of the report by Mr. Justice Butterfield which reviewed a number of cases including those two. The Government have been reviewing the process for securing prosecutions in organised crime cases generally, and proposals will appear in a consultation document on tackling organised crime which we intend to publish shortly.

### Persistent Offenders

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will change the definition of persistent offenders, with particular reference to rural areas. [151941]

**Paul Goggins:** The national Persistent Offender Scheme that came into effect in April 2003 defines a Core Persistent Offender as "someone who is 18 or over and has been convicted of six or more recordable offences in the last 12 months". The definition was developed in order to provide an objective test of persistent offending that can be applied across the criminal justice system. However the scheme recognises that there are individuals who do not meet this definition, who may be suspected of being prolific offenders on the basis of local intelligence. Therefore Local Criminal Justice Areas have the flexibility also to apply persistent offender strategies to "Local Persistent Offenders", identified on the basis of local intelligence and priorities, which could include issues of particular relevance to rural areas.

## Police

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many accidents involving police cars there were *(a)* in total and *(b)* involving fatalities in each year since 1997 (i) in England and Wales and (ii) in each police force area; and if he will make a statement. [155062]

**Caroline Flint:** The total number of accidents involving police vehicles in England and Wales is given in the table. The number of police and civilian fatalities arising from police responses to immediate/emergency calls and pursuits are also separately shown.

The Government welcome the recognition by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) that they must work to reduce the number of collisions involving police vehicles.

Measures already in place include a new police driver training course, launched in December 2000, which introduced a universal standard for driving in England and Wales. An essential element of the course is that officers should recognise the need to give priority to public safety above all other considerations such as attending an incident or apprehending a suspect.

Where pursuits are concerned, there is a nationally agreed ACPO Pursuit Code of Practice and it is already police policy to consider continuously the consequences of a pursuit and whether to break it off.

ACPO are working closely with the Police Complaints Authority (PCA) to identify how police vehicle collisions might be avoided. Useful information can be expected from the increasing use by forces of Automatic Data Recorders (ADR) and Vehicle Accident Data Recorders (VADR). These operate in a similar way to aircraft black boxes, providing data on such issues as speed, gear changes, breaking, and the use of blue lights.

*Total police vehicle accidents*

*Values*

| *Forces* | *Time periods* | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *1996–97* | *1997–98* | *1998–99* | *1999–2000* | *2000–01* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* |
| England and Wales | 16,908 | 16,946 | 17,338 | 18,068 | 19,266 | 16,826 | 18,644 |
| Avon and Somerset | 507 | 477 | 531 | 457 | 394 | 616 | 647 |
| Bedfordshire | 205 | 320 | 161 | 215 | 170 | 167 | 196 |
| Cambridgeshire | 256 | 303 | 238 | 200 | 225 | 183 | 217 |
| Cheshire | 194 | 111 | 142 | 112 | 124 | 175 | 167 |
| City of London | 80 | 62 | 64 | 56 | 90 | 30 | 142 |
| Cleveland | 75 | 86 | 44 | 62 | 92 | [1]— | 186 |
| Cumbria | 116 | 133 | 87 | 144 | 152 | 182 | 447 |
| Derbyshire | 320 | 383 | 399 | 355 | 379 | 399 | 449 |
| Devon and Cornwall | 250 | 308 | 337 | 347 | 352 | 369 | 184 |
| Dorset | 119 | 139 | 129 | 143 | 166 | 188 | [1]— |
| Durham | 159 | 142 | 184 | 157 | 182 | 178 | 204 |
| Dyfed-Powys | 75 | 42 | 40 | 88 | 162 | 198 | 414 |
| Essex | 391 | 396 | 406 | 392 | 446 | 392 | 203 |
| Gloucestershire | 196 | 147 | 163 | 228 | 181 | 124 | 1,038 |
| Greater Manchester | 957 | 774 | 933 | 981 | 1,108 | 1,050 | 160 |
| Gwent | 195 | 182 | 217 | 194 | 179 | 199 | 543 |
| Hampshire | 555 | 594 | 560 | 665 | 622 | 617 | 344 |
| Hertfordshire | 223 | 196 | 197 | 221 | 307 | 310 | 150 |
| Humberside | 188 | 207 | 236 | 162 | 198 | 194 | 732 |
| Kent | 423 | 546 | 448 | 427 | 507 | 506 | 510 |
| Lancashire | 449 | 268 | 160 | 417 | 331 | 244 | 180 |
| Leicestershire | 214 | 173 | 186 | 168 | 161 | 145 | 131 |
| Lincolnshire | 71 | 94 | 185 | 149 | 141 | 114 | 38 |
| Merseyside | 320 | 414 | 262 | 335 | 260 | 325 | 240 |
| Metropolitan Police | 3,783 | 4,045 | 1,645 | 4,643 | 5,375 | 3,657 | 4,910 |
| Norfolk | 192 | 211 | 184 | 221 | 224 | 202 | 231 |
| Northamptonshire | 134 | 139 | 91 | 68 | 147 | 86 | 121 |
| Northumbria | [1]— | 489 | 472 | 510 | 445 | 432 | 513 |
| North Wales | 95 | 48 | 46 | 46 | 77 | 92 | 60 |
| North Yorkshire | 131 | 140 | 140 | 102 | 167 | 117 | 397 |
| Nottinghamshire | 298 | 278 | 225 | 211 | 213 | 240 | 316 |
| South Wales | 597 | 563 | 651 | 663 | 873 | 833 | 917 |

*Total police vehicle accidents*

*Values*

| *Forces* | *Time periods* | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *1996–97* | *1997–98* | *1998–99* | *1999–2000* | *2000–01* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* |
| South Yorkshire | 292 | 357 | 400 | 367 | 279 | 216 | 316 |
| Staffordshire | 557 | 644 | 646 | 527 | 462 | 298 | 306 |
| Suffolk | 136 | 122 | 168 | 143 | 137 | 142 | 119 |
| Surrey | 270 | 108 | 108 | 42 | 148 | 103 | 320 |
| Sussex | 401 | 282 | 223 | 567 | 462 | [redacted] | 470 |
| Thames Valley | 888 | 688 | 918 | 1,045 | 1,063 | 1,127 | 992 |
| Warwickshire | 137 | 135 | 123 | 136 | 132 | 135 | 119 |
| West Mercia | 175 | 270 | 260 | 201 | 234 | 202 | 293 |
| West Midlands | 1,503 | 1,367 | 1,210 | 1,220 | 1,286 | 1,360 | [redacted] |
| West Yorkshire | 728 | 500 | 453 | 629 | 553 | 619 | 672 |
| Wiltshire | 53 | 63 | 66 | 52 | 60 | 60 | 50 |

*Police fatal road traffic accidents immediate/pursuit*

*Values*

| *Forces* | *Time periods* | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *1996–97* | *1997–98* | *1998–99* | *1999–2000* | *2000–01* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* |
| England and Wales | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Avon and Somerset | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bedfordshire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cambridgeshire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cheshire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| City of London | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cleveland | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cumbria | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Derbyshire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Devon and Cornwall | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dorset | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Durham | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dyfed-Powys | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Essex | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Gloucestershire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Greater Manchester | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Gwent | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Hampshire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Hertfordshire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Humberside | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Kent | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Lancashire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Leicestershire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Lincolnshire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Merseyside | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Metropolitan Police | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Norfolk | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Northamptonshire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Northumbria | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| North Wales | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| North Yorkshire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Nottinghamshire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| South Wales | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| South Yorkshire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Staffordshire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Suffolk | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Surrey | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sussex | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Thames Valley | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Warwickshire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| West Mercia | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| West Midlands | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| West Yorkshire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Wiltshire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

*Civilian fatal police vehicle accidents immediate/pursuit*

*Values*

| *Forces* | *Time periods* 1996–97 | 1997–98 | 1998–99 | 1999–2000 | 2000–01 | 2001–02 | 2002–03 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| England and Wales | 15 | 15 | 10 | 11 | 18 | 23 | 20 |
| Avon and Somerset | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Bedfordshire | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Cambridgeshire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cheshire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| City of London | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | [1] |
| Cleveland | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cumbria | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Derbyshire | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Devon and Cornwall | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dorset | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | [1] |
| Durham | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Dyfed-Powys | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Essex | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Gloucestershire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 |
| Greater Manchester | 2 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 0 |
| Gwent | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Hampshire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | [1] |
| Hertfordshire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Humberside | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Kent | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Lancashire | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | [1] |
| Leicestershire | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Lincolnshire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Merseyside | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Metropolitan Police | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 4 |
| Norfolk | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Northamptonshire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Northumbria | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| North Wales | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| North Yorkshire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | [1] |
| Nottinghamshire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| South Wales | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| South Yorkshire | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Staffordshire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Suffolk | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Surrey | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sussex | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Thames Valley | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Warwickshire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| West Mercia | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| West Midlands | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | [1] |
| West Yorkshire | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Wiltshire | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

[1] Indicate data not yet submitted by police force.

*Notes:*

1. The information is provided by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, to which forces submit statistical returns.
2. All figures are for financial years.
3. The figures for police vehicle accidents include all incidents in which a police vehicle sustains damage, including those where no other vehicle is involved. They encompass a very wide range of incidents from the very serious to the trivial, such as a scratched vehicle in a police yard.
4. Details of the number of fatalities involving police vehicles engaged in activities other than immediate/emergency response or pursuit are not centrally available.

### Prison and Probation Service

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has considered reclassifying the Prison and Probation Service as an emergency service. [152714]

**Paul Goggins:** The Government have not considered reclassifying the Prison and Probation Service as an emergency service and have no plans to do so.

### Prisons

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what factors have been identified as accounting for the increase of self-harming incidents in prisons between 1999 and 2003; and if he will make a statement. [154176]

**Paul Goggins** *[holding answer 10 February 2004]:* In December 2002 new procedures for reporting self-injury were introduced in prisons in England and Wales. The evidence suggests that much of the increase in reported self-harm in 2003 may result from this rather than an actual increase in the incidence of self-harm.

Beyond that, the reasons for any increase in prisoner self-harm may be related to the fact that the prison population includes a large number of prisoners with a combination of psychiatric disorders, alcohol and drug dependency, family background and relationship problems, histories of self-harm and previous abuse, all of which raise their risk of suicide and self-harm. Additionally, the current operating environment is very challenging because an increased prisoner population and movement of prisoners puts a strain on resources and makes it more challenging to prevent suicides and self-harm. Long-term trends suggest that self-inflicted deaths have been increasing since 1988, broadly in line with the increase in prison population.

A number of intervention strategies have been introduced into establishments for people who self-harm. These include counselling, support groups, and specialised psychological interventions. A network of establishments has been set up to develop interventions, facilitate evaluation and share good practice, and guidance to staff on managing people who self-harm has been circulated to establishments.

### Prisons and Probation Ombudsman

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the costs, and what extra resources will be provided, to the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman's office when he takes on responsibility for investigating deaths of prisoners, residents of probation hostels and detainees in immigration removal centres from April. [150725]

**Paul Goggins** *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* Provisional estimates of the costs are in the region of £1.5 million a year. The Ombudsman's office is working on the detail of the new arrangements in consultation with my officials. The necessary extra resources will be provided as part of the Ombudsman's funding for the next financial year. In the meantime, we have provided an additional £100,000 for start-up costs in the current year.

### Released Prisoners

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will extend the length of time in which released prisoners can apply for Housing Benefit. [148895]

**Mr. Pond:** I have been asked to reply.

All customers, including those leaving prison, may make a Housing Benefit claim up to 13 weeks in advance. Where there is continuous good cause for delay customers may also apply for their Housing Benefit to be backdated. We have no plans to change these arrangements at present.

Jobcentre Plus currently assist released prisoners by waiving labour market conditions for the first seven days of their claim and by providing pre-arranged work focused interviews through the Freshstart initiative. As many Housing Benefit applications are linked to claims for Jobseekers Allowance or Income Support, this helps to ensure that Housing Benefit claims are made as early as possible.

### Royal Pardons

**Mr. Kilfoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many royal pardons of convicted criminals were agreed by the Home Secretary in each year between 1983 and 2003. [154575]

**Mr. Blunkett:** The two forms of the Royal Prerogative of Mercy (RPM) used to grant pardons to convicted criminals are:

(1) Free pardon ("free" in this context means that the pardon is free from any conditions); and

(2) Remission (the mitigation of punishment by releasing a prisoner from having to serve some or all of the remainder of his sentence; or releasing one who has been subjected to a monetary penalty from the obligation to pay it or part of it).

The figures from 1992 are in the following table. Figures for earlier years are not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

| | *Free Pardons* | *Remission*[1] |
|---|---|---|
| 1992 | 19 | 42 |
| 1993 | 22 | 34 |
| 1994 | 12 | 29 |
| 1995 | 12 | 1 |
| 1996 | 1 | 4 |
| 1997 | 0 | 3 |
| 1998 | 0 | 0 |
| 1999 | 0 | 0 |
| 2000 | 0 | 2 |
| 2001 | 0 | 0 |
| 2002 | 0 | 3 |
| 2003 | 0 | 0 |

*Note:*
These figures do not include the occasional use of RPM for small periods of remission to reward meritorious acts in prison (e.g. extinguishing a fire).

### Russian Citizens (Asylum)

**Mr. Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Russian citizens have applied for political asylum in the UK during the past five years; and how many have been granted political asylum. [154685]

**Beverley Hughes:** The table shows the number of asylum applications and initial decisions for nationals of Russia (excluding dependants) in 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002 and from January to September 2003, the latest period for which published data is available. Initial decisions do not necessarily relate to applications received in the same period.

Information on asylum applications and decisions is published quarterly. The next publication covering the fourth quarter of 2003, and provisional full year data, will be available on 24 February 2004 on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

*Initial decisions on asylum applications[1,2,3] received in the United kingdom, excluding dependants, by year, nationals of Russia*

*Principal applicants*

| | | | *Initial decisions* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | *Cases considered under normal procedures* | | | | |
| | | | *Grants of:* | | | | |
| | *Applications received* | *Total initial decisions* | *Asylum* | *ELR* | *HP* | *DL* | *Total refusals[4]* |
| 1999 | 685 | 305 | * | 5 | N/a | N/a | 55 |
| 2000 | 1,000 | 1,195 | 25 | 45 | N/a | N/a | 900 |
| 2001[8] | 450 | 895 | 20 | 40 | N/a | N/a | 840 |
| 2002[9] | 295 | 355 | 15 | 20 | N/a | N/a | 320 |
| Q1 2003[9] | 70 | 95 | * | 5 | N/a | N/a | 85 |
| Q2 2003[9] | 65 | 115 | * | N/a | * | 5 | 110 |
| Q3 2003[9] | 65 | 80 | * | N/a | — | 5 | 75 |

*Initial decisions on asylum applications[1,2,3] received in the United Kingdom, excluding dependants, by year, nationals of Russia*

*Principal applicants*

| | *Backlog clearance exercise* | |
|---|---|---|
| | *Grants of ELR under backlog criteria[5,6]* | *Non compliance refusals under backlog criteria[5,7]* |
| 1999 | 190 | 50 |
| 2000 | 185 | 35 |
| 2001[8] | n/a | n/a |
| 2002[9] | n/a | n/a |
| Q1 2003[9] | n/a | n/a |
| Q2 2003[9] | n/a | n/a |
| Q3 2003[9] | n/a | n/a |

[1] Figures rounded to the nearest 5, with * = 1 or 2

[2] Decision figures do not necessarily relate to applications received in the same period

[3] Information is of initial determination decisions, excluding the outcome of appeals or other subsequent decisions

[4] May include some refusals under non compliance grounds

[5] Cases decided under pragmatic measures aimed at reducing the pre 1996 asylum backlog

[6] May include a small number of cases where asylum has been granted

[7] May include a small number of cases where the application has been refused on substantive grounds

[8] Revised figures

[9] Not applicable

### Seaside Towns

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many and what percentage of crimes in each ward, in each principal seaside town in England and Wales were drug-related, in the latest month for which figures are available, with figures for Welsh seaside town clusters disaggregated; and if he will make a statement. [154943]

**Caroline Flint:** There is currently no measure of drug-related offending at the local level. Existing data sources such as convictions, and recorded crime statistics are not available at ward level and do not contain information about offenders' drug use.

### Sentencing Guidelines Council

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the work of the Sentencing Guidelines Council. [152840]

**Paul Goggins:** The role of the Sentencing Guidelines Council is to issue guidance on all aspects of sentencing so as to promote consistent and just sentencing by the courts within the framework provided by Parliament. Recruitment of members is currently under way.

### Tagging

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the case for *(a)* using tagging with an intensive supervision order and *(b)* making tagged offenders who can afford it pay a rental for tagging equipment. [150180]

**Paul Goggins:** The Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (ISSP) operates within the supervision order for juveniles. The programme is being evaluated by Oxford university and the evaluation report with 12 month reconviction data is now expected in April 2004. Electronic tagging provides the main form of monitoring of the offender on ISSP. Other forms of monitoring include voice verification.

Electronic monitoring is also used with curfew orders and tagging on bail as well as early release from custody. Evaluation of tagging for juveniles on curfew orders has been published. Progress is also being made on developing the Intensive Control and Change Programme with tagging for 18 to 20-year-old adults and we are extending the pilot areas.

We have no proposals to charge juvenile or adult offenders for tagging. The financial benefits of charging offenders for use of tagging equipment are likely to be small and offset by administration and enforcement costs. Tagging is already a cost effective alternative to custody.

### Visas

**Mr. David:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans the Government have to *(a)* re-examine and *(b)* change visa arrangements for US nationals entering the United Kingdom. [153299]

**Beverley Hughes:** The Government have no plans to re-examine or change the entry clearance requirements for US nationals entering the United Kingdom, although all such requirements are kept under review.

**Mr. David:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what *(a)* the arrangements for the issuing of visas and *(b)* eligibility for visas are for (i) US citizens and (ii) other non-EU and non-Commonwealth citizens entering the United Kingdom. [153300]

**Beverley Hughes:** Arrangements for the issuing of visas are specific to the individual visa issuing Post and are influenced by factors such as the level of demand, and local security situation. Applicants may lodge applications online, in person or by courier service or post. Visa sections may return successful applicants' passports by courier service, or return their endorsed passport to them in person. In the US the visa issuing Posts in Chicago, Los Angeles and New York accept applications made on-line, by post or in person. Visa sections in non-EU or non-Commonwealth countries may operate any one or more of these methods.

US Nationals are not visa nationals and are therefore only obliged to apply for entry clearance to the UK in specific categories, as set out in the Immigration Rules or if coming to the UK for longer than six months. Visa nationals, which include certain non-EU and non-Commonwealth citizens, are required to obtain entry clearance to enter the UK for any period or purpose. Whether applying for entry clearance or not, the same conditions, as set out in the Immigration Rules, apply to all non-EU or non-Commonwealth nationals.

**Mr. Best:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to reduce the time taken by his Department to respond to requests for information made by the Visa Section of the British High Commission in Harare about visa applicants. [149486]

**Beverley Hughes:** Immigration and Nationality Department officials are working closely with UKvisas to ensure that all requests for information are handled promptly, effectively and securely by those involved. On 10 January this year a new system was introduced making greater use of electronic transmissions. This will also provide an audit trail for each request for information. UKvisas and the relevant Home Office Departments are constantly reviewing the system. Work is currently under way to identify further improvements.

### Wetherby Young Offenders Institution

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 14 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 762W, on HMYOI Wetherby, what assessment he has made of the reasons for the increases in costs per prisoner and cost per prisoner place; and what the *(a)* cost and *(b)* increase in cost is per (i) prisoner and (ii) prisoner place. [151692]

**Paul Goggins:** I refer the hon. member to the answer I gave to question (151131) on 9 February 2004 which set out the reasons for increases in the cost per prisoner and cost per prisoner place at HMYOI Wetherby between 1998–99 and 2002–03. The costs themselves were set out in my previous answers to questions 145649 and 145650.

### Work Permits

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many work permits were issued in 2002. [145413]

**Beverley Hughes:** Under the work permit arrangements, 136,151 approvals were issued during the calendar year 2002. This figure includes initial approvals and approvals of applications to extend and to change existing work permits. It represents a 13 per cent. increase on the numbers of approved in 2001 and a 203 per cent. increase since 1997. These increases are part of our overall policy of expanding legal migration where it meets the needs of the economy while bearing down on illegal migration.

**Mr. Baron:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many work permits were granted to health care professionals to work in the United Kingdom in each of the last 10 years, broken down by *(a)* country of origin and *(b)* profession. [151609]

**Beverley Hughes:** *[holding answer 29 January 2004]:* The tables provide figures for the numbers of work permits granted to health care professionals between 1995 and 2003 (the period for which information is available) broken down by country of origin, and between 2000 and 2003 broken down by occupation.

A breakdown by occupations for the years 1995 to 1999 can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

*All health and medical work permit applications approved, broken down by country of origin: 1995*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| India | 209 |
| Mauritius | 157 |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 151 |
| Nigeria | 116 |
| United States of America | 112 |
| South Africa | 102 |
| Australia | 100 |
| Zimbabwe | 76 |
| Pakistan | 68 |
| Malaysia | 57 |
| Others | 475 |
| Total | 1,623 |

*1996*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| India | 276 |
| Mauritius | 200 |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 192 |
| South Africa | 190 |
| Australia | 189 |
| Zimbabwe | 146 |
| Nigeria | 133 |
| United States of America | 127 |
| Pakistan | 96 |
| Malaysia | 82 |
| Others | 650 |
| Total | 2,281 |

*1997*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| South Africa | 420 |
| Australia | 357 |
| India | 318 |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 198 |
| Nigeria | 196 |
| United States of America | 187 |
| Mauritius | 162 |
| Zimbabwe | 142 |
| Pakistan | 112 |
| Canada | 102 |
| Others | 926 |
| Total | 3,120 |

*1998*

| | Number |
|---|---|
| South Africa | 753 |
| India | 457 |
| Australia | 438 |
| Nigeria | 338 |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 278 |
| United States of America | 232 |
| Zimbabwe | 225 |
| New Zealand | 192 |
| Mauritius | 187 |
| Malaysia | 178 |
| Others | 1,465 |
| Total | 4,743 |

*1999*

| | Number |
|---|---|
| South Africa | 2,024 |
| Philippines | 1,770 |
| India | 916 |
| Australia | 720 |
| Nigeria | 688 |
| Zimbabwe | 581 |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 501 |
| United States of America | 376 |
| Malaysia | 272 |
| New Zealand | 259 |
| Others | 2,629 |
| Total | 10,736 |

*2000*

| | Number |
|---|---|
| Philippines | 6,592 |
| South Africa | 2,880 |
| India | 1,939 |
| Zimbabwe | 1,149 |
| Nigeria | 1,046 |
| Australia | 827 |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 471 |
| United States of America | 401 |
| Pakistan | 391 |
| New Zealand | 390 |
| Others | 3,874 |
| Total | 19,960 |

*2001*

| | Number |
|---|---|
| Philippines | 10,017 |
| India | 4,137 |
| South Africa | 4,132 |
| Zimbabwe | 1,959 |
| Nigeria | 1,329 |
| Australia | 1,097 |
| Pakistan | 799 |
| Ghana | 565 |
| China Peoples Republic of | 539 |
| New Zealand | 488 |
| Others | 5,514 |
| Total | 30,576 |

*2002*

| | Number |
|---|---|
| Philippines | 11,143 |
| India | 6,482 |
| South Africa | 5,728 |
| Zimbabwe | 2,646 |
| Nigeria | 1,814 |
| Australia | 1,241 |
| Pakistan | 861 |
| China Peoples Republic of | 713 |
| Ghana | 631 |
| Bulgaria | 599 |
| Others | 6,598 |
| Total | 38,456 |

*2003*

| | Number |
|---|---|
| Philippines | 12,014 |
| India | 9,835 |
| South Africa | 5,880 |
| Zimbabwe | 2,825 |
| Nigeria | 1,510 |
| Australia | 1,292 |
| China Peoples Republic of | 1,068 |
| Pakistan | 964 |
| Ghana | 850 |
| Bulgaria | 787 |
| Others | 7,417 |
| Total | 44,442 |

*All health and medical work permit applications approved, broken down by occupation: 2000*

| | Number |
|---|---|
| Nurse | 14,123 |
| Medical practitioner | 543 |
| Pharmacist | 411 |
| Researcher | 243 |
| Dental surgeon | 162 |
| Physiotherapist | 157 |
| Assistant dentist | 140 |
| Veterinary surgeon | 114 |
| Psychiatrist | 99 |
| Occupational therapist | 90 |
| Others | 3,879 |
| Total | 19,961 |

*2001*

| | Number |
|---|---|
| Nurse | 22,414 |
| Medical practitioner | 852 |
| Doctor | 762 |
| Pharmacist | 471 |
| Researcher | 267 |
| Physiotherapist | 261 |
| Dental surgeon | 218 |
| Psychiatrist | 188 |
| Radiographer | 155 |
| Occupational therapist | 135 |
| Others | 4,854 |
| Total | 30,577 |

*2002*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Nurse | 25,926 |
| Doctor | 1,948 |
| Medical practitioner | 524 |
| Pharmacist | 443 |
| Researcher | 378 |
| Physiotherapist | 357 |
| Radiographer | 352 |
| Dental surgeon | 238 |
| Psychiatrist | 213 |
| Occupational therapist | 194 |
| Others | 7,884 |
| Total | 38,457 |

*2003*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Nurse | 27,171 |
| Doctor | 2,947 |
| Pharmacist | 409 |
| Physiotherapist | 389 |
| Radiographer | 384 |
| Medical practitioner | 340 |
| Researcher | 339 |
| Social worker | 208 |
| Dental surgeon | 201 |
| Psychiatrist | 189 |
| Others | 11,866 |
| Total | 44,443 |

**David Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will break down, by occupation, work permits awarded in each year since 1997. [154150]

**Beverley Hughes:** Figures for the primary occupations for which the most work permit applications have been issued since 1997 are given in the following tables:

*1997*

| *Occupation* | *Total number issued* |
|---|---|
| Trainee | 4,529 |
| Manager | 2,579 |
| Manager (Unspecified) | 1,943 |
| Systems Analyst | 1,768 |
| Staff Nurse | 1,527 |
| Other Financial Occupations | 1,331 |
| Company Director | 1,209 |
| Other Medical Occupations | 1,007 |
| Other Professional Sportsmen | 908 |
| Musician | 839 |
| Others | 25,204 |

*1998*

| *Occupation* | *Total number issued* |
|---|---|
| Trainee | 5,649 |
| Systems Analyst | 2,446 |
| Manager | 2,254 |
| Staff Nurse | 1,782 |
| Manager (Unspecified) | 1,543 |
| Company Director | 1,162 |
| Other Financial Occupations | 1,102 |
| Other Medical Occupations | 1,083 |
| Musician | 846 |
| Other Professional Sportsmen | 723 |
| Others | 33,022 |

*1999*

| *Occupation* | *Total number issued* |
|---|---|
| Trainee | 3,957 |
| Staff Nurse | 2,679 |
| Nurse | 2,406 |
| Other Managerial Related Occupation | 2,195 |
| Manager | 1,871 |
| Other Medical Occupations | 1,356 |
| Systems Analyst | 1,284 |
| Manager (Unspecified) | 998 |
| Other IT Related Occupation | 905 |
| Accountant | 899 |
| Others | 39,695 |

*2000*

| *Occupation* | *Total number issued* |
|---|---|
| Nurse | 15,040 |
| Other Managerial Related Occupations | 14,971 |
| Other IT Related Occupations | 14,971 |
| Other Financial Occupations | 4,405 |
| Other Engineering Occupations | 4,346 |
| System Analyst | 3,606 |
| Other Health/Medical Occupations | 3,347 |
| Researcher | 3,246 |
| Software Engineer | 3,006 |
| Accountant | 2,531 |
| Others | 21,417 |

*2001*

| *Occupation* | *Total number issued* |
|---|---|
| Nurse | 24,263 |
| Other Managerial Related Occupations | 13,308 |
| Other IT Related Occupations | 9,220 |
| Teacher (School/College) | 5,880 |
| Software Engineer | 5,603 |
| Other Engineering Occupations | 4,555 |
| System Analyst | 4,435 |
| Other Financial Occupations | 4,421 |
| Researcher | 3,931 |
| Other Health/Medical Occupations | 3,801 |
| Others | 37,970 |

*2002*

| *Occupation* | *Total number issued* |
|---|---|
| Nurse | 28,642 |
| Other Managerial Related Occupations | 12,670 |
| Teacher (School/College) | 8,353 |
| Other Health/Medical Occupations | 7,004 |
| Other IT Related Occupations | 6,935 |
| Software Engineer | 6,768 |
| Chef | 5,724 |
| Other Engineering Occupations | 5,140 |
| Researcher | 4,140 |
| Analyst Programmer | 4,008 |
| Others | 42,951 |

*2003*[1]

| *Occupation* | *Total number issued* |
|---|---|
| Nurse | 22,055 |
| Other Managerial Related Occupations | 10,049 |
| Other Health/Medical Occupations | 7,711 |
| Chef | 5,723 |
| Teacher (School/College) | 5,342 |
| Other IT Related Occupations | 5,146 |
| Software Engineer | 3,905 |

*2003*[1]

| *Occupation* | *Total number issued* |
|---|---|
| Other Engineering Occupations | 3,519 |
| Researcher | 3,098 |
| Other Financial Occupations | 2,927 |
| Others | 35,510 |

[1] To 30 September 2003.

**Mr. Baron:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many work permits were awarded to health workers *(a)* from each of the top 10 countries of origin and *(b)* in total in each of the last 10 years. [154601]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer 12 February 2004]*: The tables provide figures for the number of permits granted to healthcare professionals between 1995 and 2003 (the period for which information is available). The tables give details of the number of applications approved for each of the top 10 countries of origin and the total of approved applications for each year.

*Health and medical permit applications approved— top 10 countries of origin and total approved applications by year: 1995*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| India | 209 |
| Mauritius | 157 |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 151 |
| Nigeria | 116 |
| United States of America | 112 |
| South Africa | 102 |
| Australia | 100 |
| Zimbabwe | 76 |
| Pakistan | 68 |
| Malaysia | 57 |
| Total | 1,623 |

*1996*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| India | 276 |
| Mauritius | 200 |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 192 |
| South Africa | 190 |
| Australia | 189 |
| Zimbabwe | 146 |
| Nigeria | 133 |
| United States of America | 127 |
| Pakistan | 96 |
| Malaysia | 82 |
| Total | 2,281 |

*1997*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| South Africa | 420 |
| Australia | 357 |
| India | 318 |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 198 |
| Nigeria | 196 |
| United States of America | 187 |
| Mauritius | 162 |
| Zimbabwe | 142 |
| Pakistan | 112 |
| Canada | 102 |
| Total | 3,120 |

*1998*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| South Africa | 753 |
| India | 457 |
| Australia | 438 |
| Nigeria | 338 |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 278 |
| United States of America | 232 |
| Zimbabwe | 225 |
| New Zealand | 192 |
| Mauritius | 187 |
| Malaysia | 178 |
| Total | 4,743 |

*1999*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| South Africa | 2,024 |
| Philippines | 1,770 |
| India | 916 |
| Australia | 720 |
| Nigeria | 688 |
| Zimbabwe | 581 |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 501 |
| United States of America | 376 |
| Malaysia | 272 |
| New Zealand | 259 |
| Total | 10,736 |

*2000*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Philippines | 6,592 |
| South Africa | 2,880 |
| India | 1,939 |
| Zimbabwe | 1,149 |
| Nigeria | 1,046 |
| Australia | 827 |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 471 |
| United States of America | 401 |
| Pakistan | 391 |
| New Zealand | 390 |
| Total | 19,961 |

*2001*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Philippines | 10,017 |
| India | 4,137 |
| South Africa | 4,132 |
| Zimbabwe | 1,959 |
| Nigeria | 1,329 |
| Australia | 1,097 |
| Pakistan | 799 |
| Ghana | 565 |
| Peoples Republic of China | 539 |
| New Zealand | 488 |
| Total | 30,576 |

*2002*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Philippines | 11,143 |
| India | 6,482 |
| South Africa | 5,727 |
| Zimbabwe | 2,647 |
| Nigeria | 1,814 |
| Australia | 1,241 |
| Pakistan | 861 |
| Peoples Republic of China | 713 |
| Ghana | 631 |
| Bulgaria | 599 |
| Total | 38,457 |

*2003*[1]

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Philippines | 8,749 |
| India | 7,367 |
| South Africa | 4,422 |
| Zimbabwe | 2,050 |
| Nigeria | 1,128 |
| Australia | 1,034 |
| Peoples Republic of China | 732 |
| Pakistan | 723 |
| Ghana | 653 |
| Bulgaria | 532 |
| Total | 33,058 |

[1] Figures are only available for the period January to September 2003.

**Zimbabwe**

**Mr. Malins:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people sought asylum from Zimbabwe in the last 12 months; how many applications *(a)* succeeded and *(b)* failed; how many failed applicants have been removed; and how many were white Zimbabwean farmers in each case. [154041]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer 1 February 2004]:* The following tables show the number of asylum applications, initial decisions and appeal outcomes between October 2002 and September 2003 and the number of removals between October 2002 and June 2003, the latest published figures available, for nationals of Zimbabwe. Initial decisions do not necessarily relate to applications made in the same period. Appeals do not necessarily relate to refusals of grants of asylum, humanitarian protection or discretionary leave made in the same period. Removals do not necessarily relate to initial decisions or appeal outcomes made in the same period.

Information on the ethnic origin or occupation of asylum applicants is unavailable. The requested information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost by examination of individual case records.

Information on asylum applications, initial decisions on asylum applications, appeal outcomes and removals by nationality is published in quarterly web pages and in the annual statistical bulletin Asylum Statistics United Kingdom, available from the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html. The next quarterly publication, covering the fourth quarter of 2003 and provisional full year data, will be published on 24 February.

*Asylum applications*[1] *received in the United Kingdom, excluding dependants, and initial decisions*[2]*, October 2002 to September 2003, nationals of Zimbabwe*

*Principal applicants*

| | *Applications* | | | *Decisions* | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | *Grants of:* | | | | |
| *Zimbabwe* | *Total* | *Port* | *In country* | *Total decisions* | *Asylum* | *ELR* | *HP* | *DL* | *Total refusals* |
| *2002* | | | | | | | | | |
| October | 1,455 | 1,170 | 280 | 705 | 275 | 10 | n/a | n/a | 420 |
| November | 965 | 610 | 360 | 855 | 315 | 10 | n/a | n/a | 530 |
| December | 320 | 50 | 270 | 770 | 295 | 10 | n/a | n/a | 465 |
| *2003* | | | | | | | | | |
| January | 495 | 60 | 430 | 400 | 125 | 5 | n/a | n/a | 270 |
| February | 285 | 70 | 215 | 295 | 85 | * | n/a | n/a | 210 |
| March | 295 | 85 | 210 | 490 | 135 | * | n/a | n/a | 350 |
| April | 335 | 80 | 260 | 310 | 90 | n/a | — | 5 | 215 |
| May | 230 | 75 | 155 | 430 | 95 | n/a | 5 | * | 330 |
| June | 250 | 55 | 190 | 405 | 90 | n/a | — | * | 315 |
| July | 285 | 55 | 230 | 285 | 50 | n/a | — | 5 | 230 |
| August | 185 | 25 | 160 | 270 | 35 | n/a | — | * | 235 |
| September | 240 | 60 | 180 | 345 | 50 | n/a | — | 5 | 290 |
| October 2002 to September 2003 total | 5,335 | 2,395 | 2,940 | 5,560 | 1,640 | 40 | 5 | 15 | 3,865 |

[1] Provisional figures rounded to nearest 5, with '*' = 1 or 2.

[2] Information is of initial determination decisions, excluding the outcome of appeals or other subsequent decisions.

*Note:*

n/a not applicable.

*Outcome of appeals[1,2] determined by adjudicators of the Immigration Appellate Authority, excluding dependants, October 2002 to September 2003, nationals of Zimbabwe*

*Number of principal appellants*

| | *Appeals determined by adjudicators*[2] | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *Allowed* | | *Dismissed* | | *Withdrawn* | |
| *Zimbabwe* | *Total* | *Total* | *As percentage of determined* | *Total* | *As percentage of determined* | *Total* | *As percentage of determined* |
| *2002* | | | | | | | |
| October | 285 | 105 | 37 | 160 | 57 | 20 | 7 |
| November | 255 | 90 | 35 | 150 | 59 | 15 | 6 |
| December | 265 | 100 | 38 | 155 | 59 | 5 | 3 |
| *2003* | | | | | | | |
| January | 300 | 85 | 28 | 205 | 68 | 15 | 4 |
| February | 205 | 70 | 34 | 125 | 60 | 10 | 5 |
| March | 310 | 100 | 32 | 195 | 63 | 15 | 6 |
| April | 380 | 115 | 31 | 250 | 66 | 10 | 3 |
| May | 405 | 115 | 29 | 265 | 65 | 25 | 6 |
| June | 315 | 95 | 30 | 205 | 64 | 20 | 6 |
| July | 405 | 145 | 36 | 245 | 60 | 15 | 4 |
| August | 305 | 70 | 23 | 220 | 72 | 15 | 5 |
| September | 400 | 105 | 26 | 280 | 70 | 15 | 4 |
| October 2002 to September 2003 total | 3,830 | 1,195 | 31 | 2,450 | 64 | 185 | 5 |

[1] Provisional figures rounded to nearest 5 (except percentages). Figures may not add up due to independent rounding. Data on appeal outcomes by nationality in this table are derived from electronic sources.
[2] Figures include cases withdrawn by the Home Office, as well as the appellant.

*Removals and voluntary[1] departures of principal asylum applicants (excluding dependants): October 2002 to June 2003*[2,3,4]

| *Zimbabwe* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| *2002* | |
| October | 10 |
| November | 10 |
| December | 10 |
| *2003* | |
| January | * |
| February | 5 |
| March | 10 |
| April | 5 |
| May | 5 |
| June | 5 |
| Total | 55 |

[1] Includes persons departing "voluntarily" after enforcement action had been initiated against them, persons leaving under assisted voluntary return programmes run by the International Organisation for Migration, and removals on safe third country grounds.
[2] Figures rounded to the nearest five with * denoting 1 or 2 and may not sum to total due to rounding.
[3] Data have been estimated due to data quality issues.
[4] Provisional figures.

**Mr. Malins:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his policy is on the removal of failed asylum seekers from Zimbabwe; and if he will make a statement. [154042]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer 10 February 2004]:* My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary announced in January 2002 a suspension of removals of failed asylum seekers to Zimbabwe. This was in response to concerns about the serious deterioration in the situation in Zimbabwe in the build-up to the presidential election held in March that year. We did not, at that time, regard it as unsafe to return failed asylum seekers to Zimbabwe, but in view of the rapidly changing conditions we considered that it would be appropriate not to enforce returns.

The Government's position is, as it has been since January 2002, that each asylum (and human rights) claim made by a Zimbabwean national will be considered on its individual merits in accordance with our obligations under the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Each application is considered against the background of the latest available country information including that obtained from and through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

We do of course recognise that conditions in Zimbabwe are such that there are individuals who are able to demonstrate a need for international protection. Where they meet the definition of a refugee in the 1951 convention, asylum is granted. There may also be individuals whose circumstances make them particularly vulnerable and who would engage our obligations under the ECHR. Where this is the case these individuals will be granted humanitarian protection or discretionary leave.

In the first nine months of last year, we granted asylum to 755 Zimbabweans and granted other forms of protection to 30 others. These statistics show that we are giving protection to the significant number of people who are found to be in need of it.

If an application is refused, there will be a right of appeal to the independent appellate authorities against that decision. Should a claim be refused and any appeal be unsuccessful that means that, for that individual, return to Zimbabwe would be safe. That is why we consider it reasonable to expect an individual in that position to leave voluntarily.

However, although it would be safe for failed asylum seekers to return to Zimbabwe, our view at present is that in the wider context of the Government's position on Zimbabwe, it would be inappropriate forcibly to return them at this time. The exceptions we would make to that policy are in cases where a failed asylum seeker

had a serious criminal record or their presence in the United Kingdom was not otherwise conducive to the public good. In such circumstances enforced return to Zimbabwe would be considered by Ministers on a case by case basis.

The policy remains under continuous review.

## HEALTH

### Road Safety

**Peter Bottomley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will commission a study of the effect of time delay in summoning help on fatalities and serious injuries following road crashes. [154918]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The Government's objective is to save more lives by providing faster, more responsive emergency ambulance services, with better trained staff; and to deliver improved patient assessment and treatment while making more use of technology.

Immediately life-threatening emergency calls (Category A) should be responded to 75 per cent. of the time within eight minutes, irrespective of location. Clinical evidence shows that achievement of the 75 per cent. standard could save as many as 1,800 lives each year.

Other emergency calls that are not life threatening should be responded to 95 per cent. of the time within 14 minutes in urban areas and 19 minutes in rural areas.

The latest information about ambulance performance is contained in the Department of Health Statistical Bulletin, "Ambulance Services, England 2002–03". Copies of the bulletin have been placed in the Library.

### Acute Care

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance his Department has published to ensure that patients who have received specialist acute care are referred for aftercare to a hospital close to the patients' homes; and if he will make a statement. [155152]

**Dr. Ladyman:** In January 2003, the Department published a good practice guide; "Discharge from hospital: pathway, process and practice". This puts the patient and their carer at the heart of the process for discharge from acute hospital care to other forms of care. February 2003 guidance on reconfiguration, "Keeping the NHS Local", also emphasises the need to expand the range of local options available from providers across the whole health and social care system.

### Acyl-CoA Dehydrogenase Deficiency

**Mr. Flook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the areas that will start screening newborn children for medium chain acyl-CoA dehydrogenase deficiency, broken down by primary care trust. [155171]

**Dr. Ladyman:** Six laboratories in England are screening newborn children for medium chain acyl-CoA dehydrogenase deficiency for 24 months. This is the first stage of a five-year programme to assess the potential impact of screening. The pilot covers children born in and around Birmingham, Sheffield, Leeds, Manchester, parts of London and South East counties.

### "Agenda for Change"

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish the evaluation undertaken so far by his Department into the pilot trials of "Agenda for Change". [153109]

**Mr. Hutton:** The United Kingdom Health Departments, national health service unions and NHS employer representatives are reviewing the emerging evidence from the 12 "Agenda for Change" early implementer sites. The conclusions from this review should be known from late spring. Some emerging lessons from the early implementer sites, designed to support other NHS organisations in their preparatory work, are available on the web-sites of the Department of Health and NHS Modernisation Agency.

### Anaesthetists

**Mr. Peter Atkinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the future demand for anaesthetists in Northumberland and Tyne and Wear Strategic Health Authority area following the introduction of the European Working Time Directive; and if he will make a statement on meeting the demand. [153811]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The Working Time Directive (WTD) is an integral part of modernising and improving services at all levels. Strategic health authorities (SHAs) are responsible for planning for implementation by national health service trusts of the WTD for doctors in training from August 2004, as part of their overall NHS planning.

It is for local organisations to determine the level of staff needed to implement the WTD and to deliver a quality service. Priority will be given to trusts facing WTD challenges in the allocation of an additional 1,500 locally funded specialist registrar training opportunities, subject to educational approval being obtained.

Figures from the September 2002 Department of Health census show that, in the Northumberland, Tyne and Wear SHA, there were 272 staff with a specialty in anaesthetics. Of these 138 were consultants. As part of the local delivery plans, the local health economy is planning an increase to 176.48 whole time equivalent consultants by 31 March 2006.

In addition to recruiting increased numbers of consultants, the NHS in Northumberland, Tyne and Wear is looking at new and innovative ways to provide services. This includes the implementation of the non-medical anaesthetics practitioner role at Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust, which involves recruiting non-medical anaesthetic personnel from overseas.

### Asthma

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many asthma sufferers had their condition reviewed at least once in the last year for which figures are available. [154569]

**Dr. Ladyman:** The information requested is not collected centrally.

The question of the frequency of patient review is a purely clinical one and will depend on the circumstances of the individual patient.

The new general medical services contract significantly benefits patients by improving the quality of care and widening the range of services available at general practitioners' surgeries.

### Benefit Fraud

**Mr. Webb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many staff in his Department have been *(a)* investigated, *(b)* suspended, *(c)* dismissed, *(d)* prosecuted and *(e)* convicted for involvement in benefit fraud in each of the last six years; and what amounts were involved in each case. [151998]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** There are no recorded instances.

### Capital Investment (Newcastle)

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list *(a)* planned and *(b)* committed new capital investment programmes undertaken in the Newcastle Primary Care Trust area by the (i) Newcastle Primary Care Trust, (ii) Newcastle Hospitals Trust, (iii) Neuro Rehabilitation Trust, (iv) Northumberland, Newcastle and North Tyneside Trust and (v) Northgate and Prudhoe Trust since 1997–98, including PFI financed projects. [154607]

**Miss Melanie Johnson** *[holding answer 12 February 2004]:* Planned and committed capital investment programmes in the area covered by Newcastle Primary Care Trust since 1997–98 are as follows.

*1. Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals National Health Service Trust*

*Planned*

A major private finance initiative (PFI) development, costing £220 million, will result in the transfer of acute services from Newcastle General Hospital to the Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI) and Freeman Hospital. This will include a new cancer and renal care centre at the Freeman Hospital. At the RVI, there will be a new accident and emergency department, with all of the vital clinical supporting services accommodated together (for example, traumatic orthopaedics, neurosciences, diagnostic imaging and critical care), and a new children's wing. The Freeman Hospital developments are scheduled to open in mid-2006 and an opening date of late 2007 is scheduled for the developments at the RVI.

*Committed/completed*

A new children's intensive care unit and fracture clinic was opened in spring 2002 at a cost of £3 million.

A new 17-bed critical care unit at the Freeman Hospital, Newcastle was completed in 2003 at a cost of £4.5 million.

New facilities for cleft lip and palate services were developed during 2002–03 at a cost of £1.4 million.

The regional neurosciences centre at Newcastle General Hospital was improved and upgraded during 2002–03 at a cost of £1.2 million.

Facilities for dermatology patients were upgraded at the RVI during 2002–03, at a cost of £1.2 million.

A new energy centre at the RVI, costing £6.9 million and funded through the PFI, was opened during 2003.

A pharmacy manufacturing and stores scheme opened at the RVI during 2003 at a cost of £8.6 million.

A new antenatal clinic opened at the RVI during 2003. This was developed at a cost of £5.7 million.

Work has started on a multi-storey car park, funded through the PFI, costing £8 million, for completion in the autumn.

*2. Northgate and Prudhoe NHS Trust*

*Planned*

A £20 million Northern neuro disability centre is to be developed at Walkergate through the PFI. This is scheduled for completion in 2006 and will bring together current services at Hunters Moor Hospital, Newcastle, the Janie Heppell Unit and Annexe at Prudhoe Hospital and the Sanderson Centre and Hartside Unit at St. Nicholas Hospital, Newcastle. It will provide services for people with neuro disabilities caused by disease, illness or accident.

*3. Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland Mental Trust NHS Trust*

*Planned*

A £20 million development is planned at St. Nicholas Hospital in Newcastle to improve adult medium and low secure forensic psychiatry accommodation and provide a new personality disorder unit. This is scheduled for completion in 2007.

*Committed/completed*

A rehabilitation unit at St. Nicholas Hospital was reprovided in 2002 at a cost of £1.2 million, as well as accommodation for the neuropsychiatry service, at a cost of £2 million.

*4. Newcastle Primary Care Trust*

*Committed*

More than £5 million is to be spent using NHS local investment finance trust (LIFT) to provide modern health centres in Kenton, Walker and Brunton Park. This is part of a scheme that will eventually transform more than 25 outdated health centres and community facilities across Newcastle and North Tyneside.

In a separate scheme, a new doctors' surgery in the west end of Newcastle is being developed at a cost of £2 million. This is being done in partnership between Prospect Medical Group and Prime, a private sector development. Work started last year and was scheduled for completion in February 2004.

*Planned*

As above—the LIFT project will eventually result in major improvements to more than 25 health centres across Newcastle and North Tyneside.

### Cardiac Care

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people from each primary care trust

area in England received cardiac treatment at Brighton hospitals in the most recent year for which information is available. [154873]

**Ms Rosie Winterton** *[holding answer 12 February 2004]:* Information on number of people from each primary care trust (PCT) area in England who have received cardiac treatment at Brighton hospitals, is shown in the table. The latest information available is for 2002–03.

*Cardiac procedures (OPCS4 codes K01-K71). All operation count of Episodes. Finished admission Episodes—For Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust by PCT of residence. NHS hospitals in England, 2002–03*

| | *PCT of residence* | *Total episodes* |
|---|---|---|
| 5LQ | Brighton and Hove City PCT | 938 |
| 5LT | Sussex Downs and Weald PCT | 470 |
| 5L8 | Adur, Arun and Worthing PCT | 438 |
| 5FK | Mid-Sussex PCT | 420 |
| 5LR | Eastbourne Downs PCT | 344 |
| 5F1 | Bexhill and Rother PCT | 184 |
| 5DG | Isle of Wight PCT | 158 |
| 5FJ | Hastings and St. Leonards PCT | 153 |
| 5MC | Horsham and Chanctonbury PCT | 149 |
| 5KQ | East Surrey PCT | 103 |
| 5KV | Poole PCT | 97 |
| 5MA | Crawley PCT | 65 |
| 5L9 | Western Sussex PCT | 57 |
| 5FN | South and East Dorset PCT | 43 |
| 5CE | Bournemouth PCT | 28 |
| 5L2 | Maidstone Weald PCT | 23 |
| 5KP | East Elmbridge and Mid Surrey PCT | 22 |
| 5MV | Wolverhampton City PCT | 19 |
| 5FD | East Hampshire PCT | 12 |
| 5LX | Fareham and Gosport PCT | 12 |
| 5HT | Dudley South PCT | 11 |
| 5M3 | Walsall PCT | 10 |
| 5CM | Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley PCT | 9 |
| 5FE | Portsmouth City PCT | 7 |
| 5HV | Dudley Beacon and Castle PCT | 6 |
| 5CD | North Dorset PCT | 6 |
| 5MH | Rowley Regis and Tipton PCT | 6 |
| 5DQ | Burntwood, Lichfield and Tamworth PCT | * |
| 5FP | South West Dorset PCT | * |
| 5FF | South West Kent PCT | * |
| 5M1 | South Birmingham PCT | * |
| 5L5 | Guildford and Waverley PCT | * |
| 5MW | North Birmingham PCT | * |
| 5MN | South Western Staffordshire PCT | * |
| 5MJ | Wednesbury and West Bromwich PCT | * |
| 5L7 | Woking PCT | * |
| 5DR | Wyre Forest PCT | * |
| 5LL | Ashford PCT | * |
| 5GD | Bedford PCT | * |
| 5AX | Bexley PCT | * |
| 5G6 | Blackwater Valley and Hart PCT | * |
| 5MY | Eastern Birmingham PCT | * |
| 5LN | East Kent Coastal PCT | * |
| 5MG | Oldbury and Smethwick PCT | * |
| 5D1 | Solihull PCT | * |
| 5MT | South Worcestershire PCT | * |
| 5L4 | Swale PCT | * |
| 5C4 | Tower Hamlets PCT | * |
| 5D2 | West Lincolnshire PCT | * |
| 5A9 | Barnet PCT | * |
| 5GE | Bedfordshire Heartlands PCT | * |
| 5HP | Blackpool PCT | * |
| 5JG | Bristol South and West PCT | * |
| 5LM | Canterbury and Coastal PCT | * |
| 5D4 | Carlisle and District PCT | * |
| 5K9 | Croydon PCT | * |
| 5HX | Ealing PCT | * |
| 5A8 | Greenwich PCT | * |
| 5A4 | Havering PCT | * |
| 5MX | Heart of Birmingham Teaching PCT | * |
| 5HY | Hounslow PCT | * |
| 5LD | Lambeth PCT | * |
| 5LF | Lewisham PCT | * |
| 5D3 | Lincolnshire South West Teaching PCT | * |
| 5L3 | Medway PCT | * |
| 5E9 | Mid-Hampshire PCT | * |
| 5DD | Morecambe Bay PCT | * |
| 5AP | Newark and Sherwood PCT | * |
| 5D7 | Newcastle PCT | * |
| 5A1 | New Forest PCT | * |
| 5DL | Reading PCT | * |
| 5MR | Redditch and Bromsgrove PCT | * |
| 5KK | Scarborough, Whitby and Ryedale PCT | * |
| 5LP | Shepway PCT | * |
| 5DJ | South Wiltshire PCT | * |
| 5M7 | Sutton and Merton PCT | * |
| 5GN | Uttlesford PCT | * |
| 5GV | Watford and Three Rivers PCT | * |
| 5LC | Westminster PCT | * |
| 5DN | Wokingham PCT | * |
| 59999 | Unknown | 61 |
| | Total | 3,851 |

*Notes:*
1. Finished admission episodes—A finished admission episode is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.
2. All Operations count of Episodes—These figures represent a count of all FCEs where the procedure was mentioned in any of the 12 (4 prior to 2002–03) operation fields in a HES record. A record is only included once in each count, even if an operation is mentioned in more than one operation field of the record.
3. Low Numbers—Due to reasons of confidentiality, figures between 1 and 5 have been suppressed and replaced with an asterisk.
4. Grossing—Figures have not (yet) been adjusted for shortfalls in data (i.e. the data are ungrossed).
*Source:*
Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Department of Health.

### Care Homes

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of differences in fee levels for care home places in different parts of the country. [155806]

**Dr. Ladyman:** Independent data published in July 2003 found that the number of care home places available nationally exceeded demand by 10,000. Where there are local capacity issues to be addressed, it is for local councils to assess the need for care home places in their areas in the light of local circumstances and preferences and to commission services to meet assessed needs. They should act in consultation with people needing services and local providers.

### Children's NHS Framework

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will publish the Children's National Health Service Framework; and if he will make a statement. [155539]

**Dr. Ladyman:** The national service framework for children, young people and maternity services will be published later this year.

### Clinical Negligence

**Mr. Hurst:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost to the national health service resulting from clinical negligence was in each year from 1990 to 2002. [156016]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The total cost of medical negligence in each year since 1996, as prepared by the National Audit Office and presented in the National Health Service Summarised Accounts for England, is in the table. Information for the period 1990 to 1995 was not collected centrally.

*£ millions*

| | In year expenditure |
|---|---|
| 1996–97 | £235 |
| 1997–98 | £144 |
| 1998–99 | £221 |
| 1999–2000 | £373 |
| 2000–01 | £415 |
| 2001–02 | £446 |

*Note:*
Changes to accounting policies imposed by Her Majesty's Treasury over the years mean that these amounts are not directly comparable.

### Community Health Councils

**Dr. Tonge:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health for how many former community health council premises which are empty, payments for *(a)* leases, *(b)* rent, *(c)* rates and *(d)* security costs are still being made; [149762]

(2) what the estimated cost is of *(a)* maintaining and *(b)* securing empty community health council premises until alternative uses have been found. [149763]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** There are currently 96 vacant community health council offices and the estimated cost for rent, rates, services and security is £1.62 million per annum. A number of these premises are under offer or are awaiting sale or assignment to other bodies, including national health service organisations, and the position will change as these progress.

**Dr. Tonge:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost was of abolishing community health councils. [149776]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** It is not possible to give the exact costs for abolishing community health councils (CHCs). We have estimated the running costs for CHCs from 1 April to 1 December 2003 and for a residual period up to March 2004 at £15 million. Additionally, redundancy costs are estimated at £14.9 million and the estimated costs for rent, rates, servicing and security of vacant CHC offices is £1.62 million per annum. A number of these premises are under offer or are awaiting sale or assignment to other bodies, including national health service organisations, and the position will change as these progress.

### Nappies

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action the Government is taking to promote the use of reusable nappies in hospitals. [154771]

**Dr. Ladyman:** The Government firmly believes that women and their families should be given information on the use of both re-usable and disposable nappies to make an informed choice. The Pregnancy Book and Birth to Five are two comprehensive information booklets produced by the Department of Health, which are given free to all first time mothers. Both publications give detailed information on both reusable and disposable nappies, including information about nappy laundering services, and suggest that parents ask their midwife to show them how to fold/pin terry nappies if they decide to use them.

It is for individual units and trusts to decide on the practicalities of promoting the use of terry nappies in their own maternity units.

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the NHS spent on the *(a)* purchase and *(b)* disposal of (i) disposable nappies and (ii) reusable nappies in the last year for which figures are available. [154772]

**Dr. Ladyman:** The National Health Service provides very few nappies for newborn babies; mothers are encouraged to provide their own nappies. The main exception is extremely premature babies, for whom commercially available nappies are too large. NHS-bought nappies are therefore provided.

The vast majority of nappies purchased by the NHS are provided for children with disabilities who are incontinent. We do not have central information on the purchase of reusable nappies.

During the financial year 2002–03, the NHS bought approximately 12 million disposable nappies, with a value of £1.5 million.

### Continence Wear

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the *(a)* provision, *(b)* collection and *(c)* disposal of continence wear to older children and adults cost the NHS in the last year for which figures are available. [154773]

**Dr. Ladyman:** Information in the form requested is not available centrally. However, the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency (PASA) estimates that over the past 12 months National Health Service trusts have spent approximately £23 million on disposable products and £150 thousand on reusable products. Additionally, PASA estimates that approximately £22 million was spent by the NHS on home delivery products for people with incontinence. Together, this gives a total spend of around £45 million by the NHS on continence products in the last 12 months.

### Crisis Resolution Teams

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of the crisis resolution teams that are operational are open 24 hours per day, seven days per week. [154405]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 22 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1425W, to the hon. Member for Broxbourne (Mrs. Roe).

### Delayed Discharges

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total amount of reimbursement from social services departments to the NHS for delayed discharges is in the current financial year for *(a)* England and *(b)* each strategic health authority; and if he will make a statement. [154582]

**Dr. Ladyman:** Data on legal liabilities for reimbursement charges are not available centrally at this time.

### Dentistry

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the number of trained dentists living in the UK as refugees; and what proportion he estimates are working in the NHS. [151467]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Information is not held centrally on the number of refugees working as dentists in the national health service. We are aware that the British Dental Association and the Refugee Council have a database containing details of 60 dentists who are refugees. These dentists are preparing for the General Dental Council's international qualifying examination (IQE) to become eligible to practise in the United Kingdom. We are considering how dentists with overseas qualifications could be given more support with the additional training they require to take the IQE and equip themselves to practise in the NHS.

**Mr. Steen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will break down the funding targeted at primary care trusts where access to NHS dentists is low, announced on 18 September 2003, by *(a)* region and *(b)* primary care trust. [151540]

**Ms Rosie Winterton** *[holding answer 28 January 2004]:* On 18 September 2003 we announced new investment totalling £65.2 million for dentistry. This consisted of £35 million capital for dental access and quality, £30 million for dental information technology and £200,000 for developing dental leadership. This was on top of revenue funding we announced in August of £9 million for targeted support on dental access and £1 million for organisation development. We subsequently announced on 25 November further revenue funding of £15 million to support access for patients to a modernised national health service dental service, bringing the total of new funding announced this year for dentistry to £90.2 million.

The £30 million investment in IT will facilitate integration of dental practices with wider NHS information technology systems and will support local contracting. The IT investment and solutions for dentistry consistent with other NHS information technology initiatives are being taken forward within the national programme for IT.

The funding of £200,000 for developing dental leadership is aimed at strategic health authority level to support primary care trusts (PCTs) in delivering the modernisation agenda for dentistry.

The organisational development funds of £1 million are being distributed in line with advice from strategic health authorities (SHAs). They are intended to help PCTs, local dental committees and dentists to prepare for the change in the way dental services are commissioned. £0.3 million has been distributed for 2003–04 and the remaining £0.7 million will be distributed for use in 2004–05.

The balance of £59 million is intended to support dental access and quality as follows:

£9 million is for the NHS dentistry support team that has been set up to work with those areas where it is hardest to find a NHS dentist. These funds are being used in a targeted way to support local action plans for improving access to dentistry. The NHS support team has identified 16 PCTs with specific dental access issues. Funding for these PCTs, which are shown in the list, will take into account the challenge faced by the individual PCTs and the potential benefit of the proposals in the dental action plan that each of the challenged PCTs is developing. Draft plans are now starting to arrive. The team allocated £200,000 in 2003–04, and will be increasing the pace of allocations early in 2004–05, based on the plans currently in preparation.

£35 million capital funds are to enable PCTs to invest in primary care premises and facilities to improve access and quality. These funds will be distributed on a fair-shares basis at SHA level and then on a targeted basis to PCTs on the advice of the SHAs. The fair shares for SHAs are shown in the table. The bulk of the funds will be spent in 2004–05 to allow SHAs and PCTs to plan for its investment.

£15 million revenue funding for 2004–05 to support access will also be allocated on a fair-shares basis at SHA level and, on the advice of the SHA, on a targeted basis to PCTs. The SHA fair shares allocations of these funds are shown in the table.

Guidance for PCTs on commissioning NHS dentistry, including the allocation of £35 million capital and £15 million revenue to support access, quality and choice was issued on 15 January. The guidance makes it clear that access remains a key priority in the run up to the new arrangements for dentistry from April 2005.

*PCTs which have been identified for support from the NHS Dentistry Support Team*

Fareham and Gosport PCT

Isle of Wight PCT

New Forest PCT

West Gloucestershire PCT

North East Lincolnshire PCT

Scarborough, Whitby and Ryedale PCT

Craven, Harrogate and Rural District PCT

Northumbria Care Trust

Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale PCT

Hyndburn and Ribble PCT

Blackburn with Darwen PCT

Morecambe Bay PCT

Shropshire County PCT

Telford and Wrekin PCT

South West Staffordshire PCT

Central Cheshire PCT

£000

| Strategic Health Authority | Capital | Revenue |
|---|---|---|
| England | 35,000 | 15,000 |
| Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire | 1,396 | 598 |
| Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire | 1,039 | 446 |
| Birmingham and The Black Country | 1,771 | 761 |
| Cheshire and Merseyside | 1,853 | 796 |
| County Durham and Tees Valley | 894 | 384 |
| Cumbria and Lancashire | 1,411 | 602 |
| Dorset and Somerset | 814 | 349 |
| Essex | 1,071 | 458 |
| Greater Manchester | 1,987 | 852 |
| Hampshire and Isle of Wight | 1,148 | 492 |
| Kent and Medway | 1,071 | 459 |
| Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland | 962 | 412 |
| Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire | 1,416 | 607 |
| North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire | 1,073 | 460 |
| North Central London | 961 | 413 |
| North East London | 1,297 | 556 |
| North West London | 1,344 | 575 |
| Northumberland, Tyne and Wear | 1,089 | 466 |
| Shropshire and Staffordshire | 988 | 425 |
| South East London | 1,165 | 499 |
| South West London | 863 | 370 |
| South West Peninsula | 1,092 | 469 |
| South Yorkshire | 981 | 420 |
| Surrey and Sussex | 1,689 | 723 |
| Thames Valley | 1,285 | 550 |
| Trent | 1,813 | 777 |
| West Midlands South | 1,013 | 433 |
| West Yorkshire | 1,514 | 648 |

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on progress of Options for Change in improving NHS Dentistry, with particular reference to *(a)* Portsmouth and *(b)* South Hampshire. [151997]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** We are committed to rebuilding and restoring national health service dentistry to improve oral health. The report, "NHS Dentistry: Options for Change", published in 2002, set out the ideas and principles behind the reform of NHS dentistry. Central to these changes are the aims of:

local commissioning of services offering care which is responsive to local need;

moving away from the restrictions of the detailed and inflexible existing fee-for-item system and giving dentists the opportunity to practise more preventive dentistry;

improving the patient experience;

improving access to NHS dentistry.

New legislation in the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 will enable these changes and will underpin a modernised, high-quality primary dental service, properly integrated with the rest of the NHS. The aim is to deliver better access to services; better working lives for dentists and their teams, better oral health and an improved patient experience. From 1 April 2005, primary care trusts (PCTs) will assume a new responsibility for commissioning dental services supported by the £1.2 billion resources currently held centrally.

The Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act also provides for the replacement of the existing Dental Practice Board by a new special health authority for England and Wales with a wider remit for modernisation and change. This is likely to happen in 2005. In the meantime, shadow arrangements are in place to work in partnership with the existing Dental Practice Board to lead the modernisation process and provide support to PCTs and dentists to ensure a smooth transition to the new arrangements. Discussions are also on-going with the dental profession on the base contract, which will replace the item of service arrangements.

In Hampshire, each PCT has identified a dental management lead who has been working closely with the strategic health authority dental lead and the Department of Health to prepare dental action plans for the transition to local commissioning of dentistry. In agreement with the Department, arrangements have been made for some dental practices that wish to do so—including one in Portsmouth—to act as pilots for future contracting arrangements.

### Dietary Strategy

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his Department's strategy is for reducing *(a)* salt levels in food and *(b)* the prevalence of people having excess salt in their diet. [153116]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Strangford (Mrs. Robinson) on Tuesday 27 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 332W.

On Tuesday 3 February 2004, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced a period of consultation on a public health white paper. This will provide the overarching framework for work that the Department of Health and other Government Departments are already engaged in. The consultation aims to engage the public, the media, industry, voluntary groups and health professionals in a wide-ranging debate about how the nation can best tackle issues like obesity, smoking and sexually transmitted infections.

### Directly Funded Equipment

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of the money set aside for directly funded equipment has been taken up by local authorities *(a)* so far this financial year and *(b)* in the last financial year. [151717]

**Dr. Ladyman** *[holding answer 29 January 2004]:* I assume that the hon. Member is referring to funding for community equipment services. These are funded in the following manner: all local health and social services have historic funding streams for these services. At the beginning of the initiative to integrate and modernise these services we announced that we were increasing baseline funding to the National Health Service and councils to enable them to participate. We gave the NHS an extra £105 million over the years 2001–02 to 2003–04 and made a substantial addition to councils' personal social services allocation (following normal practice, the amount of the latter was not announced). Councils with social services responsibilities are also now receiving even more funding for community equipment through the systems and access capacity grant, starting with £7.6 million this year, with considerable rises due in 2004–05 and 2005–06. In all cases, local service

commissioners decide how to use that funding to meet the needs of their local populations and this element of their spending is not monitored centrally.

### Disciplinary Procedures

**Mr. Laurence Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* NHS hospital doctors, *(b)* NHS consultants and *(c)* NHS general practitioners are suspended on disciplinary grounds; and if he will make a statement. [154255]

**Mr. Hutton** *[holding answer 10 February 2004]:* Discipline for National Health Service trust clinicians is a matter for local managers and disciplinary action will take a variety of forms, NHS trusts are not required to collect this information and it is not collected centrally.

Primary care trusts (PCTs) must notify the Family Health Services Appeal Authority (Special Health Authority) when they suspend or lift a suspension from a general medical practitioner. Thirty GPs are currently suspended by PCTs.

**Mr. Laurence Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the average time taken to *(a)* investigate and *(b)* resolve cases regarding the suspension of NHS (i) hospital doctors, (ii) consultants and (iii) general practitioners was in the latest year for which figures are available; what percentage of those investigations found in favour of (A) those making the complaint and (B) the person suspended; and if he will make a statement; [154257]

(2) what the total cost is in *(a)* salaries and national insurance contributions and *(b)* other costs arising from (i) NHS hospital doctors, (ii) NHS consultants and (iii) NHS general practitioners currently suspended; and if he will make a statement. [154256]

**Mr. Hutton** *[holding answer 10 February 2004]:* This information is not held centrally.

**Mr. Laurence Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the procedures for investigating the cases of suspended NHS hospital doctors, consultants and general practitioners. [154258]

**Mr. Hutton** *[holding answer 10 February 2004]:* The Department issued a mandatory framework, (HSC 2003/012) Maintaining High Professional standards in the Modern NHS, for the handling of concerns about doctors and dentists employed in the National Health Service, on 29 December 2003. The procedures a primary care trust must follow are set out in the NHS (General Medical Services) Regulations 1992, as amended; the NHS (General Medical Services Supplementary List) Regulations 2001, as amended; and the NHS (Personal Medical Services) (Services List) and the (General Medical Services Supplementary List) and (General Medical Services) Amendment Regulations 2003.

**Mr. Laurence Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement about the kinds of complaints which cause NHS hospital doctors, consultants and general practitioners to be suspended. [154259]

**Mr. Hutton** *[holding answer 10 February 2004]:* Under the Restriction of Practice and Exclusion from Work Directions 2003, formal exclusion of one or more clinicians must be used only where there is a need to protect the interests of patients or other staff pending the outcome of a full investigation of: allegations of misconduct, concerns about the lack of capability or poor performance; or the presence of the practitioner in the workplace is likely to hinder the investigation.

Full consideration should be given to whether the practitioner could continue in or (in cases of immediate exclusion) return to work in a limited capacity or in an alternative, possibly non-clinical role, pending the resolution of the case.

Regulations permit primary care trusts to suspend general medical practitioners from their medical, supplementary medical or services lists if they consider this is necessary to protect patients or is otherwise in the public interest. This is an interim measure pending the outcome of regulatory body or criminal investigation, or while they consider serious matters which may lead to the practitioner's removal on suitability, efficiency or fraud grounds.

### Drug Addicts

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many addicts in England and Wales are maintained on prescribed *(a)* heroin and *(b)* methadone; and at what average annual cost for each of those prescriptions. [150727]

**Miss Melanie Johnson** *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* There are approximately 450 drug misusers in England being maintained on prescribed heroin. The estimated annual cost per patient of maintaining a drug misuser on heroin is £12,000 per patient.

We do not have figures centrally on the numbers of drug misusers being maintained on methadone. The estimated annual cost per patient of maintaining a drug misuser on oral methadone is £3,000.

### EU Accession States (Migration)

**Dr. Murrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* plans he has made and *(b)* resources he has assigned for the treatment of migrants from EU accession states from 1st May. [153798]

**Mr. Hutton** *[holding answer 9 February 2004]:* Research for the Home Office does not suggest that the numbers of people who migrate from the new Member States of the European Union to the United Kingdom will be significant. Those that fall into the categories covered by Regulations (EEC) 1408/71 and 574/72—for example temporary visitors, certain pensioners and others—will have costs of any National Health Service treatment met by the person's country of insurance.

**Dr. Murrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the likely impact on the NHS of migration from EU accession states. [153799]

**Mr. Hutton** *[holding answer 9 February 2004]:* I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Runnymede and Weybridge (Mr Hammond) on 3 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 822W.

### Family Planning/Reproductive Health Care

**Joan Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what monitoring arrangements are being put in place by his Department to ensure that the advice provided by general practices which sign up to providing contraceptive services under the new general medical services contract *(a)* covers all methods of contraception and *(b)* is of a high standard. [154447]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Regulations for the new general medical services contract set out a new contractual requirement that practices providing additional contraceptive services must give "advice about the full range of contraceptive methods" and "the referral as necessary for specialist sexual health services". This includes referral for the fitting of intrauterine devices and contraceptive implants where these are not provided by the practice. In addition, practices will be rewarded through a quality and outcomes framework for having policies on emergency contraception and pre-conceptual (all other) contraception. Primary care trusts will be responsible for performance managing the contract.

**Joan Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps the Government is taking to meet the Faculty of Family Planning and Reproductive Healthcare's recommendation that there should be one full-time clinician in family planning and sexual and reproductive healthcare per 125,000 population; [154448]

(2) how many *(a)* doctors and *(b)* nurses are employed in family planning community clinics; and what steps the Government is taking to (i) recruit and (ii) retain (A) doctors and (B) nurses in such clinics. [154449]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** It is for individual primary care trusts and National Health Service trusts to determine how their services are configured and delivered in order to provide quality services. The NHS will continue to plan its future workforce requirements to address identified need. We are also ensuring through the Department's performance management measures that the creation of clinical posts is seen as a high priority. Also, the Faculty of Family Planning and Reproductive Healthcare is represented on the contraceptive services group that has been established by the Department. Workforce is a key issue being addressed by this group. In 2003–04, central funding was provided to support the implementation of four additional specialist registrar posts in family planning and reproductive health.

The Department does not collect data on the numbers of doctors and nurses specifically employed in family planning community clinics (the medical and non-medical workforce census collects information annually on the number of doctors and nurses employed in the NHS, but cannot distinguish those working in family planning).

**Mrs. Calton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps his Department is taking to prioritise contraceptive services within strategic health authorities' local delivery plans; [154429]

(2) what steps his Department *(a)* has taken over the last 12 months and *(b)* plans to take over the next 12 months to prioritise contraceptive services within the NHS; and what impact such measures have had to date; [154430]

(3) if he will make a statement on the role of the group of key experts on contraception referred to by the Under-Secretary for State of Health on 15 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 371WH. [154433]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** It is a key aim of both the Government's Sexual Health and HIV Strategy and Teenage Pregnancy Strategy to reduce unintended pregnancy rates. Provision of good quality contraceptive services is key in achieving this aim. It is the responsibility of primary care trusts (PCTs) to ensure that comprehensive services are provided and the Department has issued them with guidance on how to commission these services.

The Department has also convened a group of key experts, including representatives from the Faculty of Family Planning and Reproductive Healthcare, the Royal College of General Practitioners and the Family Planning Association, to develop and implement an action plan to support the improvement of contraceptive services at local level.

We are working with strategic health authorities to help raise the priority level of sexual health, including contraceptive services, within local delivery plans.

### Flu Vaccine

**Sandra Gidley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much his Department has spent on advertising the free influenza vaccine. [152759]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** £1,411,000.00 was spent on this year's flu advertising campaign.

**Sandra Gidley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what studies his Department undertook to find the most effective way of informing people about their eligibility for the free influenza vaccine. [152760]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Each year, the Department conducts research before and after the advertising campaign to measure awareness among our target audience. Research has consistently proved television as the best media for advertising free flu vaccination.

### Glenfield Hospital

**Mr. Robathan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients at the Herschel Prins Low Secure Unit at the Glenfield Hospital site in Leicestershire have been found not to have mental health problems. [154636]

**Dr. Ladyman:** This information is not collected centrally.

**Mr. Robathan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost was of building the Herchel Prins Unit at Glenfield Hospital in Leicestershire; what its running costs were in the last financial year; and what this cost was per patient. [154637]

**Dr. Ladyman:** This information is not collected in the format requested.

**Mr. Robathan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients have escaped from the Herschel Prins Unit at Glenfield Hospital in Leicestershire in the last year. [154638]

**Dr. Ladyman:** This information is not collected centrally.

### General Practitioners

**Dr. Murrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the procedure is for transferring general practitioner held records when a patient moves practices. [153750]

**Mr. Hutton:** When a patient registers with a new general practitioner, the doctor will request the transfer of medical records via the primary care trust.

**Dr. Murrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what investigation he has made of delays in transferring general practitioner records when a patient moves. [153794]

**Mr. Hutton:** A survey conducted by the Department in 1997 showed that, on average, 85 per cent. of medical records were transferred within the timescale guidance issued by the Department. These targets are six weeks for routine cases and two working days for urgent cases.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the arrangements are for *(a)* setting, *(b)* regulating, *(c)* monitoring and *(d)* reporting on performance and clinical governance standards for (i) private agencies and (ii) NHS organisations providing out-of-hours GP services. [152742]

**Mr. Hutton:** At present, all organisations providing out of hours—both private and not-for-profit—have to meet nationally set quality standards and report to primary care trusts (PCTs) on performance, including clinical governance.

Under the new general medical services (GMS) contract, anyone who provides services out of hours, including individuals contracted by the PCT, and organisations, will need to meet national quality standards. These standards are currently under review by an expert group to make them an integral part of GMS and personal medical services contracting. Strategic health authorities will performance manage PCTs in their delivery of out of hours services.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners recruited through flexible career schemes were working as locums in the NHS before joining the scheme. [153110]

**Mr. Hutton:** The most recent data available is from the June 2003 census, which showed that, of the 85 general practitioners who were counted as flexible career scheme doctors, 25 had last been counted in the census as a locum.

### Haemophilia

**Nick Harvey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what access patients in the South West have to treatment that is in accordance with national standards for haemophilia care published in the National Service Specification for Haemophilia and Related Conditions in 2001; and if he will make a statement; [154576]

(2) what plans he has for the provision of a comprehensive care centre for haemophilia in the South West; and if he will make a statement. [154577]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Our policy, "Shifting the Balance of Power", means that the local national health service has responsibility for planning and developing health services according to local needs and demands.

In 2001, The Haemophilia Alliance produced a National Service Specification for a service that allows people with haemophilia the best care that can be made available. The Government welcomed this model service specification, which sets out clear standards of care for patients with inherited bleeding disorders. NHS commissioners of haemophilia services will find the document an invaluable resource when planning and developing services for patients.

I understand that there are 10 haemophilia centres throughout the South West region, which provide a good range of services between them. The United Kingdom Haemophilia Centre Doctor's Organisation (UKHCDO) is the body responsible for designating comprehensive care centres, and I am informed that the haemophilia centre directors in the South West are in regular contact with the chair of the UKHCDO about the provision of services in the South West.

The following is a list of the Haemophilia Centres in the South West:

Bath, Bristol (Infirmary and Children's) for the Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Strategic Health Authority (SHA) area

Bournemouth/Poole, Dorchester, Taunton/Yeovil for the Dorset and Somerset SHA area

Barnstaple, Exeter, Plymouth, Torquay, Truro for the South West Peninsula SHA area.

### Integrated Community Equipment Service Group

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out the work programme for the Integrated Community Equipment Service Group for 2004. [R] [154992]

**Dr. Ladyman:** The integrating community equipment services team will continue to support local equipment services as they further develop their integration during 2004. The team members do this through:

supporting regional networks of service leads and, during this year, they will aim to help the networks become self-sustaining

visiting services, particularly those that appear to need extra help

maintaining a popular and informative internet site: www.icesdoh.org/.

### Joint Consultative Forum

**Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he last met his counterparts from the Welsh Assembly and Scottish Parliament in the joint consultative forum. [154090]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, has regular meetings with his counterparts from Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

### Junior Doctors

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the protection of salary for junior doctors working at hospitals as part of a rotation, with particular reference to Great Ormond Street. [R] [153418]

**Mr. Hutton:** Junior doctors receive a banding supplement reflecting the amount and intensity of their out of hours work. When junior doctors contract for a rotation they are made aware of the bandings of the posts they will be working in. As circumstances change, posts may be adjusted and rebanded and the pay for new entrants to such posts may reduce to a level commensurate with the work undertaken. However, for those already contracted to fill those posts, rotation pay protection (built into the national contract for all doctors in training) applies.

National health service trusts are responsible for ensuring that appropriate rotation and salary arrangements are in place for junior doctors, in line with national guidance.

Under those arrangements, there is regular monitoring to ensure that rotas are satisfactory, that junior doctors hours are within agreed limits and that safe services are provided.

Great Ormond Street has these arrangements in place and policies and procedures under which any concerns can be raised and addressed.

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of whether hospitals are changing junior doctors' hours of work statistics to ensure that they conform to the *(a)* New Deal and *(b)* European Working Time Directive. [R] [153734]

**Mr. Hutton:** Information collected on junior doctors' hours in the assessment of New Deal compliance, as required by their contract of employment, is based on information supplied by the junior doctors themselves. Before this data is collated centrally, it is validated by junior doctors at national health service trust level. We have no reason to suppose that these returns are anything but an accurate representation of the work situation. Information is not collected centrally on Working Time Directive compliance at trust level; this is a matter for the hospitals concerned.

### Living Wills

**Mr. Soley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice he has issued to health authorities on dealing with patients' wishes as expressed in living wills. [155214]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Guidance on advance refusals is included in the Department of Health's "Reference Guide to Consent for Examination or Treatment" published in March 2001. A copy of the guide has been placed in the Library and is also available from the Department of Health's website at http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/01/90/79/04019079.pdf

### Long-term Care

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 30 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 559W, on long-term care, if he will place in the Library copies of the survey and estimates by the Personal Social Services Research Unit referred to in the explanatory note. [154633]

**Dr. Ladyman:** In the explanatory note referred to in my answer of 30 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 559W, the estimate of the proportion of privately funded older care home residents receiving disability benefits is from Netten A., Darton R. and Curtis L. (2002). Self-Funded Admissions to Care Homes. A report of research carried out by the Personal Social Services Research Unit (PSSRU), University of Kent on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions, (Department for Work and Pensions Research Report No. 159). A copy of this report is available in the Library.

The estimate of private expenditure on private home care was obtained from PSSRU. It derives from research on projections of demand for long-term care for older people. A copy of a recent discussion paper on this PSSRU study—Comas-Herrera A., Pickard L., Wittenberg R. et al. (2003) Future demand for long-term care, 2001 to 2031: projections of demand for older people in England, PSSRU discussion paper 1980—will be placed in the Library.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 30 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 559W, on long-term care, what the basis is of the assumption in the explanatory note that there are 58,000 privately funded residents of residential care homes in England. [155967]

**Dr. Ladyman:** The figure of 58,000 is an estimate in the absence of data on numbers of privately funded residents in residential care homes. There were around 120,000 older local authority supported residents in independent sector care homes in March 2003. The "PSSRU 1996 Survey of Care Homes for Elderly People", www.pssru.ac.uk/pdf/dp1423≥2.pdf, found that around one third of older residents of independent sector residential care homes were privately funded. This suggests that an estimate of around 58,000 is reasonable.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 20 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1110W, on long-term care, whether the Department's proposals in response to the Royal Commission, including free nursing care and changes to the residential charging rules, will have changed these costs. [155968]

**Dr. Ladyman:** The estimated cost of £1.5 billion for England covers only the cost of free personal care and excludes the cost of free nursing care, as that has been implemented. The estimate would have been higher if free nursing care had been included. In principle, this also applies to the 12-week disregard of housing assets and the uprating of the capital limits which the Government announced in their response to the Royal Commission. The estimate of around 100,000 privately

funded residents used in the calculation should in principle have been higher if these changes had not been implemented.

## Mental Health

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he has taken to ensure fair treatment of ethnic minorities in NHS mental institutions. [155603]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The specific and general duties of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places an onus on statutory bodies to identify and tackle racial discrimination faced by the black and minority ethnic community.

In support of this for mental health services we have issued for consultation "Delivering Race Equality—A Framework for Action" which sets out what those planning, delivering and monitoring local primary care and mental health services need to do to improve services for users, relatives and carers from black and minority ethnic communities. This is backed up by a programme of work by the National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE).

NIMHE has also issued "Engaging & Changing—Developing effective policy for the care and treatment of Black and minority ethnic detained patients". The document provides guidance in relation to the development of policies concerning the care and treatment of black and minority ethnic communities in the areas of ethnic monitoring, racial harassment, the use of interpreters and the provision of culturally appropriate care and staff training.

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether NHS mental health services have a written policy banning racial abuse. [155604]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The NHS Plan introduced an improving working lives standard in 2000 which makes it clear that every member of staff in the national health service is entitled to work in an organisation which can prove that it is investing in improving diversity and tackling discrimination and harassment. All NHS organisations including mental health trusts have to achieve the standard, which is a key performance indicator, part of the star rating system.

In relation to tackling racial harassment an improving working lives toolkit "Improving Working Lives: Tackling Racial Harassment in the NHS—Good Practice Guidance" was issued in 2001. This guidance sets out key principles on tackling racial harassment in NHS employment.

The need for local policies to deal with staff/patient and patient/patient racial harassment where patients have been detained under the Mental Health Act is highlighted in the National Institute for Mental Health document "Delivering Race Equality—A Framework for Action and Engaging and Changing—Developing effective policy for the care and treatment of Black and minority ethnic detained patients".

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in mental health institutions died in each of the last five years through *(a)* hanging, *(b)* hanging with the use of a non-collapsible curtain track and *(c)* hanging with the use of a collapsible curtain track. [154418]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The total numbers of people who died in mental health institutions from hanging in each of the last five years for which figures are available (1997–2001) are shown in the table.

| | *Deaths from hanging* |
|---|---|
| 1997 | 57 |
| 1998 | 44 |
| 1999 | 51 |
| 2000 | 36 |
| 2001 | 36 |

*Note:*
Figures for hangings using non-collapsible and collapsible curtain tracks are not available.

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health which professionals make up an assertive outreach team. [154406]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** A detailed service specification for assertive outreach teams, which includes information on staffing requirements, is contained in the "Mental Health Policy Implementation Guide" (2001), which is available from the Department's website at http://www.publications.doh.gov.uk/mentalhealth/implementationguide.htm and is also available in the Library.

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of the assertive outreach teams that are operational are multi-disciplinary. [154407]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** According to the Durham mental health service mapping database www.dur.ac.uk/service.mapping/amh), over 95 per cent. of assertive outreach teams, which are operational, are multi-disciplinary.

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list which trusts depend on home treatment teams for additional cover to their assertive outreach teams. [154409]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Information about the arrangements for clinical cover in teams is not captured centrally.

The inter-relationship of teams and services and their working arrangements are local matters in the context of national guidance on standards of care, the evidence concerning best practice, and the targets set within the NHS Plan.

Guidance on the configuration of teams and services is provided in the Mental Health Policy Implementation Guide, which is available from the Department's website at http://www.publications.doh.gov.uk/mentalhealth/implementationguide.htm and is also available in the Library.

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many early intervention teams the National Service Framework for Mental Health recommends establishing. [154423]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The "National Service Framework for Mental Health" (1999) set out standards for treatment and care for people with mental health

problems, including two standards specifically concerned to ensure that each person with severe mental illness receives the range of mental health services they need. The NSF also set out evidence concerning the importance of early intervention for young people with the first sign of a psychosis.

The "NHS Plan" (2000) provided extra investment by 2003–04 to fast-forward the NSF and set a target of 50 early intervention teams to be established by 2004 to ensure all young people who experience a first episode of psychosis receive the early and intensive support they need.

Further details were set out in the "Mental Health Policy Implementation Guide" (2001) which is available from the Department's website at http://www.dh.gov.uk, a copy of which has also been placed in the Library.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total funding for mental health services was in the NHS in England in each year since 1997. [154005]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to him on 15 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 857–58W.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 2 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 687W, on mental health, how many carer support workers are employed in the NHS. [154010]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** This information is not centrally available. Arrangements are being made to centrally capture data on carer support workers in post by the end of the year.

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects the full complement of *(a)* early intervention, *(b)* assertive outreach and *(c)* crisis resolution teams to be established, as set out in the National Service Framework for Mental Health. [154424]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The full complement of assertive outreach teams has been delivered.

We expect local services to have plans in place to deliver the full complement of early intervention and crisis resolution teams by the end of the year as set out in the NHS Plan (2000).

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many prisoners have been *(a)* diagnosed with and *(b)* treated for mental health disorders in each year since 1997, broken down by prison establishment. [155900]

**Dr. Ladyman:** The information is not available in the form requested. A survey of psychiatric morbidity among prisoners in England and Wales in 1997, by the Office for National Statistics, showed that 90 per cent. of prisoners have at least one significant mental health problem, including personality disorder, psychosis, neurosis, alcohol misuse and drug dependence. Around 5,000 people in prison at any one time have a severe mental illness though they will not all be acutely ill.

Prisons and their national health service primary care trust partners are responsible for assessing the health needs of their populations and developing services, including mental health services to meet those needs. NHS funded prison mental health in reach teams will be providing services in 90 prisons by March 2004.

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on incidence of mental health disorders among ethnic minority prisoners. [155901]

**Dr. Ladyman:** In 1997 the Office for National Statistics (ONS) undertook a survey of "Psychiatric morbidity amongst prisoners in England and Wales". The report included a range of information on the prevalence of specific mental health problems in black and minority ethnic prisoners. A copy of the ONS study is available in the Library.

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the effectiveness of mental health service *(a)* provision and *(b)* interventions in prisons. [155902]

**Dr. Ladyman:** The provision of national health service community-style mental health services will be in around 90 establishments by March 2004. An evaluation of the in-reach programme has been commissioned through the NHS forensic research and development programme and is expected to start shortly.

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what programmes are in place to ensure swift identification of prisoners with mental health disorders upon arrival at prison establishments; and which prison establishments operate such programmes. [155903]

**Dr. Ladyman:** Her Majesty's Prison Service and the Department of Health are working together to implement a revised reception health screening process by March 2004. The new process focuses explicitly on ensuring prompt and effective identification of individuals with mental health problems.

The new reception screening arrangements are being introduced into the following establishments in England by March 2004: Durham, Eastwood Park, Feltham, Glen Parva, Holme House, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, New Hall, Wandsworth, Brixton, Bedford, Lewes, Preston, Styal, Wormwood Scrubbs, Woodhill, Dorchester, Exeter, Highpoint North, Lincoln, Norwich, Pentonville, Hull, Chelmsford, Nottingham, Hindley, Altcourse, Ashfield, Blakenhurst, Bristol, Brinsford, Castington, Gloucester, Leicester, Highdown, Birmingham, Forest Bank, Onley, Parkhurst, Shewsbury, Stoke Heath, Winchester, Elmley, Brockhill, Bullingtdon, Doncaster, Long Lartin, Lancaster Farms, Wetherby, Wakefield, Holloway, Belmarsh, Full Sutton, Huntercombe, Reading, Warren Hill, Werrington, Low Newton, Kirkham and Morton Hall.

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health which prisons operate permanent community mental health teams. [155904]

**Dr. Ladyman:** The specialist care of severely mentally ill prisoners is provided by mental health teams, which are staffed by national health service employees and broadly correspond to local community mental health teams. There are currently 90 such teams operating in the following establishments in England:

*Pnase 1*: (introduced during 2001–02): Belmarsh, Birmingham, Brixton, Bullwood Hall, Chelmsford, Durham, Eastwood Park, Feltham, Frankland, Holloway, Leeds, Leicester, Pentonville, Wandsworth, Winchester, Whitemoor, Woodhill and Wormwood Scrubs.

*Phase 2*: (introduced during 2002–03): Ashfield, Bedford, Blakenhurst, Bristol, Brockhill, Dorchester, Exeter, Glen Parva, Holme House, Hull, Lewes, Lincoln, Liverpool, Long Lartin, Manchester, Moorland, New Hall, Norwich, Nottingham, Onley, Parkhurst, Portland, Preston, Rochester, Styal and Wakefield.

*Phase 3*: (introduced during 2003-O4): Albany/Camp Hill, Altcourse, Aylesbury, Blantyre House, Brinsford, Buckley Hall, Bullingdon, Canterbury, Castington, Coldingly, Cookham Wood, Dartmoor, Deerbolt, Doncaster, Dovegate, Drake Hall, Elmley, Forest Bank, Foston Hall, Full Sutton, Garth, Gartree, Gloucester, Haverigg, Highdown, Highpoint North/ Highpoint South, Hindley, Hollesley Bay/Warren Hill, Huntercombe, Kingston, Lancester Farms, Littlehay, Low Newton, Maidstone, Northallerton, Reading, Risley, Shrewsbury, Stafford, Stoke Heath, Swaleside, Swifen Hall, Thorn Cross, Werrington, Wetherby and Wolds.

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people are employed to treat mental health disorders in each prison establishment. [155905]

**Dr. Ladyman:** This information is not available. Most healthcare staff working in prisons will be involved in some way in caring for individuals with mental health problems. By March 2004 we expect to meet the NHS Plan commitment for 300 additional staff to provide specialist community type mental health services to over 5,000 prisoners.

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total cost of mental health programmes in UK prisons was in each year since 1997, broken down by prison establishment. [155906]

**Dr. Ladyman:** In England the total amount allocated specifically to primary care trusts for national health service mental health services in prisons was £1,719,000 in 2O01–02; £3,685,000 in 2002–03 and £9,400,000 in 2003–04. A breakdown of this information, by prison, has been placed in the Library. We expect total expenditure on these services to double to around £20 million by 2O05–06.

Mental health services for prisoners are also provided through Her Majesty's Prison Service, but the funding for these is not separately identified.

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what mental health programmes are available to prisoners upon release from prison. [155907]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Released prisoners can access the full range of mental health services available to the population in which they become resident. An important function of national health service mental health in-reach teams working in prisons is to ensure effective through-care for prisoners with serious mental health problems, to be followed up by support from appropriate mental health services on release.

## NHS Premises (Accidental Injury)

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many deaths from accidental injury on NHS premises were recorded in each year since 1997. [151719]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The number of fatal injuries on national health service premises reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in each financial year since 1997–98 are shown in the table. The figures are for work-related injuries. This covers workers (employees and self-employed people) who are injured at work or in connection with their work, and members of the public (including hospital patients) injured as a result of the work activity of someone else. Injuries arising directly out of the conduct of medical treatment by a doctor or dentist are not reportable to HSE.

*Fatal injuries on NHS premises as reported to all enforcing authorities, 1997–98 to 2002–03*[1]

| | *Workers* | *Members of the public* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1997–98 | — | 8 | 8 |
| 1998–99 | — | 14 | 14 |
| 1999–2000 | — | 17 | 17 |
| 2000–01 | 1 | 16 | 17 |
| 2001–02 | — | 11 | 11 |
| 2002–03[1] | — | 15 | 15 |

[1] Provisional.

*Note:*

Figures relate to Great Britain.

*Source:*

Reports to Health and Safety Executive under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 1995.

## NHS Professionals

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether NHS Professionals accepts NHS staff with work permits to work as agency staff. [152992]

**Mr. Hutton:** Under current Home Office regulations, national health service staff employed under work permit arrangements are not permitted to undertake supplementary employment through a recruitment agency.

## NHS Trusts

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many trust franchise managers have terminated their contract before its expiry; and what action has been taken against them in each case; [153273]

(2) under what circumstances a franchise manager appointed to run a zero star trust may terminate his three year contract to manage that trust *(a)* without a penalty and *(b)* with a penalty; and what penalty can be applied by (i) the trust and (ii) the Department. [153274]

**Mr. Hutton** *[holding answer 6 February 2004]:* National Health Service franchise contracts are a matter for agreement between the individual concerned and his/ her employer. Questions relating to specific clauses within such contracts can be answered only by these parties.

The Department has no remit to apply a penalty to the chief executive of a franchised trust should he/she choose to terminate his/her contract before it is due to finish.

The chief executives of two franchised trusts have terminated their franchise contracts before they were due to finish. Any subsequent action taken as a result of this is a matter for their employers.

### Nursing

**Mr. Archie Norman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many nurse practitioners he estimates are required to ensure compliance in England with the European working time directive; [153706]

(2) how many nurses of an appropriate grade work as nurse practitioners to cover doctors in training in the NHS. [153709]

**Mr. Hutton:** It is not possible to estimate a figure for the number of nurse practitioners required, as ensuring compliance with the working time directive (WTD) requires a range of different approaches in different trusts and services, only some of which will require nurse practitioners to be employed.

The 20 WTD pilot projects currently in progress include seven employing nurse practitioners and five more which have developed senior specialist nurse roles. Examples of these are nurses trained as first assistants in surgery, as perioperative surgical practitioners, as specialist mental health nurses, and as pre-admission nurses. These pilots have shown that nurse practitioners and nurses in specialist roles can be extremely effective at both helping a trust to achieve compliant rotas and improving the quality of patient care. In all of these pilots, however, the nurses' roles are combined with changes to medical staff working patterns, and changes to service delivery, which together improve WTD compliance.

**Mr. Norman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the vacancy rate is for the nursing grades that cover nurse practitioners for each strategic health authority in England. [153708]

**Mr. Hutton:** It is not possible to identify nurse practitioners within the vacancy information collected. The rate of vacancies lasting three months or more for all qualified nurses was 2.9 per cent. in March 2003, down from 3.9 per cent. in 2000.

### Nursing Homes

**Mr. Laurence Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many people in nursing homes receive *(a)* higher, *(b)* medium and *(c)* lower level band funding in (i) England and (ii) Gloucestershire; and if he will make a statement; [155500]

(2) how many people in nursing homes receive continual help funding; what the criteria are for determining eligibility for such funding; and if he will make a statement. [155501]

**Dr. Ladyman:** Data on the number of people receiving each band of national health service funded nursing care are not collected centrally. There are roughly 20,000 people in nursing homes, at any one time, who are in receipt of fully funded NHS continuing care. All strategic health authorities have recently agreed fully funded NHS continuing care eligibility criteria that apply in their area.

### Operations

**Mr. Hurst:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many operations were performed in NHS hospitals to correct mistakes made in previous operations through *(a)* error and *(b)* misdiagnosis in each year from 1990 to 2002. [155991]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** This information is not collected centrally.

However, the Government have established the National Patient Safety Agency to improve the safety of national health service patient care by promoting an open and fair culture and by introducing during 2004 a national reporting and learning system for adverse events.

### Organ Donor Register

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of people signed onto the organ donor register. [154619]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** People are encouraged to join the organ donor register through a number of initiatives, including when they apply for a driving licence, register with a new general practitioner, or apply for a new passport. Additionally, UK Transplant runs publicity campaigns and targets action to raise the profile of organ donation, including specific advertising and information campaigns to increase organ donation from the South Asian and black African and Caribbean populations.

UK Transplant is currently running a pilot scheme with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency to send out organ donor registration forms to all vehicle owners with the road tax reminder during January, March and April this year. The pilot will cover nine million vehicles and UK Transplant will assess the effectiveness of the pilot later in the year.

There are currently over 11 million people on the register—19 per cent. of the United Kingdom population.

### Osteoporosis

**Dr. Murrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to improve services for people with osteoporosis in the South West. [153815]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** National action to improve services for people with osteoporosis is being taken forward through the work of the orthopaedic services improvement team, part of the National Health Service Modernisation Agency, and implementation of the national service framework (NSF) for older people. The prevention, treatment, care and support of those at risk of osteoporosis are important components in the delivery of the integrated falls services that the NSF requires to be in place locally by April 2005.

In the South West, the responsibility for commissioning services for people with osteoporosis rests with individual primary care trusts. Local programmes are being developed as part of the NSF to improve services for older people and prevent falls, which includes action on osteoporosis. For example, in South Devon an initiative called Osteoporosis South Devon was launched in October 2002 and is a new service for primary and secondary care to identify those at higher risk of osteoporosis.

Action is also being taken across the region to prevent the onset of osteoporosis. To this end, a South West regional physical activity group has been set up, which is developing a sport and physical activity plan for the South West.

**Ms Keeble:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to issue guidelines on the treatment of osteoporosis. [153943]

**Dr. Ladyman:** The anticipated publication date for the guidance from the National Institute for Clinical Excellence on the clinical and cost effectiveness of technologies for the prevention and treatment of osteoporosis is June 2004. A clinical guideline is also in preparation on the assessment of fracture risk and the prevention of osteoporotic fractures in individuals at high risk. The anticipated publication date for this guidance is June 2005.

**Ms Atherton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the preliminary recommendations of the National Institute for Clinical Excellence on the drug treatment of osteoporosis. [154894]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The National Institute for Clinical Excellence's consultation document does not constitute its formal guidance on this technology appraisal: the recommendations are preliminary and may change after the consultation. As a registered stakeholder of the guidance, the Department has responded to the consultation and it would be inappropriate to comment further at this stage.

### Overseas NHS Staff

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the number of overseas staff working in the NHS. [153103]

**Mr. Hutton:** The information requested is not collected centrally.

### Parliamentary Questions

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the reorganisation of the Department will improve the response time to *(a)* parliamentary questions and *(b)* ministerial correspondence. [153687]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The Department's change programme is seeking to improve the quality and timeliness of response to parliamentary questions and ministerial correspondence by centralising expertise.

Since the formation of the Department's customer service centre, there has been steady improvement during 2003 towards Whitehall standards and this is expected to continue as the centre expands to take on all departmental ministerial correspondence.

### Patient Records

**Mr. Wyatt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to centralise the holding of patients' records; and if he will make a statement. [153629]

**Mr. Hutton** *[holding answer 9 February 2004]:* The national programme for information technology is responsible for introducing the National Health Service care record service (NHS CRS), which will lead to the NHS having an integrated, electronic record management service for the first time. The NHS CRS will provide each patient with a single, comprehensive set of electronic medical and care notes. This will enable all authorised clinicians involved with the care of a patient, to see and share health information. Local practices and hospitals will continue to hold detailed local records, but additionally a summary health record will be created containing essential data such as allergies, current treatments or medication.

The NHS CRS will also ensure that key data and information is entered only once and then available to multiple users and professionals who are authorised to access. It will support better clinical decision making, remove the need for repeat and potentially harmful tests simply because the previous record is lost or not available and improve the quality of the time spent with the patient.

The security and confidentiality of patient information is an absolute priority in the context of electronic records and transmissions. Within the contracts for new applications, systems and services being negotiated with IT suppliers are stringent terms around ensuring security, control, alerts and audit measures, including encryption. We will have a right to terminate the contract of any supplier that fails to deliver the high standards that NHS patients and professionals are entitled to expect.

### Performance Indicators

**Mr. Norman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will publish the full details of the 2003–04 NHS performance indicators for *(a)* acute and specialist trusts, *(b)* primary care trusts, *(c)* mental health trusts and *(d)* ambulance trusts. [152624]

**Mr. Hutton:** The national health service performance ratings for 2003–04 will be published by the new Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection. The indicators to be used for the 2003–04 ratings were published by the Commission for Health Improvement (CHI) on 18 December 2003. Full details can be found on the CHI website at www.chi.nhs.uk.

**Mr. Norman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the official definitions are of *(a)* NHS performance indicators, *(b)* NHS targets and *(c)* NHS standards. [152623]

**Mr. Hutton:** National health service performance indicators are now published by the Commission for Health Improvement as part of the NHS performance ratings. They measure service quality and progress in areas of importance to patients and the public. The performance ratings system assesses trusts' performance on these indicators.

Targets are the level of service that the Government expects all NHS organisations to achieve and are set out in the priorities and planning framework for that year.

The standards will define levels of service quality, which those providing or commissioning English NHS health services should seek to achieve. The performance of the NHS against those standards will be assessed against criteria to be set by the independent Commission for Health Care Audit and Inspection.

### Prescriptions

**Dr. Murrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on progress towards meeting the NHS Plan target for the electronic transmission of prescriptions. [153822]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The electronic transmission of prescriptions is one of the core programmes within the national programme for information technology (NPfIT) in the national health service in England. The electronic transmission of prescriptions (ETP) programme will enable prescribers to create and transfer prescription data electronically to a patient's community pharmacist and the Prescription Pricing Authority (PPA). As well as being more convenient for the patient (for example in relation to repeat prescriptions), this will improve safety by reducing prescription errors and providing better information at the point of prescribing and dispensing. It will also ensure that information about what has been prescribed and dispensed forms part of each person's NHS care record. In addition, ETP will deliver important administrative improvements.

The NHS Plan did not contain a specific target in relation to the electronic transmission of prescriptions. We are working towards the timetable for implementation contained in "Delivering 21st Century IT Support in the NHS". This stated, "the National Prescriptions Service will be 50 per cent. implemented by December 2005 and fully implemented by December 2007". This work is being taken forward by the NPfIT in the NHS.

Key elements of the electronic transmission of prescriptions system have been procured as part of the recently concluded NHS care records service procurements. Work is now focusing on how community pharmacies can be connected to the system, and how their pharmacy computer systems can be upgraded to comply with the requisite technical specification. It is intended that deployment of the live system will commence in January 2005.

### Primary Care

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the safety of care provided by co-operatives and other organisations providing out-of-hours primary care services. [152815]

**Mr. Hutton:** Primary care trusts (PCTs) are responsible for ensuring that providers of out of hours care in their area provide a high quality, safe service, through the system of accreditation.

Accreditation ensures that providers meet nationally set quality standards, including clinical governance. Providers must report regularly to PCTs on performance, and strategic health authorities performance manage PCTs in their delivery of out of hours services.

All organised providers of out-of-hours services will be accredited by March 2004. Thereafter, they will be subject to re-accreditation at least once every three years, unless an accrediting PCT has grounds to lead it to initiate an earlier re-accreditation. Provider assessment is undertaken by a PCT outside the area that is covered by the provider, to ensure impartiality.

Under the new general medical services (GMS) contract everyone who provides services out of hours, including individuals contracted by the PCT, as well as organisations, will need to meet the national quality standards. These standards are currently under review by an expert group to make them an integral part of GMS and personal medical services contracting.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many adverse incidents he estimates occurred in co-operatives and out-of-hours primary care services in each year since 1997. [152817]

**Mr. Hutton:** Information on the number of adverse incidents that occurred in co-operatives and other out of hours primary care services are not held centrally. Primary care trusts (PCTs) and before them, health authorities, are responsible for ensuring that out of hours services are provided to the highest standard. Since October 2002, the performance of all providers of out of hours services have been judged against nationally set quality standards, including clinical governance. Providers must report regularly to PCTs on performance and are re-accredited at least once every three years, unless an accrediting PCT has grounds to lead it to initiate an earlier re-accreditation. Strategic health authorities performance manage PCTs in their delivery of out of hours services.

### Renal Services

**Dr. Pugh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what capital allocation has been made available in 2003–04 for the development of renal services in *(a)* Merseyside and *(b)* Cheshire. [154298]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** In 2003–04, the total renal capital allocation for Cheshire and Merseyside was £504,000.

**Dr. Pugh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funding is available in 2003–04 to the local health authorities in *(a)* Merseyside and *(b)* Cheshire for the development of renal services. [154299]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** In 2003–04, £3 million was identified by primary care trusts (PCTs) for investment into the development of renal services to support Cheshire and Merseyside renal patients. This is revenue funding and does not include the national renal capital funding. It is in addition to the PCT baseline investment.

### Respiratory Disease

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the total expenditure on respiratory disease in terms of *(a)* hospital expenditure,

*(b)* primary care expenditure and *(c)* pharmaceutical expenditure for each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [156004]

**Dr. Ladyman:** Information on expenditure on respiratory disease is not collected centrally. The British Thoracic Society published their report in November 2001 entitled "The Burden of Lung Disease". The report estimates the total cost of respiratory disease to the national health service to be £2,576 million. It estimates that approximately £647 million is spent on primary care, £1,062 million is spent on hospital inpatient care, £18 million is spent on hospital day case care, £40.7 million is spent on hospital outpatient care and £800 million is spent on prescriptions relating to respiratory disease.

### Restructuring/Change Programme

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the expected expenditure is on redundancies arising from the restructuring and change programme. [153676]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Initial expenditure on voluntary redundancies is £9.1 million. The amount of further expenditure will depend on a number of factors, including the level of transfers to partner organisations, the amount of natural wastage and the number of staff the Department is able to re-deploy.

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the estimated total cost is of the Department of Health reorganisation and change process; and whether this figure includes monies to address *(a)* planning, *(b)* evaluation, *(c)* retraining and *(d)* relocation. [153677]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Total costs in the implementation period October 2003 to October 2004 are estimated at £13.7 million. This includes external consultants support in planning the implementation and evaluation as well as support for staff. This figure also incorporates initial expenditure on voluntary redundancies of £9.1 million. Relocation costs cannot be quantified until appointments have been made.

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much money will be spent on *(a)* external consultants and *(b)* the process of transferring service provision to other Government Departments, arm's length bodies and local health authorities as part of the Department's change programme. [153678]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** We expect to spend £1.25 million on external consultants in the change programme implementation period from October 2003 to October 2004. Staff support in managing change, recruitment and in seeking alternative employment is estimated at £2.35 million in the same period.

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the expected social costs are of the restructuring proposed for the Department of Health in relation to *(a)* redundancies, *(b)* relocation of staff and *(c)* the impact of these issues on areas of high unemployment. [153679]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The impact of unnecessary redundancies will be mitigated by a vacancy freeze (in place since last summer) and active redeployment of staff to alternative posts, either within the health and social care system or within the civil service.

Funds will be available to support the relocation of staff. The Department is committed to maintaining the proportion of posts it currently has in Leeds.

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the Department has conducted an impact assessment as outlined in the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, prior to the significant departmental changes that may affect the Department's staff. [153681]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The Department has identified the potential impact of the change programme on the promotion of race equality, has consulted upon and put in place processes to mitigate any adverse impact and is monitoring implementation.

**Mr. Norman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many departmental staff will be transferred to departmental arm's length bodies under the Change Programme. [153697]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Provisionally, several hundred posts are designated for transfer to other organisations, including arm's length bodies, which are themselves currently under review.

### School Nurses

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many school nurse whole-time equivalents are employed in each of the primary care trusts in Sussex; and what their responsibilities are. [154404]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The information on the number of school nurses and whole-time equivalents employed in each of the primary care trusts in Sussex is not collected centrally.

However the number of qualified nurses employed in each primary care trust (PCT) in the Sussex area, which includes school nurses, is shown in the table.

*All NHS qualified hospital and community health service nurses and GMS practice nurses employed by unrestricted principles and equivalents (UPEs)* [1] *in the specified organisations as at 30 September 2002*

| | *Whole time equivalent* | *Headcount* |
|---|---|---|
| Total of specified organisations | 1,325 | 2,061 |
| 5FH Bexhill and Rother PCT | 107 | 153 |
| 5FJ Hastings and St. Leonards PCT | 94 | 151 |
| 5FK Mid-Sussex PCT | 116 | 197 |
| 5L8 Adur, Arun and Worthing PCT | 280 | 418 |
| 5L9 Western Sussex PCT | 283 | 443 |
| 5LQ Brighton and Hove City PCT | 65 | 110 |
| 5LT Sussex Downs and Weald PCT | 218 | 335 |
| 5MA Crawley PCT | 94 | 135 |
| 5MC Horsham and Chanctonbury PCT | 70 | 119 |

[1] UPEs includes QMS Unrestricted Principals, PMS Contracted GPs and PMS Salaried GPs.

*Sources:*

Department of Health Non-Medical Workforce Census.

Department of Health General and Personal Medical Services Statistics.

School nurses' responsibilities cover children in the five to 16 age group in areas, which include general health care, drop-in cases, child protection, vaccinations, health checks, referrals on to general practitioners, target health checks (such as hearing tests), as well as requests from schools, one to one for parent or child.

### Scrutiny Committees (Costs)

**Mrs. Lait:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the Answer of 21 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1362–63W, what the resource implications are to *(a)* local government and *(b)* the NHS of the requirement for national services within the NHS to consult Overview and Scrutiny committees when they wish to change a national service; and whether a regulatory analysis of the system has been published. [155078]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** It is not possible to assess the resource implications for local government or national health service organisations in relation to the requirement for overview and scrutiny committees to be consulted on changes to national NHS services, since each circumstance will lead to a different set of arrangements. It is right that substantial changes are appropriately consulted upon and that both local government and the NHS treat that consultation as a priority for local people affected by any proposed change. Local government and the NHS locally should set aside funding to ensure that such changes do receive rigorous consultation to ensure local people's interests are taken into consideration.

To date, there has not been any regulatory analysis of the work of overview and scrutiny committees in relation to health services. The Department is making a one-off payment to the Centre for Public Scrutiny to undertake a programme of work to support and enable health scrutiny by local government. Part of the three-year programme will be to put in place an evaluation of health scrutiny, including health service consultations, and to assess the outcomes for local people resulting from the input of overview and scrutiny committees.

### Secure Beds (Lancashire)

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* secure beds and *(b)* non-secure beds are available in Lancashire Care Trust; and what percentage is in use in each case. [153494]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The information is not collected in the form requested.

### Sex Lottery Campaign

**Sandra Gidley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what publications and media outlets were used in the sex lottery campaign; and how often each outlet was used. [150292]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The Sex Lottery campaign has been carefully designed to target young adults, aged 18 to 30, who are most at risk from sexually transmitted infections and who would benefit from increased information and awareness raising. A variety of publications and media outlets have been used to reach this audience, and a full detailed list has been placed in the Library.

### Spinal Foundation

**Mr. Brady:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps his Department is taking to facilitate referrals by general practitioners to the Spinal Foundation; [155997]

(2) if he will make a statement on his Department's plans for future funding of *(a)* services and *(b)* research provided by the Spinal Foundation. [155998]

**Dr. Ladyman:** We currently have no plans to provide further funding to the Spinal Foundation.

Decisions on whether or not an individual patient should be referred to the Spinal Foundation is a matter for the clinician involved in the patient's care and is not something the Department would become involved in centrally.

### Streptococcal Infections

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what figures his Department has collated on the number of cases of Group D streptococcus in each of the last five years. [151945]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Almost all group D streptococcal infections in humans are associated with enterococci or 'Streptococcus bovis group'. Data received by the Health Protection Agency Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre under a voluntary reporting system are shown in table 1.

*Table 1: Annual totals for England and Wales*

| | *Number of reports of enterococci isolated from blood stream* | *Number of reports of 'Streptococcus bovis group' isolated from blood stream* |
|---|---|---|
| 1998 | 3,049 | 160 |
| 1999 | 3,208 | 173 |
| 2000 | 3,648 | 161 |
| 2001 | 4,312 | 196 |
| 2002 | 4,855 | 215 |

*Source:*
Health Protection Agency website: http://www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics az/bacteraemia/gram pos.htm

Information for hospital episode statistics is shown in table 2.

*Table 2: Streptococcus group D (ICD10 B95.2) as the cause of diseases classified to other ICD10 chapters—All diagnosis count of episodes. Finished Consultant Episodes (FCEs)—NHS hospitals in England, 1998–99 to 2002–03*

| | *Finished consultant episodes* |
|---|---|
| 1998–99 | 381 |
| 1999–2000 | 479 |
| 2000–01 | 542 |
| 2001–02 | 572 |
| 2002–03 | 707 |

*Notes:*
1. A finished consultant episode (FCE) is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one health care provider. Please note that the figures do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year. These figures represent a count of all FCEs where the diagnosis was mentioned in any of the 14 (7 prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in a HES record. A record is only included once in each count, even if a diagnosis is mentioned in more than one diagnosis field of the record.

2. Figures are grossed for both coverage and missing/invalid clinical data, except for 2001–02 and 2002–03, which are not yet adjusted for shortfalls.
*Source:*
Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Department of Health

### Stroke

**Dr. Cable:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimated NHS spending was on *(a)* treatment of stroke patients, *(b)* research on strokes and *(c)* stroke rehabilitation in 2003. [154948]

**Dr. Ladyman:** Information on national health service spending on the treatment and rehabilitation of stroke is not collected centrally. Primary care trusts (PCTs) receive unified allocations to cover the costs of hospital and community health services, discretionary funding for general practice staff, premises and computers and primary care prescribing.

The level of funding made available for the drugs, staffing and other costs of providing stroke services are determined locally. It is for PCTs, in partnership with local stakeholders, to determine how best to use their funds to provide health services for their populations, including those with stroke.

Management of much of the research supported by NHS research and development funding is devolved and expenditure at project level is not held centrally by the Department. The main agency through which the government supports medical and clinical research is the Medical Research Council (MRC). The MRC is an independent body that receives its grant-in-aid from the Office of Science and Technology. The MRC spent an estimated £4.9 million on stroke research in 2002–03.

### SunSmart

**Mr. Baron:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the SunSmart campaign for 2004 will be launched. [154615]

**Miss Melanie Johnson** *[holding answer 12 February 2004]:* The SunSmart campaign, run by Cancer Research UK on behalf of the United Kingdom Health Departments, will be launched in spring 2004.

### Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy

**Mr. Havard:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what precautions are in force to protect people from the risk of transmission of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies through surgical instruments. [153859]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Advice from the Spongiform Encephalopathies advisory committee indicates that good decontamination is key in reducing the risk of person to person transmission of variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (vCJD) through surgical instruments.

A circular (HSC 2000/032) was issued to the national health service on 18 October 2000, emphasising the importance of effective decontamination in preventing the spread of vCJD. In addition, the Department has surveyed the effectiveness of decontamination services and taken action to ensure all NHS hospitals in England had access to decontamination services of an acceptable standard by December 2001.

### Unlicensed Drugs (Children)

**Paul Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to restrict the prescription of unlicensed drugs to children. [155331]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** There are no plans to impose a general restriction on the prescription of unlicensed medicines to children.

Most medicines have only been tested for safe and effective use in the adult population and there are comparatively few medicines on the market that are specifically licensed for the treatment of children. This leads to prescribers having no option but to prescribe unlicensed and off-label medications in this patient population.

Normally, if a product has not been licensed for use in children because of a lack of clinical trial data and/or clinical experience, the summary of product characteristics contains statements to this effect and use in children is not recommended. However, further restrictions (contraindications) have been introduced with respect to the off-label or unlicensed use of specific medicinal products where there is evidence that the benefit/risk may be unfavourable.

The real solution to this problem lies not in restricting paediatric prescribing but in stimulating the development and testing of appropriately formulated medicines for use in the paediatric population. It is expected that the European Commission will adopt a proposal for a Regulation on medicines for paediatric use by the end of April 2004. It will contain a number of incentives and obligations to stimulate the development of medicines for children. In the mean time officials have been asked to develop a UK strategy to deliver, in the short and medium term, improved availability of medicines that are appropriately labelled and appropriately formulated for use in children.

### Wind Turbines

**Dr. Murrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what studies he has commissioned into the health effects of living close to wind turbines. [154766]

**Mr. Hutton:** The Department has not funded any work in this area.

### Working Time Directive

**Mr. Norman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health which of the European Working Time Directive pilot sites have a full complement of *(a)* senior specialist nurses and *(b)* nurse practitioners to cover doctors in training. [153707]

**Mr. Hutton:** The Working Time Directive (WTD) pilot sites are managed by the Modernisation Agency (MA) as part of the wider work on WTD implementation. I understand from the MA that it is not possible to say what constitutes a full complement of these nurses, as each trust and service will have specific needs to be determined locally.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### Council Tax Benefit

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of pensioners were eligible for council tax benefit in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2003. [153788]

**Mr. Pond:** Between 43 per cent. and 46 per cent. of pensioners in Great Britain were either in receipt of, or were entitled to but not receiving, council tax benefit in financial year 1997–98. Approximately 48 per cent. of pensioners are estimated to be entitled to council tax benefit in 2003–04.

*Notes:*

1. Pensioners are defined as either a single person aged at least 60 or, if within a couple, at least one person is aged 60 years or above.
2. Pensioners in Residential Care and Nursing Homes are excluded from the estimates.
3. The estimate for 1997–98 is presented as range to reflect the uncertainty in the number of estimated entitled non-recipients based on Family Resources Survey data.
4. The estimate for 2003–04 is based on the Department's Policy Simulation Model (PSM), which makes use of 2001–02 Family Resources Survey data projected forward to 2003–04 to estimate the extent of council tax benefit entitlement for each pensioner unit in the survey.
5. The estimates are based on sample counts that have been adjusted for non-response using multi-purpose grossing factors that control for tenure type, council tax band and a number of demographic variables. Estimates, particularly for 2003–04, are subject to sampling error and remaining response bias.

**Mr. Prosser:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has to introduce assessed income periods for pensioners claiming council tax benefit; and what estimate he has made of the cost of this change. [152797]

**Mr. Pond:** The assessed income period (AIP) applies in pension credit. It is a period, normally five years, during which pensioners aged 65 or more will not need to report to the Pension Service changes to the money they have set aside for their retirement.

There are no plans to introduce similar arrangements for council tax benefit and therefore no estimate of cost has been made. However, the requirement for pensioners to complete annual reviews in housing and council tax benefit claims was removed in October 2003, and will be abolished for all other housing and council tax benefit recipients from April 2004.

**Mr. Prosser:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will introduce a single short form specifically for pensioner home owners claiming council tax benefit. [152798]

**Mr. Pond:** We have already introduced a streamlined housing benefit/council tax benefit claim form for pensioners (HCTB1(PC)), and are currently considering the introduction of a council tax benefit claim form designed specifically for use by pensioners who do not require housing benefit.

### Benefit Appeals

**John Barrett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* successful and *(b)* unsuccessful appeals were made against decisions made on (i) disability and (ii) sickness benefits in each year since 1997; and what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the primary decision-making process for (A) disability and (B) sickness benefits. [153377]

**Maria Eagle:** The information is in the table.

*Appeals against decisions made on the key disability and sickness benefits*

| *Benefit type and appeal tribunal decision* | *2003* | *2002* | *2001* | *2000* | *1999* | *1998* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Incapacity benefit successful appeals | 22,055 | 18,145 | 15,185 | 16,845 | Not available | Not available |
| Incapacity benefit unsuccessful appeals | 24,155 | 22,910 | 19,385 | 24,545 | Not available | Not available |
| Attendance allowance successful appeals | 3,480 | 3,960 | 5,035 | 3,440 | 2,455 | 2,300 |
| Attendance allowance unsuccessful appeals | 4,135 | 4,350 | 5,640 | 4,180 | 2,635 | 2,410 |
| Disability living allowance successful appeals | 36,855 | 39,495 | 45,165 | 31,065 | 25,170 | 20,330 |
| Disability living allowance unsuccessful appeals | 32,095 | 32,510 | 40,200 | 31,410 | 25,810 | 21,980 |

For comparison purposes, the total number of beneficiaries of each benefit for each year is shown as follows rounded to the nearest 100,000.

| | *DLA* | *AA* | *IB* |
|---|---|---|---|
| August 2003 | 2.5 | 1.4 | 1.5 |
| August 2002 | 2.4 | 1.3 | 1.5 |
| August 2001 | 2.3 | 1.3 | 1.5 |
| August 2000 | 2.2 | 1.3 | 1.5 |
| August 1999 | 2.1 | 1.3 | 1.5 |
| August 1998 | 2 | 1.2 | 1.6 |

*Source:*
DWP statistics, given for 31 August for each year shown.

The Secretary of State publishes an annual report on decision-making standards in the Department for Work and Pensions. Copies are available in the Library.

### Benefit Fraud

**John Barrett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the regional variation in *(a)* housing benefit, *(b)* income support and *(c)* jobseeker's allowance fraud; and if he will make a statement. [147830]

**Mr. Pond:** We are committed to driving down levels of fraud and error in the benefits system, including tackling regional variations; and there are a number of specific initiatives within our agencies to achieve this.

The latest published national statistical report 'Fraud and Error in Income Support and Jobseeker's Allowance from April 2001 to March 2002' provides a breakdown of estimates of Income Support and Jobseeker's Allowance fraud by each Government Office Region. A copy is available in the Library.

We cannot provide an estimate of the regional variation in Housing Benefit fraud because the measurement sample only supports a national estimate.

**Mr. Webb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the annual level of *(a)* detected and *(b)* undetected benefit fraud in each of the last six years. [151020]

**Mr. Pond:** We estimate that approximately £2 billion per annum is overpaid as a result of fraud.

We make regular estimates of the total amount of fraud overpayments on Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance and Housing Benefit and the results are published as National Statistics.

Our estimates of levels of fraud and error in Income Support and Jobseeker's Allowance are published in the series of reports "Fraud and Error in Claims for Income Support and Jobseeker's Allowance."

For Housing Benefit, we published "Fraud and Error in Housing Benefit, April 2002 to March 2003" on 11 December 2003. This report represents the first national headline estimates, for the level of fraud and error in Housing Benefit, derived via the statistical analysis of data collected by the Housing Benefit Review (HBR) continuous measurement exercise. Copies of the reports have been placed in the Library.

**Mrs. May:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what guidance he has issued regarding joint prosecution for benefit fraud with local authorities; [155071]

(2) what guidance he has issued to local authorities about undertaking joint prosecutions with the Department of Work and Pensions for benefit fraud. [155103]

**Mr. Pond:** Comprehensive guidance is provided to fraud investigators in this Department and in local authorities in the form of the Fraud Procedures and Instructions (FPI) Manual. Guidance on joint proceedings with local authorities was updated in June and August 2003, with additional specific guidance on joint prosecutions also issued in August 2003.

**Mrs. May:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many joint prosecutions have been undertaken by the Department with local authorities on benefit fraud in each of the last five years, broken down by local authority; [155072]

(2) how many joint prosecutions with local authorities for benefit fraud have been suspended in the last three months. [155104]

**Mr. Pond:** The information is not available.

**Mrs. May:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what discussions he has had with the office of the Deputy Prime Minister about the implications of the Howell Opinion on joint prosecutions for benefit fraud. [155271]

**Mr. Pond:** There have been no discussions concerning the implications of the Howell Opinion with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. However, Department for Work and Pensions lawyers and officials are continuing to work on the implications of the Opinion to ensure that effective joint working between DWP and local authorities may continue within the existing statutory framework.

### Benefit Payments

**Mr. Challen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many recipients of benefits have had their payments made to *(a)* standard bank or building society accounts, *(b)* bank or building society basic accounts and *(c)* Post Office card accounts. [142216]

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* child benefit recipients, *(b)* pensioners and *(c)* other benefit recipients received payments (i) into bank accounts, (ii) into Post Office Card Accounts and (iii) through post offices using pension and benefit books at the most recent date for which figures are available. [142424]

**Mr. Pond** *[holding answer 8 December 2003]:* The information in the table shows the current number of live accounts, by benefit group, actively paid by Direct Payment into a bank or building society account, and Post Office card account.

| *Benefit* | *Accounts paid by Direct Payment (excluding Post Office Card Account)* | *Accounts paid to Post Office Card Account* | *Accounts paid by order book* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Working Age Benefits | 1,818,507 | 51,560 | 2,683,926 |
| Disability and Carer's Benefit | 1,476,640 | 8,133 | 1,534,277 |
| Retirement Pension | 5,474,797 | 42,561 | 5,606,745 |
| Child Benefit | 4,848,029 | 52,053 | 1,938,727 |
| War Pensions | 138,790 | 2,753 | 99,447 |
| All Benefits | 13,756,763 | 157,060 | 11,863,122 |

*Notes:*

1. This table has been derived from a number of different sources.
2. The Ministry of Defence is now responsible for payment of War Pensions benefit—they provided the figure for Accounts paid to Post Office Card Account up to 22 October 2003.
3. The figures relate to accounts not customers.
4. They only include customers actually receiving an amount in payment.
5. We cannot differentiate between standard bank or building society accounts and basic bank accounts.
6. The table details figures for GB only.

Key figures on the progress of conversion to Direct Payment are available in the Library updated every four weeks.

### Benefit Rights

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will review all advertisements encouraging retired people to take up their benefit and tax credit rights in order to ensure that they are clear, unambiguous and accurate; and if he will withdraw advertisements that fail in these respects. [153079]

**Malcolm Wicks:** We constantly review advertising throughout a campaign to ensure it is working effectively—so that we can take appropriate action if necessary.

DWP national advertising is checked for clarity, comprehension and accuracy prior to publication or broadcast to ensure that our approach is clear and will generate the desired response. This may involve focus group research among representatives of the target audience and clearance by the relevant broadcast standards authorities. The process can also involve Departmental consultation with key stakeholders such as Help The Aged or Age Concern. Major campaigns also use tracking research to identify any issues of clarity, comprehension and accuracy, in order to

optimise campaign performance and ensure that the public have clear and timely information on entitlements and benefits.

Some local advertising, for example one-off local newspaper advertisements informing the public about outreach events, does not follow this process, as the advertisement just highlights the details of the event. It would not be cost effective to adopt the approach above in these cases.

The Department is not responsible for advertising tax credits.

**John Barrett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps his Department is taking to increase awareness of *(a)* disability and *(b)* sickness benefits. [153378]

**Maria Eagle:** The Department continually strives to ensure that its customers are aware of any potential entitlement to disability and sickness benefits. The Department publishes a wide range of literature and this is available from numerous easily accessible sources such as offices of the Department, some post offices, doctors' surgeries or advice centres. These, together with free telephone helplines/ensure that the public have sufficient information to enable them to make informed decisions about disability and sickness benefits.

The Department has a national, regional and local outreach programme in place that aims to promote and raise awareness about availability of services. The Department also meets regularly with partners from local authorities and welfare rights organisations that represent customers with physical, mental and sensory impairments, to ensure that they are kept up to date with our initiatives to modernise the delivery of benefits.

Expert advice is also available from advisers in Job Centre Plus offices which are rolling out over the next two or three years or Social Security offices, about all the benefits that can be claimed by people of working age and about the best steps for moving towards work.

For people with internet access information about all benefits and how these may be claimed is also contained on the DWP website.

The effectiveness of these initiatives has, for example, contributed to the increase in the number of disability living allowance recipients by 25.4 per cent. in the five years to August 2003 and by 5.9 per cent. in the last 12 months alone.

### Casual Staff

**Paul Holmes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many employees have been employed on 13-week casual appointments in Jobcentre and JobcentrePlus offices in *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* each region in the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement; [152672]

(2) how many JobcentrePlus staff on 13-week casual contracts were employed on these contracts for *(a)* the second time, *(b)* the third time and *(c)* more than the third time in the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement. [152673]

**Mr. Browne:** The information is not available and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what functions are carried out by casual staff employed in offices in the South East Region; what training they receive; and what the cost of such training was in the last year for which figures are available. [151529]

**Maria Eagle:** The Department employs casual staff for a number of reasons, for example, to help manage peaks of work and to aid release of permanent staff for training and preparation for major business change. Information on the specific duties carried out by casual staff is not available.

The Learning and Development provided for casual staff varies according to the job role and work undertaken by the individual. For example, those dealing with customers receive training linked to serving customers, keeping safe, equal opportunities, data protection and interviewing skills. More informal training includes working with, and observing more experienced colleagues and coaching from subject experts and line managers. In addition, many new staff have a buddy or mentor.

Information on the cost of training for casual staff is not available.

### Child Support Agency

**Mr. Swire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on reform of the Child Support Agency. [155348]

**Mr. Pond:** I refer the hon. Member to the written statement from my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 80–82WS.

**Mr. Webb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when existing Child Support Agency cases assessed under the old rules will be transferred to the new assessment system. [155910]

**Mr. Pond:** I refer the hon. Member to the written answer I gave the hon. Member for Castle Point (Bob Spink) on 18 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 1092W.

**Mr. Weir:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many people whose cases are in the hands of the Child Support Agency in *(a)* Angus constituency and *(b)* Scotland are due arrears of child maintenance; and how many have been due arrears for more than three months; [152544]

(2) what the *(a)* average and *(b)* longest time taken by the Child Support Agency has been to collect arrears due to persons whose cases are in the hands of the Agency in (i) the Angus constituency and (ii) Scotland; [152545]

(3) what amounts of arrears are due to persons in *(a)* the Angus constituency and *(b)* Scotland whose cases are in the hands of the Child Support Agency; [152546]

(4) what the total amount is owed to people whose cases are in the hands of the Child Support Agency in *(a)* Angus and *(b)* Scotland of arrears in child maintenance. [152547]

**Mr. Pond:** The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member.

*Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. Michael Weir, dated 23 February 2004:*

In reply to your recent Parliamentary questions about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the following questions:

> how many people whose cases are in the hands of the Child Support Agency in *(a)* Angus constituency and *(b)* Scotland are due arrears of child maintenance; and how many have been due arrears for more than three months.
>
> what the *(a)* average and *(b)* longest time taken by the Child Support Agency has been to collect arrears due to persons whose cases are in the hands of the Agency in (i) the Angus constituency and (ii) Scotland.
>
> what amounts of arrears are due to persons in *(a)* the Angus constituency and *(b)* Scotland whose cases are in the hands of the Child Support Agency.
>
> what the total amount is owed to people whose cases are in the hands of the Child Support Agency in *(a)* Angus and *(b)* Scotland of arrears in child maintenance.

The specific information that you seek is not available. However, I can tell you that there are around 600 cases within the Angus Parliamentary constituency where arrears are due and have been for more than three months. In comparison Scotland has nearly 26,000 cases where arrears have been outstanding for more than three months.

### Departmental Relocation

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) if he will make a statement on the factors which underlay decisions to *(a)* relocate work and *(b)* close his Department's offices in the South-East Region; [151631]

(2) what factors underlay the decisions *(a)* to close offices, *(b)* to transfer work through relocation and centralisation and *(c)* not to replace permanent staff in (i) Portsmouth, (ii) Southampton and (iii) the Isle of Wight; and if he will make a statement. [152149]

**Mr. Browne:** Jobcentre Plus and The Pension Service are modernising the services we provide to our customers. This modernisation is increasing the number of places where people can get information about work and benefits.

Jobcentre Plus is providing improved customer access through telephone contact centres, the internet and new, dedicated caller offices. The creation of new style Jobcentre Plus offices is providing customers with premises where they can make inquiries both about their benefits and about job opportunities in one place.

The Pension Service has a network of pension centres, complemented by a local service delivered in partnership with local authorities and voluntary sector organisations. The Pension Service is meeting pensioners in their local communities, holding appointment and drop-in advice surgeries in places that they are familiar with, such as Age Concern and CAB outlets, local libraries and community centres.

The purpose of these plans was to provide all the Department's customers in Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isles of Wight; in the South East Region; and in the country as a whole with a modern and efficient service. These services are being targeted where people need them after consultation with local welfare agencies, local authorities, MPs and others. Where necessary duplication of sites is being reduced, helping to ensure that the taxpayer gets value for money. Overall these plans are building on the high quality service already provided by social security offices and Jobcentres by delivering a service tailored to the specific needs of its customers.

In determining the location of the new Jobcentre Plus offices a great many factors are taken into account. These factors include, but are not limited to, the population size and spread, the quality, cost and availability of local transport, the distance between offices, concentrations of our key customer groups, areas designated for urban renewal or other regeneration initiatives, employers' needs, labour market characteristics, the availability of suitable office accommodation, the cost of maintenance and disposal, and the availability of staff and ability to relocate existing local staff. In some cases we have found that industrial and demographic change has left our offices situated in less than ideal locations. This modernisation programme provides an opportunity to critically review where we can best locate our offices to deliver services to meet the needs of the local community.

### Disability Allowance

**Mr. Goodman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the cost of extending the entitlement to disability allowance and attendance allowance to 52 weeks for those claimants who are hospitalised. [155986]

**Maria Eagle:** Extending to 52 weeks the period during which disability living allowance and attendance allowance can be paid to hospital in-patients is estimated to cost in the region of £145 million a year at current rates. This figure includes the consequential costs in carer's allowance, pension credit and the income-related benefits.

### Ethnic Minorities

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what discussions he has had with colleagues in the Department for Health to ensure fair treatment for older people from ethnic minority groups and their needs in terms of *(a)* income and *(b)* quality of life. [155810]

**Malcolm Wicks:** Ministers have regular contact with colleagues in Department of Health to discuss the position of older people—this would include the fair treatment of minority groups such as ethnic minorities.

### Direct Payment

**John Barrett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to his answer of 17 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 978W, on the exceptions service, whether those individuals who do not opt for a direct payment option will be eligible for the service. [147779]

**Mr. Pond:** Customers who have not supplied account details will be contacted at an appropriate time and the options available to them will be fully explained. This will include the fact that order books will no longer be a payment option. An alternative method of payment will be available for those who cannot operate a bank account.

Direct Payment will be the best option for the overwhelming majority of our customers, giving them a more modern and reliable method of payment with greater choice about where and when they collect their money.

Research has shown that 87 per cent. of all our customers and 90 per cent. of pensioners already have an account suitable for direct payment.

### Housing Allowances

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the local flat-rate housing allowances agreed to date for each of the pilot areas for such allowances. [149646]

**Mr. Pond:** The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is a major structural reform designed to promote choice and responsibility within the housing benefit system. The LHA has been introduced in four local authorities and is due to be introduced to the remaining pathfinder authorities in the near future.

The information for the pathfinder authorities currently delivering LHA is in the table.

*LHA rates for Teignbridge by Broad Rental Market Area (BRMA)*

| | BRMA (£) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *LHA category* | *Teign* | *Exeter* | *Tiverton and Crediton* | *Torbay* | *South Devon* | *Plymouth Environs* |
| Shared room | 53.00 | 55.00 | 50.00 | 54.00 | 51.50 | 50.50 |
| 2 room | 76.25 | 89.50 | 77.50 | 82.50 | 85.00 | 81.50 |
| 3 room | 101.00 | 114.00 | 93.00 | 115.50 | 104.00 | 98.50 |
| 4 room | 121.50 | 136.50 | 117.00 | 125.50 | 123.50 | 111.50 |
| 5 room | 136.50 | 141.00 | 124.50 | 143.00 | 130.00 | 124.50 |
| 6 room | 145.00 | 170.50 | 142.00 | 162.50 | 153.50 | 139.00 |

*LHA rates for Coventry*

| *LHA category* | *BRMA (£)* |
|---|---|
| Shared room | 47.50 |
| 2 room | 82.50 |
| 3 room | 98.50 |
| 4 room | 107.00 |
| 5 room | 118.00 |
| 6 room | 142.50 |

*LHA rates for Blackpool*

| *LHA category* | *BRMA (£)* |
|---|---|
| Shared room | 47.50 |
| 2 room | 75.00 |
| 3 room | 97.00 |
| 4 room | 102.00 |
| 5 room | 123.50 |
| 6 room | 139.00 |

*LHA rates for Lewisham by Broad Rental Market Area*

| | BRMA (£) | |
|---|---|---|
| *LHA Category* | *London South East-Central* | *London South East-Inner* |
| Shared room | 77.50 | 92.50 |
| 2 room | 147.50 | 200.00 |
| 3 room | 190.50 | 252.00 |
| 4 room | 231.00 | 284.00 |

*LHA rates for Lewisham by Broad Rental Market Area*

| | BRMA (£) | |
|---|---|---|
| *LHA Category* | *London South East-Central* | *London South East-Inner* |
| 5 room | 265.50 | 363.50 |
| 6 room | 381.00 | 437.50 |

*Notes:*

1. Tables show weekly LHA rates for January 2004.
2. The shared room rate is for one room with shared living room and *(a)* shared kitchen, toilet and bathroom, or *(b)* exclusive use of kitchen/kitchen facilities, or *(c)* exclusive use of bathroom and toilet with shared kitchen.

### Health and Safety

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will introduce legislation to provide for greater *(a)* recognition and *(b)* powers for safety representatives in workplaces. [155819]

**Mr. Browne:** We have no plans to introduce legislation to provide for greater recognition and powers for safety representatives.

We have recently received advice from the Health and Safety Commission (HSC) recommending that new legislation on worker involvement and representation in occupational health and safety should not be introduced at this time. This advice, which we have accepted, recommends that Health and Safety Commission and

Executive should instead concentrate their efforts on securing the agreement of social partners to principles and measures that will ensure that workers are properly involved in controlling risks to occupational health and safety. Today HSC is publishing its new strategy and out of this will shortly release a statement on worker involvement setting out these principles and working with social partners to win wider support. A copy will be placed in the Library when published.

### Jobcentre Plus

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many casual workers were employed by Jobcentre Plus in the South East region in each of the last two years; what the cost was; and what the projected numbers are for the current year. [151530]

**Mr. Browne:** The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

*Letter from David Anderson to Mr. Mike Hancock, dated 23 February 2004:*

As Jobcentre Plus is an Executive Agency, the Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning the employment of casual members of staff by Jobcentre Plus in the South East. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of the Agency.

The information you require is in the table below. It should be noted that Jobcentre Plus operates according to the fiscal year; therefore the information includes a projection to 31 March 2004.

| *Year ending* | *2002–03* | *2003–04* |
|---|---|---|
| Casual staff engaged[1] | 252 | [3]250 |
| Cost[2] | £3,066,634 | [3]£3,716,020 |

[1] This represents the total number of contracts offered during the course of a year.
[2] This represents the salary costs for the total number of casual members of staff in post for each month of the year.
[3] projected
*Source:*
Financial Accounting Operations System Activity Based Information System

I hope this is helpful.

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what consultation has taken place with outside interested bodies *(a)* prior to and *(b)* since the Jobcentre Plus reorganisation; and what representations he has received from groups representing (i) unemployed workers and (ii) pensioners. [151531]

**Mr. Pond:** The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

*Letter from David Anderson to Mr. Mike Hancock, dated 23 February 2004:*

As Jobcentre Plus is an Executive Agency, the Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning what consultation has taken place with outside interested bodies prior to, and since, the Jobcentre Plus reorganisation. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Jobcentre Plus came into existence as a national organisation at the beginning of April 2002. The Benefits Agency and Employment Service ceased to exist at the same time. The new service is being rolled out across the country on a district by district basis. Over 350 integrated Jobcentre Plus offices are now operating across the country. Integrating the whole of the former Employment Service and Benefits Agency's services for people of working age and creating the national network of Jobcentre Plus offices will not be completed until 2006.

As each district starts to plan for the introduction of the new integrated Jobcentre Plus, service delivery arrangements are shared with local stakeholders, MPs and others. The service delivery arrangements are shared at the initial proposal stage, amended to take account of comments received where appropriate, then shared again when approval for the plans has been given. This is an integral part of the planning process for the introduction of the Jobcentre Plus service across England, Wales and Scotland.

District Managers are provided with a list of suggested stakeholders for this initial planning stage. These include; local MPs/MEPs/MSPs/Members of the National Assembly of Wales, local authorities, programme providers/service delivery partners, employers, Citizens Advice Bureaux, and welfare rights organisations. This list is not exhaustive and each District Manager may identify their own local stakeholders.

As part of the consultation process District Managers may also canvass the opinions of their customers and any comments they provide will be used as part of the planning process. Representations districts receive about Jobcentre Plus service delivery plans from our stakeholders can also include those representing unemployed workers and pensioners. Any concerns or issues raised by these groups as a result of the consultation process will be addressed at district level and are fed in to each districts planning before the final decision is made for roll out of Jobcentre Plus in that district.

Jobcentre Plus managers at all levels maintain close contact with many local and national organisations representing our client base. This enables continuous feedback concerning the services that we provide before, during and after the roll out of the new Jobcentre Plus services.

I hope this is helpful.

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has *(a)* to provide new Jobcentre Plus premises for the inner city areas of (i) Portsmouth and (ii) Southampton, *(b)* to increase staffing levels in remaining offices and *(c)* to improve the furnishing in remaining offices. [151535]

**Mr. Browne:** The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

*Letter from David Anderson to Mr. Hancock, dated 13 February 2004:*

As Jobcentre Plus is an Executive Agency, the Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning Jobcentre Plus proposals for the inner city areas of Southampton and Portsmouth. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of the Agency.

Plans are currently being developed to roll out the new integrated Jobcentre Plus service in both Portsmouth and Southampton. Partners and stakeholders were originally consulted about these plans in June and September 2002.

Presently, options for both cities are being vigorously pursued. While suitable premises have been identified for Portsmouth that will have the capability to deliver the enhanced services to Portsmouth customers; discussions remain commercially sensitive. Therefore, we are unable to give details of the sites under consideration. Commercial considerations also apply to Southampton, where work is ongoing.

Jobcentre Plus is contributing to the wider DWP modernisation and efficiency agenda and the workforce planning levels agreed for Jobcentre Plus form part of this. There are no plans to change substantially the numbers of people who work in Southampton and Portsmouth Jobcentre Plus locations beyond the impact of these plans. Each Region has a share of the total Jobcentre Plus performance target with the allocation of resource budgets within

Jobcentre Plus linked to expected workloads and performance targets. The headcount target for each region, and each district in that region, and each office in that district, is based on this.

The new Jobcentre Plus service will provide a more professional and welcoming environment. When the new Jobcentre Plus offices open, they will be to the design and furnishing standard of this new enhanced Jobcentre Plus model. Existing Jobcentre offices in Portsmouth and Southampton undergo regular quarterly health and safety inspections, where the existing furnishings are reviewed.

If there are any specific issues you wish to raise about these offices or if you would like to see the new specification in offices which have rolled out the new service, please contact Karen Gamester, the District Manager for Hampshire and Isle of Wight, on 01962 848887, who will be happy to assist.

I hope this is helpful.

### New Deal

**Mr. Wilshire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what resources are made available to New Deal advisers to provide practical advice to members of the public on the New Deal programme who are not graduates, who wish to acquire additional skills to pursue careers which require graduate level entry. [154341]

**Mr. Browne:** The primary aim of New Deal is to help people into employment as soon as possible. The advice given to non-graduate New Deal participants wishing to pursue careers requiring graduate entry level qualifications could depend on a range of factors including the person's existing qualifications, their financial situation, the availability of the training required, and the entry criteria for specific courses.

New Deal advisers have knowledge of the local labour market and access to a range of resources to assist them in providing appropriate advice and guidance to all New Deal participants. Resources used by advisers include: careers publications, access to the internet, links with training providers and local colleges as well as Connexions/Careers Service. Someone without the relevant qualifications to start a degree or diploma course could, for example be referred to an Access Course, which can be funded under New Deal. People interested in further or higher education would also be given advice on sources of funding such as Career Development Loans, and referred to relevant educational bodies for more detailed advice on course funding.

**Mr. Wilshire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what procedures are followed to ensure that training programmes and allied support within the New Deal are tailored to an individual's requirements; [154342]

(2) if he will make it his policy to ensure that individuals are not placed on New Deal training courses that provide guidance and advice on skills the person has already acquired. [154343]

**Mr. Browne:** The New Deal is primarily a 'jobs first' programme and its success is measured through the number of people helped into work; so far nearly one million people have been helped into employment through New Deal.

Training programmes, and other support available through New Deal, are intended to equip people with the skills needed to compete effectively in the local labour market. Effort is made to tailor courses and other support to meet individuals' requirements but this has to be balanced against the recruitment and skills needs of local employers and the likelihood of the training improving employment prospects. In circumstances where the needs of an individual cannot be met through normal contracts with training providers, one-off courses or training provision can be purchased if this is likely to improve the person's chances of getting quickly into work.

It is not the intention of New Deal to place people on training courses that provide them with skills they already have. However, participants on the mandatory New Deal programmes may be expected to attend courses to help address their barriers to work, for example, a two-week Gateway to Work course, which provides jobsearch and motivational support.

### Occupational Pensions

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions which trade unions he has met to discuss the future of occupational pension schemes; and if he will make a statement. [154748]

**Malcolm Wicks:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and I are committed to increasing consensus on pension issues by maintaining frequent contact with all our key partners in both the Trade Unions and the employer community. It is important that we all play our part in making sure that today's and tomorrow's pensioners have the level of income in retirement that they have chosen.

Within the last two months we have met representatives from many union groups including TGWU, TUC, UNIFI, GMB, GPMU, AUT, NUT, UNISON, Usdaw, ISTC, CWU, GPM, GMBI and Amicus.

In the next few weeks I hope to have further meetings with representatives from the TGWU and the CWU.

### Pension Credit

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will rank each parliamentary constituency according to the take-up of pension credit. [154747]

**Malcolm Wicks:** The most recent monthly progress report on pension credit, accompanied by tables showing the number of pension credit households in each parliamentary constituency in Great Britain, was published on 9 February. Copies are in the Library. It is not currently possible to rank constituencies according to the level of pension credit take-up since estimates of the number of eligible households are not available at constituency level.

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners are not receiving their pension credit entitlement in *(a)* Portsmouth and *(b)* England; and what steps his Department is taking to improve take-up. [155217]

**Malcolm Wicks:** The information is not available in the form requested. However, we estimate that there are approximately 3.15 million pensioner households in England likely to be eligible for pension credit. The

latest monthly pension credit progress report, published on 9 February, shows that at 31 January, approximately 1.82 million pensioner households in England were receiving pension credit. As at the same date, the numbers of households receiving pension credit in Portsmouth, North and Portsmouth South were 2,555 and 3,862 respectively.

We are currently in the main phase of our marketing campaign for pension credit and aim to have at least 3 million households in receipt of pension credit by 2006. By June 2004, we will have written to all pensioner households, explaining about the new entitlement. Direct mail is being supported by extensive TV and press advertising. From May we intend to focus campaign activity on those pensioners who are likely to be entitled but who have not responded. The Pension Service local service is playing a key role, particularly in encouraging pensioners who are less likely to take up their entitlement to apply. We continue to work closely with organisations such as Help the Aged and Age Concern, at both national and local level, and with local authorities.

**Mr. Hepburn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what the average pension credit payment is to pensioners in *(a)* Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* Tyne and Wear, *(d)* the North East and *(e)* the UK; [155845]

(2) what the average minimum income guarantee payment is to pensioners in *(a)* Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* Tyne and Wear, *(d)* the North East and *(e)* the UK; [155846]

(3) how many pensioners are *(a)* eligible for and *(b)* in receipt of pension credit in (i) Jarrow constituency, (ii) South Tyneside, (iii) Tyne and Wear, (iv) the North East and (v) the UK; [155890]

(4) how many pensioners were in receipt of the minimum income guarantee in *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* Tyne and Wear, *(d)* the North East and *(e)* the UK at the last date on which it was paid; [155952]

(5) how many pensioners are eligible for the minimum income guarantee in *(a)* Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* Tyne and Wear, *(d)* the North East and *(e)* the United Kingdom. [156022]

**Malcolm Wicks:** Information on the number of people who are eligible for pension credit is not available in respect of individual local authority areas or parliamentary constituencies. However, we estimate that around 250,000 pensioner households in the North East Government Office Region (GOR) and around 3.8 million pensioner households in Great Britain are eligible for pension credit. Information on numbers of pension credit recipients and average awards in the areas mentioned is given in the table.

*Pension credit recipients in Great Britain, the North East, Tyne and Wear, South Tyneside and Jarrow, 31 January 2004*

| | *Households* | *Individuals* | *Average weekly award per household (£)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Great Britain | 2,172,280 | 2,610,450 | 43.50 |
| North East GOR | 130,080 | 157,750 | 38.45 |
| Tyne and Wear | 60,710 | 73,325 | 39.09 |
| South Tyneside | 9,385 | 11,305 | 39.18 |
| Jarrow parliamentary constituency | 4,835 | 5,890 | 38.45 |

*Notes:*
1. Numbers of recipients have been rounded to the nearest five.
2. Average weekly awards have been rounded to the nearest penny.
3. Numbers of recipients exclude small numbers of clerical cases. At 31 January there were approximately 8,370 such cases in Great Britain, of which approximately 505 were in the North East GOR.
4. Average weekly awards refer to the amount received by households, which may be a single person or a couple.

Information on minimum income guarantee is not available in the form requested.

Since 6 October 2003 pension credit has replaced the minimum income guarantee and the 1.8 million cases receiving minimum income guarantee prior to 6 October were automatically transferred to pension credit.

Following the introduction of pension credit, some elements of the support previously provided through minimum income guarantee are now provided through local authority funding for people in care homes, and through tax credits for children. In addition, average pension credit awards are expected to be lower than minimum income guarantee because a savings credit of up to £14.79 (single) or £19.20 (couples) is available for people with modest incomes above the guarantee level who previously received nothing from minimum income guarantee.

Information on the average weekly award and the number of minimum income guarantee recipients in the areas mentioned as at August 2003 appears in the following table.

| | *£ per week* | *Recipients (thousand)* |
|---|---|---|
| Jarrow parliamentary constituency | 44.44 | 3.8 |
| South Tyneside | 44.55 | 8.1 |
| Tyne and Wear | 43.70 | 51.3 |
| North East GOR | 44.30 | 106.2 |
| Great Britain | 50.23 | 1,802.6 |

*Note:*
Figures are based on a 5 per cent. sample and are therefore subject to a degree of sampling variation.
*Source:*
IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. sample.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he is taking to encourage pension credit take-up in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley; and what part councils play in encouraging take-up. [154745]

**Malcolm Wicks:** Pension Credit take-up activity is continuing across Lancashire, with the help of partner organisations and local authorities.

Activities in Lancashire include awareness talks to a wide range of organisations and regular information surgeries and publicity events. Local authorities across Lancashire have begun to use their Housing Benefit data to identify those potentially entitled to Pension

Credit and have worked jointly with The Pension Service on a number of marketing activities. In Chorley, activities undertaken by The Pension service include information surgeries and publicity events in libraries, day care centres and other locations including the local hospital. These are often carried out in collaboration with local authorities.

Formal agreement to proceed with joint teams has been reached with 13 of the 22 primary tier local authorities in the North West and it is expected that joint teams will start to become operational in the region from April 2004.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners have claimed pension credit in *(a)* the North West, *(b)* Lancashire and *(c)* Chorley. [154746]

**Malcolm Wicks:** Pension Credit was implemented in October 2003. The table gives numbers of recipients of Pension Credit in the North West, Lancashire and Chorley at the end of 2003 and at 31 January 2004, the latest date for which figures are available. Numbers of applications for Pension Credit are not available at regional, county or constituency level.

*Pension Credit recipients in the North West, Lancashire and Chorley, December 2003 and January 2004*

| | *31 December 2003* | | *31 January 2004* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Households* | *Individuals* | *Households* | *Individuals* |
| North West Government Office Region | 288,575 | 343,680 | 296,320 | 354,025 |
| Lancashire county district | 42,075 | 50,535 | 43,870 | 52,940 |
| Chorley parliamentary constituency | 3,065 | 3,660 | 3,165 | 3,805 |

*Notes:*
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.
2. The figures exclude small numbers of clerical cases. At 31 December 2003 there were approximately 3,555 such cases in Great Britain and 505 in the North West region. At 31 January there were approximately 8,370 cases in Great Britain and 1,190 in the North West region.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many home visits have been carried out by staff of the Pension Service in connection with pension credit in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley. [154749]

**Malcolm Wicks:** The information is not available in the form requested. However, approximately 250 home visits involving pension credit were undertaken in the local authority cluster including Preston Chorley and South Ribble in January 2004.

### Means-testing

**Mr. George Howarth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the total cost of administering means-testing for pensioners in 2003–04; and by how much pensions could be increased if the proceeds of abolishing means tests were transferred to pensions. [155469]

**Malcolm Wicks:** Information on the total cost of administering means-testing for pensioners is not currently available in the format requested. In accordance with the requirements of Resource Accounting and Budgeting the Department now accounts for its administration and benefit expenditure by Strategic Objective, as set out in its Public Service Agreements (PSA), and by individual Requests for Resources (RfRs), as set out in the Departmental Estimates and Accounts.

This Government's priority is to target money on the poorest pensioners. Almost half of the extra money to be spent on pensioners in 2004–05 will be spent on the poorest third.

As a result of the Minimum Income Guarantee and now Pension Credit, the poorest third of pensioners will be around £600 per year better off on average than had the equivalent amount been spent on increasing the Basic State Pension (BSP).

We are planning to spend around £12.6 billion in 2004–05 on pensioners through income-related benefits including Pension Credit, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit.

If this spending was transferred to pensions, the full Basic State pension could be increased by around £25 per week in 2004–05. However poorer pensioners could face large losses, losing Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit as well as Pension Credit. Those not eligible for the full Basic State Pension would not get the full £25 increase, and those without any entitlement to the Basic State Pension could be left with no income or state support whatsoever.

### Pensioners

**David Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the pensioner population is in *(a)* the East Midlands and *(b)* England. [155638]

**Malcolm Wicks:** The figures requested are in the table.

| | *Pensioner population* |
|---|---|
| East Midlands | 784,000 |
| England | 6,145,000 |

*Notes:*
1. The figures are from the Mid-Year population figures, 2002.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest thousand.
3. 'Pensioner' is defined as those over state pension age.

*Source:*
Office for National Statistics

**Mr. Swire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in East Devon are dependent on benefits; and what percentage of entitled pensioners in East Devon have taken up their benefits. [155326]

**Malcolm Wicks:** The information is not available in the format requested.

In May 2003, 29,200 pensioners in the East Devon constituency were in receipt of a key benefit. For the majority of these, 23,200, state pension was the only key benefit being received.

Key benefits are Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Incapacity Benefit, Minimum Income Guarantee, State Pension, Severe Disablement Allowance and Housing Benefit.

As at the end of January 2004 there were 3,437 Pension Credit households in East Devon parliamentary constituency. Information on the number of people who are eligible for Pension Credit is not available in respect of individual constituencies.

**Mr. Peter Duncan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he last met pensioner groups in Scotland. [155477]

**Malcolm Wicks:** Members of the ministerial team visit Scotland to discuss pension issues and have met with pensioner groups. In addition, the Department meets with representatives from pensioner groups in Scotland on a regular basis through various channels—including the Partnership Against Poverty Scotland group and the Pensions Forum which is held annually in Scotland and which members of the ministerial team attend, the last was held in Edinburgh in October.

**Dr. Cable:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in the Twickenham constituency *(a)* are in receipt of winter fuel payments, *(b)* were in receipt of the minimum income guarantee in 2003 and *(c)* have applied for and been granted pension credit. [154951]

**Malcolm Wicks:** The information is not available in the form requested.

Information on winter fuel payments for individual constituencies for 2003–04 will not be available until this winter's exercise is complete but will be provided to the hon. Member and placed in the Library when it becomes available.

The number of pensioner households in the Twickenham constituency in receipt of minimum income guarantee in August 2003 was 1,600 and receiving pension credit as at 31 January 2004 is 1,951. Numbers of applications for pension credit are not available at regional, county or constituency level.

*Notes:*

1. MIG figures are based on a 5 per cent. sample and therefore subject to sampling variation.

2. MIG claimants are benefit units where the claimant and/or their partner are aged 60 or over, therefore figure will include some claimants aged under 60.

3. MIG figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.

*Source:*

IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. and 100 per cent. sample.

### Post Office Accounts

**Mr. Clifton-Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he is taking to ensure that existing bank account holders do not have to open a different bank account in order to receive their benefits from the Post Office. [152137]

**Mr. Pond:** The Government want as many people as possible to be able to do their banking at Post Office branches and welcomes Post Office Ltd.'s efforts to secure agreements with other banks. The decision is ultimately a commercial one which rests with the individual institutions.

Universal banking services already provide access to the basic bank accounts of every High Street bank plus the nationwide Building Society at Post Office branches as well as the Post Office card account. In addition, more than 20 million customers of Lloyds/TSB, Barclays and Alliance and Leicester can access their accounts electronically at Post Office branches.

Also current accounts customers of Alliance and Leicester, Barclays, Lloyds/TSB the Co-operative Bank and the internet banks smile and cahoot can access paper-based banking services which enables them to cash cheques at Post Office branches, free of charge.

### State Pensioners (Overseas Territories)

**Mr. Nigel Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many people are in receipt of the UK state pension in each of the British Overseas Territories; [153495]

(2) if he will list those British Overseas Territories where citizens receiving the UK state pension have their pensions frozen; [153496]

(3) if he will estimate the cost of waiving the frozen pension rule in each British Overseas Territory in which citizens receiving the UK state pension have their pensions frozen; [153497]

(4) how many citizens living abroad and receiving frozen UK state pensions reside in *(a)* Canada and *(b)* the United States of America. [153498]

**Malcolm Wicks:** Information on the number of people in receipt of the UK state pension in the British Overseas Territories other than those living in the Sovereign Base Areas on Cyprus as at January 2004 is set out in the table.

| *Territory* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Anguilla | 148 |
| Bermuda | 560 |
| British Antarctic Territory | 0 |
| British Indian Ocean Territory | 0 |
| British Virgin Islands | 42 |
| Cayman Islands | 95 |
| Falkland Islands (including South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands) | 37 |
| Gibraltar | 894 |
| Montserrat | 154 |
| Pitcairn Islands | 0 |
| St. Helena and Dependencies | 71 |
| Turks and Caicos Islands | 15 |

Pensioners living in the Sovereign Base Areas on Cyprus cannot be separately identified from others living in the Republic of Cyprus.

Pensioners living in the countries set out in the table other than those living in Bermuda, Gibraltar and the Sovereign Base Areas on Cyprus have their UK state pension frozen. The estimated cost to unfreeze these

pensions, without paying arrears, would be less than £500,000 for 2003–04 based on a 5 per cent. sample. We are unable to estimate the cost for each territory because of the numbers affected.

There are currently around 150,000 UK citizens now residing in Canada in receipt of a frozen UK state pension. UK citizens now residing in the United States of America do not have their UK state pension frozen.

*Notes:*

1. Caseloads are taken from the Pensions Strategy Computer System.

2. Costs are estimated using DWP Administrative Data.

### Statutory Sick Pay

**Norman Lamb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the estimated annual total cost of compliance is in respect of the statutory sick pay scheme for employers. [154883]

**Maria Eagle:** Currently around 90 per cent. of employees are covered by an occupational sick pay scheme; where employers operate such a scheme, and it is more generous than Statutory Sick Pay (SSP), they do not have to keep SSP records. This makes it difficult to estimate the annual total costs for employers of compliance with the scheme.

In the most recent year for which figures are available (2000–01), the estimated expenditure for employers on SSP was £830 million.

*Notes:*

1. The figures are rounded to the nearest £10 million.

2. The figures are on an accruals basis and so record the year of liability of SSP payment, which is not the same as the year money was paid out.

*Source:*

Employers' end-of-year returns.

### Winter Fuel Payments

**Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what would be the additional cost in the next financial year to public funds *(a)* in benefits and *(b)* in administrative costs of providing entitlement to winter fuel payment to all persons on reaching their 60th birthday if it falls during the months of October to March inclusive, on the assumption that those with birthdays in other months would continue to receive payment in the winter after attaining age 60. [155327]

**Malcolm Wicks:** If all those reaching their 60th birthday in the months of October 2003 to March 2004 were to receive a winter fuel payment for the winter of 2003–04, the additional cost would be approximately £47 million. We are unable to provide figures for the additional administrative costs that this would incur.

**Mr. Hepburn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many British citizens not resident in the UK received Winter Fuel Payments in respect of 2003–04; how many of those previously resided in *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* Tyne and Wear, *(d)* the North East and *(e)* the UK; and what the value of such payments was in each case. [153230]

**Malcolm Wicks:** The information requested is not available. Such information that is available is as follows:

So far 14,696 people no longer resident in the United Kingdom have received Winter Fuel Payments for the period winter 2003–04, at a cost of £2,235,700. Citizenship does not affect entitlement to Winter Fuel Payment as entitlement is based on residency in the UK.

## DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

### Street Wardens

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) if he will make a statement on street warden funding in Coventry in 2004–05; [155747]

(2) what evaluation has taken place of the successes of street warden schemes in tackling anti-social behaviour in *(a)* England, *(b)* the West Midlands and *(c)* Coventry; [155660]

(3) what assessment he has made of the impact of the withdrawal of funding for the Street Warden schemes on *(a)* the levels of anti-social behaviour in Coventry and *(b)* the perceptions of safety among people in Coventry. [155661]

**Yvette Cooper:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister funds three warden schemes in Coventry. One scheme has managed to sustain itself without further funding from the department. Funding for another scheme has been offered for 2004–05 providing that the scheme continues to find match funding. The third scheme is funded from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister until March 2006.

Evaluations of the first and second round of warden schemes, including their effect on anti-social behaviour and perceptions of safety are currently being undertaken. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister expects to publish the first report later this year.

### Agricultural Ties

**Mr. Flook:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many owners of properties with agricultural ties have been forced to sell their homes because of failure to satisfy the terms of the tie, in each year since 1997. [155174]

**Yvette Cooper:** The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Where planning permission is granted for an isolated agricultural worker's dwelling, an 'occupancy' condition is normally attached in order to ensure that the dwelling is kept available for meeting the agricultural need in the area. The responsibility for attaching, monitoring compliance with, and taking any necessary action to enforce occupancy conditions rests with the local planning authority in the first instance.

### Area-based Initiatives

**Mr. Edward Davey:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much money has been allocated by his Department for each *(a)* region and *(b)* Neighbourhood Renewal Fund area for the next five years; and if he will make a statement. [152799]

**Yvette Cooper:** Funding allocated by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to the regions can be found in the Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2003 Cm 5901 as amended by corrigendum-corrected tables for Chapter 8, published in June 2003. These set out expenditure by region and by function for an historic five year period. No figures are available for the forward years.

Funding by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for Neighbourhood Renewal Fund areas for the period 2002–03 until 2005–06 is available in the Library of the House. Funding plans beyond 2005–06 are subject to current Spending Review deliberations.

### Civil Servants

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many senior civil servants in his Department are disabled, expressed in *(a)* numbers and *(b)* as a percentage of whole-time equivalents. [144985]

**Mr. Goodman:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what progress has been made in meeting targets for the proportion of people with disabilities in senior posts in his Department. [145996]

**Yvette Cooper:** Statistical information about senior civil servants with disabilities is available on the Civil Service Statistics website at http://www.civil-service.gov.uk/statistics/documents/pdf/disability-oct03.pdf

As there are less than five members of the senior civil service in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister with a disability, the actual number is not published in order to protect the privacy of individuals in line with exemption 12 of the "Code of Practice on Access to Government Information".

### Community Projects

**Mr. Edward Davey:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what progress has been made on bringing together in a single community programme the *(a)* Community Cohesion pathfinders, *(b)* Community Chest, *(c)* Community Empowerment Fund and *(d)* Community Champions Fund; and if he will make a statement. [152916]

**Yvette Cooper:** From April 2004, the Community Empowerment Fund, Community Chests and Community Learning Chests will be merged into the single Community Programme.

It was not the intention to include the Community Cohesion pathfinders or the Community Champions Fund in the single Community Programme.

The Community Cohesion Pathfinders will end in November 2004 and there are no plans to merge the fund.

The Community Champions Fund is administered by the Department for Education and Skills and there are no plans to merge the fund.

### Consultancy

**Mr. Curry:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list external *(a)* public relations and communications companies, *(b)* advertising and marketing companies, *(c)* management consultancies, *(d)* accountancy companies, *(e)* banking firms, *(f)* individual consultants and *(g)* other specialist consultancies used by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister since May 2002, indicating in each case the work performed. [145990]

**Yvette Cooper:** This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### Council Housing

**Sir Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total sum in local authority accounts derived from selling council houses is; how much the Southend-on-Sea local authority has in its account; and if he will review the purposes for which these funds can be used. [155309]

**Keith Hill:** Since 1980–81 to 2001–02, the last year for which we have audited figures, sales of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) dwellings for owner occupation have generated £23.490 billion in receipts for local authorities in England. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not hold records for the amount generated by sales in Southend-on-Sea for the entirety of this period, but from 1998–99 to 2001–02 the receipts generated were £9.603 million.

Currently, with-debt local authorities, such as Southend-on-Sea, are required to set aside 75 per cent. of the capital receipt arising from the disposal of HRA dwellings for the repayment of their debt. They may use the remaining 25 per cent. to meet capital expenditure. Debt-free local authorities are exempt from the set-aside requirement and may use 100 per cent. of such capital receipts for any capital purpose.

The set-aside regime, which effectively provides resources for new capital investment by authorities generally, will cease to be available from 1 April this year, when a new capital finance system is introduced. Pooling is the regime that will replace set-aside. It will apply to debt-free as well as with-debt authorities—both will be required to pay to the Exchequer 75 per cent. of their receipts from the sale of council housing, to provide resources nationally for further capital investment in housing. They will retain 25 per cent. to meet such capital expenditure as they may decide. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister believe these arrangements are appropriate and currently has no intention of reviewing them further.

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the councils which indicated that they did not want the fourth option of continuing council management of the homes to be improved during the course of the Government's Decent Homes consultation. [155499]

**Keith Hill:** The Government set out their 'Decent Homes' programme in "Quality and Choice: A Decent Home for All-The Way Forward For Housing" published December 2000. 70 housing authorities are now in the process of implementing the programme by means of PFIs, stock transfers, ALMOs and mainstream funding. The remaining authorities are to have completed the options appraisal process by 31 July 2005.

### Decent Homes Standard

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assistance is available to local authority housing departments to meet the Government's decent homes standard. [155118]

**Keith Hill:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has provided both financial and other support to assist local authorities in delivering decent homes. Over the period 2003–06 £7.9 billion is available for capital expenditure on the HRA housing stock.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is also making available £1.4 billion through the Private Finance Initiative Guidance on implementing the standard and conducting options appraisals has also been published on; http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_housing/documents/page/odpm_house027345.pdf

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's "Community Housing Task Force" together with Government Offices for the Regions are currently working with local authorities to help them develop their options appraisals.

This process is designed to help the authority put in place a plan that will deliver decent homes.

### Departmental Information

**Mr. Curry:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the information and public relations campaigns conducted by *(a)* non-departmental bodies and *(b)* executive agencies within his Department in each year since 1997, showing the annual cost of each campaign. [146024]

**Yvette Cooper:** Information on public relations and information campaigns run by the non departmental bodies and executive agencies of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister are not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

### Empty Houses

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* empty houses and *(b)* homeless people there are in each local authority area, listed in descending order according to the number of empty houses. [153597]

**Yvette Cooper:** Latest available information, as reported by local authorities in England, is available in the Library of the House. For corresponding information in Wales, I refer my hon. Friend to my right hon. Friend the Member for Neath (Mr. Hain).

### Expenditure Limits

**Matthew Green:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list his Department's departmental expenditure limits for 2003–04. [150101]

**Yvette Cooper:** I refer the hon. Member to the written statement my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister made on 27 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 3WS.

### Fire Authorities/ Services

**Gregory Barker:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether combined fire authorities in their first year as precepting authorities will have the costs of transition taken into account when their budget is assessed. [154552]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The Government recognises fire authorities' concerns about setting budgets for next year, not least the particular circumstances faced by Combined Fire Authorities in their move to precepting status, including the pressure arising from the need to build up reserves.

Nonetheless, the Government remains of the view that all authorities, including Combined Fire Authorities, should be seeking to minimise council tax increases. The Government will, if necessary, use its capping powers to deal with unacceptable increases.

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what action his Department has taken to ensure that the changes in locations of fire service control rooms do not impact on response times. [155441]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The location of a fire and rescue command and control room does not impact on response times. Service standards for the new regional control rooms will at a minimum be equal to present practice.

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the guidance provided to the committees of regional fire authorities regarding the regionalisation of Fire Service control rooms. [155812]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The Government have said they accept the conclusions of Mott MacDonald report, on the "Future of Fire and Rescue Service Control Rooms in England and Wales", publishedin December 2003. It believes that control rooms at regional level are appropriate for reasons of efficiency, economy, effectiveness and resilience. It is considering the views of the Practitioners' Forum, authorities and the service on the conclusions of the report and the Government's response. Copies of the report are available in the Library of the House.

### Grant Calculations

**Mr. Luff:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he has established a timetable for consultation on future changes to the *(a)* formula spending share calculation and *(b)* area cost adjustment to enable such changes to be made in financial year 2006–07. [155146]

**Mr. Raynsford:** In order to provide local authorities with more stability in funding arrangements, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has already said that we will not be looking to change the grant distribution formulae until 2006–07 at the very earliest.

If it is decided that changes to the formulae should be made for 2006–07, a full consultation on options for change would take place prior to the normal settlement round for that year.

### High Hedges

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what consultation he has undertaken prior to issuing guidance on the high hedges section of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. [153108]

**Yvette Cooper:** Consultation will begin shortly on guidance and on regulations governing certain detailed procedural arrangements relating to the high hedges section of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003. The regulations will be laid before Parliament in time for the legislation to come into force towards the end of 2004.

### Homelessness

**Ms Oona King:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will place in the Library a copy of the research commissioned by the Homelessness Directorate on homelessness among people from black and ethnic minority communities. [152026]

**Yvette Cooper:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister commissioned research on homelessness among black and ethnic minority communities in February 2003. The research consisted of a literature review, interviews with Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) households, local authority officers and a range of other key national and local stakeholders in order to explore the causes of homelessness and to provide best practice guidance on the most appropriate interventions for tackling and preventing homelessness among different BME groups.

A first draft report and guidance have been produced for further discussion with a range of key stakeholders and we expect to have a final version ready for publication in three to four months time. When published, copies of both documents will be made available in the Library of the House.

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) if he will publish the results of the annual return supplied by local authorities on homelessness applications by couples with dependent children; [152429]

(2) if he will publish the results of the annual return supplied by local authorities on homeless applications by lone-parent females; [153106]

(3) if he will publish the results of the annual return supplied by local authorities on homeless applications by single person male applicants; [153419]

(4) if he will publish the results of the annual return supplied by local authorities on homeless applications by single person female applicants. [153669]

**Yvette Cooper:** Two key summary tables, based on data from the 2003 annual homelessness return, have been made available on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website. A hard copy has been made available in the Library of the House. These include an analysis of homeless households accepted by local authorities, broken down by region and household type, distinguishing couples with dependent children and lone-parent families. Information collected about homeless applications on both the annual and quarterly homelessness returns distinguishes ethnicity, but not household type.

Further key analyses from the annual return are being prepared and will be placed on the website once finalised.

### Housing Taskforces

**Mr. Randall:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the Community Housing Task Force last met. [155799]

**Keith Hill:** The Community Housing Task Force generally meets up once a month to discuss and update on progress of work. The team last met on 4 February and will meet again on 1 March.

**Mr. Randall:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the Advisory Group on Home Buying Taskforce *(a)* last met and *(b)* produced its last report; and when he expects it to be wound up. [155800]

**Yvette Cooper:** The Home Ownership Task Force has completed its work. The Task Force met for the last time on 30 September 2003 and its final report "A home of my own" was published on 13 November 2003. Copies of the report and executive summary are available on the Housing Corporation's website at www.housingcorp.gov.uk.

### Information Technology

**Mr. Allan:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what audit mechanisms are in place to determine whether information technology *(a)* hardware and *(b)* software products are being used properly in his Department. [150928]

**Yvette Cooper:** Corporate ICT services for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister HQ are provided by the Department for Transport under a Service Level Agreement which includes provision of licences, software and hardware as part of a managed service. I therefore refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, East (Mr. McNulty) on 28 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 359W.

Government Offices and the Regional Co-ordination Unit are responsible for their own IT systems. Procurement of core systems hardware and software is undertaken by the Regional Co-ordination Unit who purchase either directly from providers or via one of their outsource partners.

Licensing of corporate-wide software is managed by the outsource providers. Such software is subject to corporate licensing agreements and is subject to similar auditing controls by the providers as mentioned in the answer referred to above.

Individual Government Offices may also purchase non-corporate hardware and software locally. All purchases of software require prior approval from the RCU. Asset tracking software is utilised to monitor hardware and software utilisation.

### Local Government

**Mr. Dhanda:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment his Department has made of the distribution of grants between local authorities in 2003–04. [153302]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The new system for distributing formula grant to local authorities was introduced in 2003–04 following an extensive review involving both central and local government, and a full and open public consultation exercise.

The new system was designed to distribute grant to local authorities according to their relative circumstances—or relative need. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is satisfied that the new grant distribution system is both fair and sustainable.

**Mr. Dhanda:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received from local authorities in the current financial year in connection with the central Government grants they have received. [153303]

**Mr. Raynsford:** As part of the consultation on the provisional local government finance settlement 2004–05, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister received 454 written responses from 275 individual authorities, MPs and others. A further 34 arrived after the close of consultation. Ministers also met delegations from the Local Government Association, the Association of London Government and four groups of local authorities. Parliament has now approved the settlement which provides local authorities with a 5.5 per cent. increase in general grant.

**Mr. Laurence Robertson:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will issue *(a)* regulations and *(b)* guidance to local authorities with regard to retrospective membership of pension schemes by part-time employees; and if he will make a statement. [155004]

**Phil Hope:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is carefully considering the case for making regulations to empower local authorities to deal with any Local Government Pension Scheme cases which have not been referred to an Employment Tribunal but which constitute a valid claim in all other respects.

The Local Government Pensions Committee of the Employers' Organisation for Local Government, in consultation with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, have issued guidance to local authorities consequent on directions from the Employment Tribunal. Further guidance in relation to the Local Government Pension Scheme is being prepared. As a result, many claims lodged with Employment Tribunals have now either been struck out or are in the process of being settled by employing authorities. Some claims may be affected by certain legal issues which have yet to be resolved.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many copies of the leaflet entitled "How you can shape the future of local government in your area" have been distributed in *(a)* Cheshire, *(b)* Lancashire, *(c)* Cumbria, *(d)* Greater Manchester, *(e)* Merseyside and *(f)* the North West Region; and what verification has been carried out to establish how many leaflets have been received by (i) households in each of those areas listed and by what date they were delivered and (ii) electors on the electoral register in the areas listed in *(a)* to *(f)* , with reference to (A) date of the register and (B) date of receipt. [155626]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The conduct of local government reviews, including consultation on the draft recommendations, is a matter for the independent Boundary Committee.

### London Boroughs (Grouping)

**Mrs. Lait:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions he has had with the Mayor of London about a possible new grouping of the London boroughs. [155025]

**Mr. Raynsford:** None.

### Management Consultants

**Mr. Flight:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost to his Department of using management consultants has been in each of the last five years. [148026]

**Yvette Cooper:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) came into existence following the Machinery of Government changes on 29 May 2002. I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Bridgwater (Liddell-Grainger) on 16 July 2003, *Official Report*, column 358W. The cost of using management consultants is not separately recorded and could be ascertained only at disproportionate cost.

### Metropolitan Authorities

**Mr. Brady:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which metropolitan authorities have developed a medium term financial strategy for the next three to five years. [155993]

**Mr. Raynsford:** This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, from April 2004, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Prudential Code requires all local authorities to prepare each year estimates of their revenue and capital spending for three years ahead. They are also required to consider known significant variations beyond that timeframe. The Government strongly supports this requirement, and have given statutory backing to the Prudential Code using powers in the Local Government Act 2003.

**Mr. Brady:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the budget overspend was for each metropolitan authority in each of the last three financial years; and what estimate he has made of budget overspends for the 2003–04 financial year. [155994]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The amount by which metropolitan authority spend has exceeded their budget forecast for 2000–01, 2001–02 and 2002–03 is as tabled. A negative figure shows that the authority spent less than their budget estimate.

No estimate has been made of the budget overspend for the 2003–04 financial year.

*£000*

| | *2000–01* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Barnsley | -7,888 | -1,702 | -9,628 |
| Birmingham | -9,905 | -6,684 | -20,046 |
| Bolton | 3,083 | -2,094 | 1,286 |
| Bradford | -13,138 | -10,875 | -3,503 |
| Bury | -4,110 | -1,352 | -2,311 |
| Calderdale | -2,249 | 143 | 155 |
| Coventry | 34,985 | 11,743 | 14,953 |
| Doncaster | -8,866 | -220 | -296 |

£000

| | 2000-01 | 2001-02 | 2002-03 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dudley | 9 | 390 | -1,836 |
| Gateshead | -8,374 | 14,273 | 11,780 |
| Kirklees | -3,420 | -7,468 | -4,359 |
| Knowsley | -996 | -733 | 2,196 |
| Leeds | -5,266 | 742 | -2,778 |
| Liverpool | 16,413 | 5,374 | -17,949 |
| Manchester | -13,045 | -13,071 | -12,674 |
| Newcastle upon Tyne | -2,440 | -1,468 | -14,636 |
| North Tyneside | 7,410 | 4,188 | 4,185 |
| Oldham | 496 | 1,760 | 514 |
| Rochdale | 220 | -389 | -1,887 |
| Rotherham | 2,288 | -2,270 | 276 |
| Salford | 666 | -549 | 363 |
| Sandwell | -8,208 | -7,744 | 1,179 |
| Sefton | -3,987 | -2,270 | 983 |
| Sheffield | -3,864 | -16,405 | -19,471 |
| Solihull | -3,359 | 1,855 | -2,353 |
| South Tyneside | -4,222 | -5,943 | -5,264 |
| St. Helens | -5,165 | -6,956 | -2,938 |
| Stockport | 1,606 | -1,607 | -4,647 |
| Sunderland | -57,687 | -5,254 | 4,611 |
| Tameside | -3,695 | -8,349 | -819 |
| Trafford | -19,111 | -2,197 | 454 |
| Wakefield | -8,581 | -3,063 | 7,077 |
| Walsall | 919 | -4,653 | -2,226 |
| Wigan | -7,581 | -5,575 | -611 |
| Wirral | 1,223 | -1,057 | 1,855 |
| Wolverhampton | -13,473 | -9,636 | -2,462 |

*Notes:*
The data are taken from the RA budget and RS outturn forms for each year.
The large under spend figure for Sunderland for 2000–01 is mainly attributable to a revenue receipt of £53.9 million in March 2001 being included in their accounts for that year.

**Mr. Brady:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which metropolitan authorities have been warned by his Department that he may apply a council tax cap for the next financial year. [155995]

**Mr. Raynsford:** All local authorities have been put on notice that the Government considers that they can and should deliver council tax increases in low single figures in 2004–05. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is not pre-judging criteria for capping and will look at authorities' budgets and council tax figures before coming to a view on capping principles.

**Mr. Brady:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which metropolitan authorities have been identified by the Audit Commission in the last 10 years as having serious shortcomings in their financial controls; and what action his Department has taken in each case. [155996]

**Mr. Raynsford:** Until the Best Value framework was established by the Local Government Act 1999 and the results of Comprehensive Performance Assessments (CPAs) became available, central Government did not hold comprehensive information on which authorities the Audit Commission had identified as having serious shortcomings in their financial controls. Two metropolitan authorities now have been identified under these processes: Walsall, as the result of a corporate governance review, which found significant weaknesses in its financial processes; and North Tyneside, which scored the lowest possible rating for financial standing in its CPA.

Both Walsall and North Tyneside received overall assessments of "poor" in their CPA assessments. In common with other authorities assessed as poor, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has appointed a lead official to work closely with each authority, and is providing support at the appropriate level to achieve recovery, including thorough advice and help with capacity building.

### Mobile Phone Masts

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to amend planning laws relating to siting of TETRA masts. [155651]

**Yvette Cooper:** Current planning guidance for all electronic communication developments is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 8 (revised) (PPG8). The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has also issued a Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development and has no plans to change these arrangements at present.

### Planning

**Diana Organ:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on retrospective planning applications. [154639]

**Keith Hill:** Local planning authorities can invite a retrospective planning application for unauthorised development where they judge that there are no planning objections to it. Otherwise, authorities have wide ranging enforcement powers to control development undertaken without planning permission.

**Diana Organ:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister for what reasons retrospective planning applications are treated in the same way as other applications. [154641]

**Keith Hill:** When development has been carried out to an acceptable standard, or it can be made acceptable by the imposition of conditions attached to a grant of planning permission, it is reasonable to enable the developer or landowner to obtain permission after the event. The considerations applying in determining a planning application will in general be the same regardless of whether or not the development has taken place.

**Diana Organ:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will impose a system of penalties for carrying out development in advance of obtaining planning applications. [154642]

**Keith Hill:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister are carrying out a review of the planning enforcement system in England. Retrospective planning applications, including whether any penalties should be imposed, and retrospective planning permission are part of that review. We expect to announce the outcome of the review later this year.

### Press/Public Relations Officers

**Mr. Curry:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how many *(a)* press officers and *(b)* public relations officers were employed by Castle Vale Housing Action Trust in each year since 1997; [146031]

(2) how many *(a)* press officers and *(b)* public relations officers were employed by Liverpool Housing Action Trust in each year since 1997; [146032]

(3) how many *(a)* press officers and *(b)* public relations officers were employed by the Stonebridge Housing Action Trust in each year since 1997; [146033]

(4) how many *(a)* press officers and *(b)* public relations officers were employed by the Tower Hamlets Housing Action Trust in each year since 1997. [146034]

**Yvette Cooper:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created on 29 May 2002. At 1 April 2003 the number of full-time equivalent staff with press or public relations responsibilities in each of the Housing Action Trusts was:

| | *Full-time equivalent staff* |
|---|---|
| Castle Vale | 1.0 |
| Liverpool | 0.6 |
| Stonebridge | 0.1 |
| Tower Hamlets | nil |

### Regional Assemblies

**Ann Winterton:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether funds will be allocated in 2004–05 for an information campaign on elected regional assemblies. [155042]

**Mr. Raynsford:** Funds will be allocated for the financial year 2004–05, but the level has not yet been decided.

**Mr. Jenkin:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how the costs of establishing elected assemblies for *(a)* the North East, *(b)* the North West and *(c)* Yorkshire and the Humber would be met. [155136]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The establishment costs will be met by central Government.

**Mr. Jenkin:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which Government-funded bodies other than the Government Offices for the Regions would reduce in size in a region where an elected assembly is established. [155138]

**Mr. Raynsford:** In those regions where an elected regional assembly is established, there will be a reduction in the size of the regional office of the Housing Corporation.

The designation of the regional chamber would be revoked. Its scrutiny and planning responsibilities, largely funded by Government grant, would pass to the elected assembly.

**Mr. Jenkin:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost of establishing and implementing proposals for elected regional assemblies has been to date; and what his estimate is of the costs for the next financial year. [155140]

**Mr. Raynsford:** No action has yet been taken to establish or implement proposals for elected regional assemblies and none will be taken in the next financial year. Costs so far have been associated with securing the Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Act 2003 and enabling referendums in the three northern regions.

**Mr. Jenkin:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the costs of abolishing regional chambers in regions where an elected assembly is established; and how those costs would be met. [155141]

**Mr. Raynsford:** It will be for the voluntary regional chambers to decide whether they should abolish themselves. The Government will cease to pay grant to the chambers in regions with elected assemblies as the functions currently supported by grant will transfer to the new assemblies.

**Mr. Jenkin:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will ensure that the size of a central Government grant to an elected regional assembly will require no assembly to precept more than the equivalent of five pence per week for a Band D council tax-payer to cover its administrative costs in its first financial year. [155143]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The Government has already said in paragraph 5.8 of the White Paper 'Your Region, Your Choice' that "In setting the level of central Government grant, we will expect council tax-payers in any region with an elected regional assembly to contribute the equivalent of around five pence per week for a Band D council tax-payer".

**Mr. Swire:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how much the South West Regional Assembly has cost since its creation; [155302]

(2) what the budget of the South West Regional Assembly has been in each year since its creation. [155303]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The regional chambers are voluntary bodies and may receive funding from a variety of sources. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not therefore hold information on the South West Regional Assembly's annual budget. This is a question for the Assembly itself.

Since April 2001 the Government has paid grants to South West Regional Assembly totalling £2,626,967 in order for it to undertake scrutiny of the South West Development Agency and (since April 2003) to act as the recognised Regional Planning body for the South West Region.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what timetable has been set for *(a)* printing and *(b)* delivery of information for the referendums on elected regional assemblies. [155458]

**Mr. Raynsford:** During the passage of the Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Act 2003, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister made commitments to provide information on the referendums to every household in the regions affected. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will make arrangements for printing and delivery once the orders for referendums have been approved by Parliament.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions have taken place, and with whom, on which constituencies are being considered as sites for headquarters of a regional assembly for the North West; and which constituencies are being considered. [155459]

**Mr. Raynsford:** No such talks have taken place. Paragraph 6.7 of the White Paper 'Your Region, Your Choice' explains that "It will be for an assembly to decide the best way to meet its accommodation requirements, including the location of its headquarters".

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many regional assembly members there will be for the *(a)* North East, *(b)* Yorkshire and Humberside and *(c)* Lancashire; and what percentage of the population each will represent. [155681]

**Mr. Raynsford:** Paragraph 7.7 of the White Paper "Your Region, Your Choice" states that "assemblies should have between 25 and 35 members". The number for each region has not been decided. However, we expect that the North East, as the English region with the smallest population would have an Elected Assembly of 25 members, while Elected Assemblies for Yorkshire and Humber and the North West would have between 30 and 35 members each.

Paragraph 6.13 of the White Paper explains that the Government will "ask the Electoral Commission to advise on the boundaries of constituencies within regions that vote for elected regional assemblies" and the powers to do this are in the Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Act 2003.

**Mr. Jenkin:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total number of staff working in the Government Office for the Regions is; how many of those staff have been transferred to the Government Office for the Regions from other Government Departments; and how many have been recruited from outside Government Departments. [149649]

**Yvette Cooper:** The total number of staff currently working for the nine Government Offices is 2,742. In addition there are about 100 secondees from the private, voluntary and community and other public sector bodies. All permanent staff working in Government Offices are employed by one of the Departments which conduct business through them.

### Rent Service

**Mr. Hammond:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will allow retrospective effect to be given to registered rents in cases where the Rent Service has not registered the rent within a reasonable time from application. [154111]

**Yvette Cooper:** There are no time limits for rent registrations in the Rent Act 1977, and there are no plans to amend the Rent Act to permit retrospective rent increases after registration.

**Mr. Hammond:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what targets he has set the Rent Service for the maximum time between application to register a rent and determination of that application. [154112]

**Yvette Cooper:** There is no maximum time set between receipt of a Fair Rent application and determination. However my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister has set The Rent Service a target for Fair Rents of completing 87 per cent. within 40 working days of receipt.

**Mr. Hammond:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what redress is available to landlords in respect of rental income lost because of unreasonable delays by the Rent Service in registering a rent. [154113]

**Yvette Cooper:** There are no time limits set for rent registrations in the 1977 Rent Act. The Rent Service works to a target of completing 87 per cent. of Fair Rent applications within 40 working days of receipt. It is unusual for significant delays to occur, but where they have, The Rent Service has diverted resources to redress the situation.

### Social Housing

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much money central Government allocated to each London borough to invest in social housing in each year since 1999. [155094]

**Mr. Raynsford:** Information on local authority housing capital allocations and the funding provided to housing associations in each London borough since 1999–2000 is available in the Library of the House.

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what action the Government is taking *(a)* to eliminate non-decent social housing by 2010 and *(b)* to reduce the number of vulnerable people living in non-decent homes by 70 per cent. by 2010. [155095]

**Keith Hill:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is providing both financial and other support to assist local authorities in delivering decent homes. Over the period 2003–06 £7.9 billion is available for capital expenditure on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) housing stock.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is also making available £1.4 billion through Private Finance Initiative (PFI).

Guidance on implementing the standard and conducting options appraisals has also been published.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's "Community Housing Task Force" together with Government Offices for the Regions are currently working with local authorities to help them develop their Options appraisals.

This process is designed to help the authority put in place a plan that will deliver decent homes.

To reduce the number of vulnerable people living in non-decent homes the Government will increase the proportion of privately rented housing stock which is in decent condition.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will continue to encourage schemes which offer support and loan finance to homeowners who repair or adapt their properties. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will provide extra resources for home improvement agencies to help older and vulnerable home owners to remain independent in their own homes and increase the statutory protection for tenants of private landlords by seeking to establish mandatory licensing for Houses in Multiple Occupation. Through a Regulatory Reform Order, local authorities have now much more freedom to help homeowners improve the condition of their homes which can include improvements to heating and insulation.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many social housing units have been built in *(a)* the North West, *(b)* Lancashire and *(c)* Chorley in each year since 2000. [154316]

**Keith Hill:** The social housing dwellings which have been funded via Social Housing Grant (SHG) or the Local Authority Social Housing Grant (LASHG) are as follows:

*SHG and LASHG unit completion figures for the North West*

| | *Number of units in year* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *1999–2000* | *2000–01* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* | *Total* |
| Total dwellings for the North West | 3,998 | 3,665 | 3,820 | 3,661 | 15,144 |
| Total dwellings for Lancashire | 861 | 899 | 554 | 668 | 2,982 |
| Total dwellings for Chorley | 29 | 15 | 56 | 14 | 114 |

### South East England Development Agency

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list each project on the Isle of Wight funded by South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) in the last 12 months for which information is available, showing the *(a)* funding from SEEDA for each project and *(b)* intended outcomes of each project. [155257]

**Mr. Raynsford:** In the financial year April 2003 to March 2004, South East England Development Agency will invest a total of £13 million on 17 projects on the Isle of Wight. The purpose of those projects is to support the sustainable economic development of the Island. Forecasted core outputs should: create or safeguard 388 jobs, create or fill 1,672 learning opportunities between three and 30 hours duration and 112 over 30 hours and create 40 new businesses while sustaining a further 12 for 12 months. The attached table applies this in more detail to individual projects.

SEEDA has also provided £35,000 towards the Island's Community Wind project. This has funded a feasibility study which has been extended to cover use of renewable energy in refurbishment and newbuild in an estate in Newport. As well as added value through dissemination there is also a possibility of creating two jobs.

### Travellers

**Andrew Selous:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether utility companies are permitted to provide services to unauthorised Traveller and Gypsy developments *(a)* at any time and *(b)* in circumstances when the local authority is challenging the development in the courts. [153724]

**Keith Hill:** Utility companies have duties to supply services for domestic purposes provided safety issues are met and permission to enter land is given.

### Unitary Authorities

**Mrs. May:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to re-assess the funding arrangements for unitary authorities. [154912]

**Mr. Raynsford:** In order to provide local authorities with more stability in funding arrangements, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has already said that we will not be looking to change the grant distribution formulae until 2006–07 at the very earliest.

**Mrs. May:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received on the funding arrangements for unitary authorities. [154913]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister received 61 representations on the proposals for the Local Government Finance Settlement 2004–05 from or on behalf of Unitary Authorities.

### Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act

**Diana Organ:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how his Department will identify which local authorities have made sufficient progress in meeting Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act 2000 targets to be classed as excellent and exempted from requirement to submit future reports. [154644]

**Phil Hope:** Those authorities categorised as excellent under the Comprehensive Performance Assessment will no longer need to prepare reports under the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA), but will be asked to provide a small amount of essential information that the Secretary of State needs for her statutory reporting duty under the HECA.

# Written Answers to Questions

*Tuesday 24 February 2004*

## HEALTH

### Health Facilities (Eastern England)

14. **Mr. Pollard:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has for *(a)* new diagnostic and treatment centres and *(b)* new acute hospitals in the eastern region of England. [155731]

**Dr. Ladyman:** By 2005 there will be a further four new Treatment Centres in the eastern region of England providing services for NHS patients. In addition further investment is being made in expanding NHS hospital services at four main sites.

### National Service Framework for Long-term Conditions

15. **Mr. Todd**: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the progress made in preparing a national service framework for long-term conditions. [155732]

**Dr. Ladyman:** We are making good progress in developing the national service framework for long-term conditions which will focus on improving services for people with neurological conditions. We plan to publish the framework in December 2004 for implementation from 2005. Only yesterday, I met the Chairs of the External Reference Group to discuss progress, and I expect to receive final advice from the group in the spring.

### Children's Hospices

16. **Jeff Ennis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to change the amount of NHS funding allocated to children's hospices. [155733]

**Dr. Ladyman:** National Health Service funding is available through negotiation between children's hospices and primary care trusts, which are responsible for funding health care for their resident population. There are no limits to the amount of funding which may be provided; this is for local decision.

### Benzodiazepines

17. **Mr. Grogan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement regarding guidance issued to doctors concerning the prescribing of benzodiazepines. [155734]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Guidance on the prescribing of benzodiazepines is provided in the British National Formulary, which is sent to all doctors within the National Health Service and on the Internet at Electronic Medicines Compendium. The guidance has been reiterated in the Chief Medical Officer's Update dated January 2004 which announced the Department's intention to introduce instalment dispensing of benzodiazepines to minimise access to extensive doses.

### Obesity

18. **Colin Burgon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how he plans to combat obesity in school children. [155735]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The Government takes the issue of tackling obesity in children very seriously. Prevention is the best long-term approach, by improving diet and promoting physical activity. Strategies are being developed through the Food and Health Action Plan that promotes healthy diet and the Activity Co-ordination Team that promotes physical activity.

25. **Mr. Reed:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to tackle obesity through increasing physical activity. [155742]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Together with my right hon. Friend the Minister for Sport, I chair the cross-Government Activity Co-ordination Team, which is preparing a delivery plan on how the Government will increase physical activity in England. We aim to publish a consultation document on physical activity proposals in April as part of the Public Health White Paper consultation process.

I have also commissioned 10 Local Exercise Action Pilots across England, which are currently under way. These will evaluate a range of different methods—and establish which are most effective—in driving up sustained physical activity rates across the population.

### Domiciliary Care

19. **Sandra Gidley**: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on domiciliary care. [155736]

**Dr. Ladyman:** The Domiciliary Care Agencies Regulations 2002 and National Minimum Standards for Domiciliary Care came into force on 1 April 2003. People using domiciliary care services are protected for the first time by a regulatory framework.

Progress on the target to increase by March 2006 the number of those supported to live intensively at home to 30 per cent. of all those being supported at home or in residential care, is encouraging. The percentage has risen by nearly two points from 27.2 per cent. to 29 per cent. in 2002–03.

### Tertiary Treatment Costs

20. **Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the cost of travel and accommodation for *(a)* patients undergoing tertiary treatment and *(b)* their relatives or carers. [155737]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Patients eligible under the NHS Low Income Scheme are entitled to full or partial reimbursement of their costs to hospital under the Hospital Travel Cost Scheme. The transport costs of an escort may also be reimbursed, but not the cost of accommodation, or any cost associated with relatives.

### General Practitioners

21. **Chris Grayling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the provision of out-of-hours general practitioner services. [155738]

**Mr. Hutton:** Primary care trusts are working with general practitioners and other organisations to develop out-of-hours services that meet national quality standards and local needs. With more direct control over the way these services are commissioned and provided they will be able to ensure they are better integrated with other unscheduled care services.

### Trauma Consultants

22. **Mr. McWalter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the number of trauma consultants needed by the NHS in 2010; and how many such consultants there were on the latest date for which figures are available. [155739]

**Mr. Hutton:** As at 30 June 2003, there were 1,396 consultants in trauma and orthopaedic surgery, an increase of 32 per cent. since September 1997. We are planning to increase trauma and orthopaedic consultant numbers by a further 9 per cent. between March 2004 and March 2006.

The national health service will continue to plan, for three-year periods, its future workforce requirements and steps will be taken to address the identified need.

### Hospital Star Ratings

23. **Mr. George Osborne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the future of the star rating system for hospitals. [155740]

**Mr. Hutton:** From April 2004, the Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection will take over the responsibility for performance rating the national health service. It will be up to CHAI to determine what form performance assessments will take in the future.

### Crohn's Disease

24. **Mr. Barnes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of bone marrow treatment for those suffering from Crohn's disease. [155741]

**Dr. Ladyman:** While we welcome new developments that improve our understanding of distressing conditions like Crohn's disease, we would need to see a rigorous scientific and clinical analysis of this particular procedure, and its outcomes, before we could judge whether it was suitable for NHS patients with Crohn's disease.

The assessment of new treatments is a gradual process. Evidence from clinical trials may suggest that a new treatment is effective. Further research is then undertaken to provide substantive evidence around issues like long-term safety, before moving to the implementation stage. We have to await evidence provided by the medical and research community before we implement new procedures and treatments.

### Ambulances

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what provison is made for ambulance drivers to receive *(a)* initial and *(b)* refresher training; and if he will make a statement. [155462]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** National health service trusts are responsible for ensuring that their staff are suitably trained and qualified to perform their duties. Ambulance staff employed on emergency driving duties receive initial driving training, are required to satisfy proficiency standards and to receive periodic refresher training to maintain proficiency in accordance with a national syllabus and standards.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance his Department has published on the vision levels that ambulance drivers need to achieve and on how frequently they should receive eye checks. [155463]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Through its occupational health service each national health service trust is responsible for setting and monitoring staff health standards—including eyesight—and for ensuring that they conform to driver licensing requirements and relevant occupational health guidance.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what standards of driving test ambulance drivers are required to meet; and what the failure rate was in each year since 1997. [155464]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Ambulance drivers are required to hold the driving licence appropriate to the class of vehicle they drive and to undertake training and an assessment as part of their initial and refresher training. Information on success or failure rates is not held centrally.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the guidelines published by his Department on the disciplinary code for ambulance drivers. [155465]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Each national health service trust is responsible for developing, adopting and implementing an appropriate disciplinary code for its staff.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what disciplinary measures are taken against ambulance drivers who are involved in road accidents. [155466]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** It is the responsibility of each national health service trust to investigate any accidents, alleged failure or misconduct on the part of its staff and where necessary to instigate disciplinary action in accordance with its local procedures.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many ambulance drivers in the NHS have not received additional driver training; and if he will make a statement. [156002]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** We are not aware of any specific instance of a national health service ambulance driver having failed to receive suitable driving training.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health on what date specialist ambulance driver training became mandatory. [156003]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The mandatory requirement is that ambulance drivers are required to hold the driving licence appropriate to the class of vehicle they drive. In addition, ambulance drivers engaged on emergency duties should undertake specialist driver training in an accredited driving school as part of the basic ambulance training course. This requirement has been in place since 1968, when the responsibility for ambulance services rested with local government.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many accidents involving ambulances there were *(a)* in total and *(b)* involving fatalities, in each year since 1997 in (i) England and (ii) each ambulance trust; and if he will make a statement. [156001]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Information on accidents involving ambulances is shown in the table. Figures for each individual ambulance trust are not collected centrally.

*Accidents involving ambulances, by severity: England, 1997–2002*

| *Severity* | *1997* | *1998* | *1999* | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fatal | 4 | 3 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 5 |
| Serious | 35 | 38 | 29 | 37 | 22 | 33 |
| Slight | 232 | 282 | 246 | 299 | 278 | 257 |
| All | 271 | 323 | 282 | 340 | 303 | 295 |

**Dr. Murrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what targets for ambulance 999 calls in rural areas have been set; and what the latest figures for performance against these targets are. [154906]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Current ambulance response targets are:

category A calls—presenting conditions which may be immediately life-threatening and which should be responded to within eight minutes irrespective of location in 75 per cent. of cases;

category B calls—presenting conditions which, though serious, are not immediately life-threatening and should be responded to within 14 minutes (urban) and 19 minutes (rural) in 95 per cent. of cases;

category C calls—presenting conditions which are not immediately life-threatening or serious but should also be responded to within 14 minutes (urban) and 19 minutes (rural) in 95 per cent. of cases; and

urgent cases—in addition to emergency 999 calls, ambulance services are required to take patients to hospital where the need is identified by a doctor as urgent and these patients should arrive at hospital within 15 minutes of the arrival time specified by the doctor in 95 per cent. of cases.

Information about performance of ambulance trusts is published annually in a statistical bulletin. The latest data are in "Ambulance Services, England: 2002–03". A copy of the bulletin is available in the Library and on the Department's website at: www.doh.gov.uk/public/sb0313.pdf

### Cataract Operations (Kent)

**Jonathan Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cataract operations will be carried out in Kent in financial year 2003–04. [155729]

**Dr. John Reid:** The Kent and Medway Strategic Health Authority plan to provide a total of 11,084 cataract operations this year in Kent. As a result, the maximum waiting time for cataract operations in Kent will be down to six months by 31 March 2004—a year-and-a-half ahead of the NHS Plan target.

### Child Social Work Team (Gatwick Airport)

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the progress of proposals to fund a joint unit at Gatwick Airport between immigration officials and members of West Sussex Social Services Child Protection Division. [144997]

**Beverley Hughes:** I have been asked to reply.

We have not as yet received formal proposals from the local authority on the structure and function of a Children Social Work team at Gatwick. The amendment to section 110 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 allows us to provide funding for special projects of this nature, and we will give full and careful consideration to any proposals from West Sussex once we receive them.

## ELECTORAL COMMISSION

### Electoral Pilots

**Mr. Jenkin:** To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission what the cost of the Electoral Commission report on Electoral Pilots at the June 2004 elections was. [155119]

**Mr. Viggers:** I am advised by the Chairman of the Commission that the total cost to it of reporting on the most suitable European Parliamentary regions for electoral pilots at the June 2004 combined European Parliamentary and local elections, as directed by the Government under section 6(2) of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, is estimated to have been approximately £32,000.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### Animal By-Products Regulations

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will place the Department's guidelines on the implementation of the EU Directive on Animal By-Products in the Library. [153469]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Guidance is available on the Defra website at hhtp://defraweb/animalh/by-prods/default.htm.

### Animal Welfare

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her policy is on the proposed new EU regulation on animal transport. [155663]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** The Government are seeking measures that result in improved conditions and better enforcement throughout the EU.

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) whether there is a central register of those convicted of cruelty to animals in the United Kingdom; [155570]

(2) whether there is a central register of those banned from keeping animals in the United Kingdom. [155571]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** There is no central register of people convicted of cruelty or who have been disqualified from keeping animals. However, the Department is considering, as part of the proposed Animal Welfare Bill, the introduction of an Animal Welfare Enforcement Database, which would assist in the enforcement of animal welfare legislation in England and Wales. It is proposed that the database would include details of those people who have been convicted and disqualified from keeping animals.

## Bovine TB

**Mr. Paterson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the natural predators of the badger are, other than man; and what effect they exert on the United Kingdom badger population. [153961]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Adult badgers have no natural predators, other than man in Britain. It is not unusual, however, for badger cubs to be killed by dogs, foxes and sometimes by adult badgers[1].

The impact of non-human induced mortality on the national badger population has not been quantified.

[1] The Handbook of British Mammals (1991). Third Edition. Edited by G. B. Corbet and S. Harris. Blackwell Scientific Publications, Oxford.

**Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many badgers have been culled in each of the *(a)* proactive and *(b)* inactive cull areas in each of the selected trial zones in each year since the trials commenced. [155081]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** The Randomised Badger Culling Trial compares 30 areas of 100 km$^2$, grouped into 10 triplets. One of the following three "treatments" is allocated to each trial area:

'Proactive' culling where badgers are trapped and culled at the outset of the trial and at intervals afterwards.

'Reactive' culling where badgers are trapped and culled from social groups associated with farms which have a confirmed incident of bovine TB during the course of the trial.

'Survey only' areas where no trapping or culling takes place. Setts are surveyed regularly to check for signs of unlawful removal of badgers. These areas act as a scientific control against which the impact of the two culling strategies can be measured.

Culling in the reactive areas of the trial has been suspended.

Details of the badgers culled in the proactive and reactive treatment areas are given in the following table:

*Table summary of badgers taken during trial operations to 12 January 2004*

| Triplet Proactive (P) or Reactive (R) | May 1998 to January 1999 | | May 1999 to January 2000 | | May 2000 to January 2001 | | May 2002 to January 2003 | | May 2003 to January 2004 | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | P | R | P | R | P | R | P | R | P | R | P | R |
| A | | | 55 | 0 | 0 | 34 | 149 | 47 | 52 | 36 | 256 | 117 |
| B | 238 | 0 | 85 | 73 | 74 | 34 | 49 | 84 | 172 | 110 | 618 | 301 |
| C | | | 246 | 0 | 111 | 178 | 126 | 115 | 132 | 101 | 615 | 394 |
| D | | | | | | | 293 | 0 | 368 | 122 | 661 | 122 |
| E | | | | | [1]744 | 0 | 96 | 62 | 258 | 126 | 1,098 | 188 |
| F | | | | | 451 | 0 | 248 | 145 | 103 | 290 | 802 | 435 |
| G | | | | | 428 | 0 | 205 | 172 | 144 | 84 | 777 | 256 |
| H | | | | | 162 | 0 | 231 | 16 | 71 | 143 | 464 | 159 |
| I | | | | | | | 219 | 0 | 175 | 94 | 394 | 94 |
| J | | | | | | | 441 | 0 | 187 | 0 | 628 | 0 |
| Sub total | 238 | | 386 | 73 | 1,970 | 246 | 2,057 | 641 | 1,662 | 1,106 | 6,313 | 2,066 |
| Total (P and R) | 238 | | 459 | | 2,216 | | 2,698 | | 2,768 | | 8,379 | |

[1] Combined total for initial and follow-up cull completed in the same culling year

*Note:*
No data for May 2001-January 2002 when trial suspended due to FMD

**Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what targets have been set for the bovine TB testing of herds in the last five years for which figures are available; how many have been completed; and how long it will take to clear the backlog of required tests. [155082]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** The State Veterinary Service has two targets relating to TB testing of cattle herds:

*(a)* 95 per cent. of herds to be tested within one month of the due date, and

*(b)* 100 per cent. of herds to be tested within three months of the due date.

The following table details the performance figures for the years where figures are available.

| | 2001 | 2002 | 2003[1] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of herds due to be tested | 12,207 | 19,877 | 15,524 |
| Completed tests within one month of the due date (percentage) | 14.5 | 47.4 | 78.7 |
| Completed tests within three months of the due date (percentage) | 22.7 | 65.0 | 92.7 |

[1] to end September

The number of tests overdue at the end of December 2003 was 3,623 of which only 163 were more than 12 months overdue (provisional data). This is similar to the number of overdue TB tests recorded before the FMD epidemic.

The number of overdue TB tests has remained more or less stable since April 2003, with no significant trend up or down. It is therefore considered that the clearance of the backlog of TB tests, which accumulated during the FMD epidemic, has been completed.

**Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what budget was set by her Department for each year for all aspects of bovine TB research, testing, culling, compensation, fieldwork and other costs for the last five years for which figures are available; and what the actual spending was in each year. [155083]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Historical information on the budgets originally set for various elements of the bovine TB programme is not readily available and can be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, a breakdown of the actual spend for the last five financial years is shown in the following table:

*Expenditure on bovine TB in Great Britain: 1998–99 to 2002–03*

*Expenditure in £000*

| | *1998–99* | *1999–2000* | *2000–01* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Compensation[1] | 3,491 | 5,303 | 6,632 | 9,243 | 31,146 |
| TB testing | 7,247 | 8,329 | 8,675 | 3,571 | 12,398 |
| Randomised Badger Culling Trial (RBCT) and associated research | 2,988 | 4,392 | 6,630 | 6,001 | 6,479 |
| Other research (not including RBCT) | 2,541 | 4,114 | 5,266 | 6,112 | 6,824 |
| Other costs[2] | 8,617 | 9,002 | 8,996 | 5,557 | 17,055 |
| Total (rounded figures) | 24,883 | 31,141 | 36,199 | 30,485 | 73,902 |

[1] Includes compensation paid for cattle and deer slaughtered as a result of TB control measures.
[2] Includes State Veterinary Service staff costs and diagnosis carried out by the Veterinary Laboratories Agency.

Fieldwork costs are included in the expenditure shown for the RBCT and associated research.

### Beef Imports

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much beef was not allowed into the country on health grounds in the last year for which figures are available. [155349]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Centrally kept statistics do not provide information to answer the question in the form asked. I can say that in the year 2003, out of 15,294 consignments of imported meat and meat products, derived from cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and horses presented for veterinary checks at Border Inspection Posts in the UK, 215 were rejected for various reasons. It is not possible to say how many were rejected on health grounds as consignments rejected for other reasons—for example, because of incorrect certification or because they did not tally with the accompanying documentation, would not be further checked to see if there were also health problems.

### Fisheries

**Mr. Paterson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment has been made of the *(a)* operational and *(b)* safety impact of including steaming time in the days at sea allowance. [150324]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** For vessels using demersal trawls of over 100 mm mesh, the total allocation of days per month is 15, the same as last year, though the total last year included a separately identified element for steaming days. There need, therefore, be no differential impact this year. We do not, however, propose to require vessels to include time lost in life-threatening circumstances at sea (such as going to the aid of another vessel in distress) as part of their allocation.

**Mr. Paterson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the economic impact on the UK retail market of the UK fishing fleet producing a surplus of haddock in the absence of adequate cod supplies. [152368]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Because of the global nature of the markets for the main whitefish species, the impact of such changes is difficult to quantify, since there is no simple relationship between local catch levels and market prices.

### Flood Alleviation (Somerset)

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will ensure that the plans by South Somerset District Council for a Merriott flood alleviation scheme (phase 2) receive early approval from *(a)* her Department and *(b)* the Environment Agency to enable it to qualify for funding available before 31 March; and if she will make a statement. [155107]

**Mr. Morley:** Following the significant flooding in autumn 2000, the Department agreed to consider special cases supported by the Environment Agency (EA) HQ for particularly deserving river defence schemes that did not achieve the priority score threshold for Defra funding. Such schemes still had to meet the other basic criteria for funding. For special case consideration, EA HQ identified criteria that were then not reflected fully in the priority scoring system. On that basis, they supported a number of special cases that the Department accepted in July 2001. Much of the special case criteria was incorporated into the revised priority scoring system that came into effect in April 2003. When notifying details of 2003–04 allocations to flood defence operating authorities in February 2003, officials indicated that, given special cases were identified as urgent following the autumn 2000 floods, the Department would not expect to extend special treatment beyond 2003–04.

I understand that the South Somerset District Council is urgently seeking the necessary consents from the Environment Agency and English Nature and will then submit an application. The Department will consider the application as swiftly as possible.

### Game Licences

**Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent assessment she has made of the impact of game licences on *(a)* the sport of shooting, *(b)* the quarry species and *(c)* the environment; and if she will make a statement. [155180]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** No assessment has been made of the impact of game licences on the sport of shooting game, the quarry species covered by these licences or the environment more generally.

### Poultry Imports

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 10 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1301W, which EU countries ban the import of chickens infected with salmonella; and for what reasons the United Kingdom does not ban salmonella infected chickens. [155184]

**Mr. Bradshaw** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* There are no bans as such on imports into EU countries of live chickens or chicken meat because of salmonella. However, European Community legislation stipulates that live chickens intended for breeding or production imported from third countries have to be accompanied by certification confirming that they are from flocks which have been submitted to a disease surveillance programme for *salmonella pullorum* and *salmonella gallinarum*.

Live chickens traded between member states must come from flocks that are routinely monitored for *salmonella pullorum* and *salmonella gallinarum*. In addition, the chickens must be monitored for salmonella while the birds are in quarantine. Those birds intended for slaughter and destined for Finland or Sweden, must be subject to a microbiological test by sampling in the establishment of origin.

Chicken meat imported from third countries and destined for Finland and Sweden must be subject to a microbiological test by sampling in the establishment of origin.

The UK complies fully with European Community rules as outlined above.

### Water Supplies

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will list the water supply and urban and rural drainage bodies in England which are companies where a holding company or majority of shareholdings are not of the United Kingdom, stating in each case the country and name of the ultimate owner, together with date of acquisition. [145468]

**Mr. Morley** *[pursuant to his reply, 14 January 2004, Official Report, c. 742W]:* In my answer I referred to information on Cambridge Water and Folkestone and Dover. This was incorrect.

The correct information for Cambridge Water and Folkestone and Dover is as follows:

| *Water only undertakers* | *Ultimate holding company and where headquarters is based* | *Date of acquisition* |
|---|---|---|
| Cambridge Water plc | Union Electricia Fenosa SA (Spain) | January 2000 |
| Folkestone and Dover Water Services Ltd. | Veolia Environnement (France) | Owned since before 1989 |

The rest of the answer remains correct.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

### Amendments

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission if he will ensure that amendments to Bills which appear on the Order Paper are available at the same time on the parliamentary website. [154571]

**Sir Archy Kirkwood:** The timetable for electronic publication of House of Commons documents is based on the recommendation of the Information Committee: that they should be made available as soon as practicable after release to Members. However, it also takes into account the potential cost to the House of moving to earlier publication. Although times of publication have been advanced in instances where this can be achieved at little cost, simultaneous publication is not practicable.

At the moment marshalled lists of amendments are made available electronically by 12 noon on the day of publication in printed form. Discussions with the House's contractor indicate that this time could be brought forward to 9.30 am without giving rise to substantial additional costs; and this option will be pursued

## INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Recruitment Advertising

**Pete Wishart:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his Department's expenditure on recruitment advertising was in each of the last three years, broken down by publication; and what proportion of such expenditure was *(a)* to advertise vacant posts and *(b)* in the form of other general recruitment advertising. [155520]

**Hilary Benn:** The proportion of our overall advertising expenditure spent to *(a)* advertise vacant posts and *(b)* in the form of other recruitment advertising, is shown in the following table.

| | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total advertising expenditure (£) | 1,208,190.72 | 914,571.19 | 849,196.36 |
| Total spent on advertising vacant posts (£) | 836,848.13 | 702,098.15 | 746,712.70 |
| Percentage spent on advertising vacant posts | 69 | 77 | 88 |
| Total spent on other recruitment advertising (£) | 371,342.59 | 212,473.04 | 102,483.66 |
| Percentage spent on other recruitment advertising | 31 | 23 | 12 |

It would involve disproportionate cost for DFID to break down our recruitment advertising expenditure by publication.

## SOLICITOR-GENERAL

### Child Murders (Drugs)

**Mr. Caton:** To ask the Solicitor-General whether investigations into the criminal cases in which a parent has been convicted of murdering a child will include an assessment of whether *(a)* cisapride and *(b)* other drugs contributed to the deaths. [153753]

**The Solicitor-General:** Since the release of Angela Cannings by the Court of Appeal and its published judgment, the Attorney-General has instigated a number of measures. A total of 258 convictions over the last 10 years for the murder, manslaughter or infanticide of a child under two by its parent have been identified. Of those, a total of 72 relate to persons still serving a custodial sentence. These will be accorded the utmost priority. Currently, some 365 boxes of evidence relating to 52 high profile cases have been recovered from central storage and dispatched to CPS areas for them to conduct an initial review. The remaining high profile cases are being recovered from the areas themselves.

With the help of the Interdepartmental Group a system of review has been established. Each individual case will first be subject to a preliminary review by the relevant CPS Area to identify its key characteristics. Each case will then be reviewed by a central review team to establish whether any features identified by the Court of Appeal in Angela Cannings' judgment make the conviction potentially unsafe. As the review proceeds, the issues in each case will become clearer and the review team will be alert for any factors, including drugs, which were held to have contributed towards the death of an infant.

## CABINET OFFICE

### Internet

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what is being done to raise levels of internet usage among those sectors of the population whose usage is under the national average, with particular reference to the *(a)* 55 to 64 and *(b)* 65 and over age groups. [155264]

**Mr. Alexander:** Opportunities to physically access the internet are now pervasive for all age-groups. Research by the Oxford Internet Institute has found that 96 per cent. of the population are aware of a place where they could get online.

For those, like some older people, who may need additional support to get online there is a network of over 6,000 UK online centres which offer community-based internet access and training at low or no cost. Last year the 'Get Started' campaign aimed to drive up internet use among key groups such as the elderly, those with disabilities and the unemployed. Of those who responded, 37 per cent. were over 65 and 45 per cent. were retired.

In addition on 15 December 2003 the Government announced a Digital Inclusion Panel which will advise Government and industry on how to ensure a digitally United Kingdom. Digital connectivity among older age-groups will be one
area to be reviewed.

### Better Regulation

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will list executive board members appointed to promote better regulation, broken down by department; and what their respective private sector experience is in each case. [155277]

**Mr. Alexander:** As of 1 February 2004, the network of departmental board level members for better regulation consisted of:

| *Board member* | |
|---|---|
| Margaret Aldred | Home Office |
| Alan Davey | Department for Culture, Media and Sport |
| Karen Dunnell | Office for National Statistics |
| Eddie Frizzell | Scottish Executive |
| Paul Gray | Department for Work and Pensions |
| Stephen Haddrill | Department of Trade and Industry |
| Mike Hanson | HM Customs and Excise |
| Dave Hartnett | Board of Inland Revenue |
| Donald Mcrae | Department for Environment, Food and Rural affairs |
| Peter Makeham | Department for Education and Skills |
| Willy Rickett | Department for Transport |
| James Sassoon | HM Treasury |
| Jonathan Spencer | Department of Constitutional Affairs |
| Richard Stagg | Foreign and Commonwealth Office |
| Pat Stewart | Food Standards Agency |
| Hugh Taylor | Department of Health |
| Peter Unwin | Office of the Deputy Prime Minister |
| Jane Willis | Health and Safety Executive |
| Baroness Young of Old Scone | Environment Agency |

These senior departmental nominees draw on a wide range of experience in advising within their organisation on private sector, public sector and European regulatory issues.

## TRANSPORT

### A35

**Mr. Swire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to upgrade the A35 between Dorchester and Honiton. [155299]

**Mr. Jamieson:** There are no current plans for significant upgrading of the A35 between Dorchester and Honiton.

**Mr. Swire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to improve *(a)* traffic flow and *(b)* road safety at Raymond's Hill on the A35. [155300]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The Highways Agency substantially completed a safety improvement scheme at Raymond's Hill last year, which includes new signs, red anti-skid surfacing and two traffic islands. It will prevent overtaking through the junction, help traffic entering or crossing the trunk road and assist pedestrians crossing the road. A reduction of the speed limit to 40 mph is also planned and this proposal has recently been advertised.

The new scheme will have limited effect on traffic flow but should make a significant improvement to road safety. Its impact will be monitored to see if further measures are necessary.

### A404

**Mrs. May:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) when he will set a date for the resurfacing of the A404 Marlow by-pass; [155068]

(2) whether the A404 Marlow by-pass meets the criteria for remedial action on environmental grounds to reduce noise pollution. [155069]

**Mr. Darling:** The A404 Marlow Bypass is currently in a satisfactory condition as far as safety is concerned and is not expected to require resurfacing within the next few years. As a result, no date has yet been set.

However, I can confirm that the A404 Marlow Bypass meets the criteria announced on 22 March 1999 for consideration for remedial action on environmental grounds to reduce noise pollution.

### Aviation Security

**Jim Dowd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent discussions his Department has had with counterparts in the Transport Safety Authority of the US Administration concerning matters of aviation security. [155221]

**Mr. McNulty:** Departmental officials are in very regular contact with their opposite numbers in the US Transportation Security Administration, about a range of aviation security matters.

### Central Railway

**Mr. Peter Ainsworth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will investigate the disclosure to the Sunday Telegraph of the Strategic Rail Authority's latest study of the Central Railway proposal; and if he will make a statement. [155242]

**Mr. McNulty:** It is not the Department's practice to comment on such matters.

### Cycling

**Mr. Paul Marsden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will list for each local authority the financial support given by the Department to support cycling proficiency tests in 2003–04; [155868]

(2) how many cycling proficiency tests were completed last year; and what the pass rates were for those tests, broken down by local authority. [155870]

**Mr. Jamieson:** Local authorities fund cycle training from within their overall resources for transport. We do not hold data centrally on how many cycling proficiency tests are undertaken.

The Government are supportive of cycle training and our research has shown that it is effective, with trained children found to be significantly safer than untrained children when knowledge and skills were tested two years after training. We want to see an increase in the level, and improvement in the quality, of cycle training for children.

The Department has been working closely with a number of groups to develop cycle training. With our support 'Guidelines for the management and Operation of Practical Cyclist Training Schemes' were revised and published by RoSPA in June 2000. In July 2001 the Department for Transport and the Department of Health gave grant funding amounting to £76,000 to the Cyclist Touring Club to run a three-year project to develop a cycle training scheme for adults and teenagers. This led to the development of the publication, "Adult Cycle Training—A Guide for Instructors and Organisers", which was launched in May 2003 and sent to all road safety officers. We are also working with a group of cycle training experts to develop a new National Standard for child cyclist training. This will be piloted in schools from April, with a view to a launch later in the year.

### Eurotunnel

**Mr. Paul Marsden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport who pays the minimum usage charge paid to Eurotunnel. [154910]

**Mr. McNulty:** The Minimum Usage Charge (MUC) is a top-up mechanism that assures Eurotunnel of a minimum income from Eurostar and rail freight services for the first 12 years of commercial operations. It is a contractual commitment to Eurotunnel by the French and UK railways currently operating through the Tunnel. For the UK, Eurostar UK Ltd. is responsible for all payments relating to passenger services, and the Strategic Rail Authority currently makes the payments for freight services. On the French side, the payments are made by SNCF.

### Infrastructure Improvement Schemes (Lancashire)

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the infrastructure improvement schemes in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley; and what their projected cost is. [153500]

**Dr. Howells:** The Chorley Transport Interchange opened in March 2003 at a cost of £2,500,000. Work is currently under way improving Chorley Railway Station at a cost of £309,000. Details of other local transport infrastructure schemes and projected costs are set out in the Local Transport Plans and Annual Progress Reports, published by Lancashire County Council, Blackpool Borough Council and Blackburn-with-Darwen Borough Council.

Additionally, both Chorley and Lancashire will benefit from the £7.5 billion West Coast Mainline route modernisation programme that is currently under way.

Details of infrastructure improvement schemes for the motorway and trunk road network in Lancashire, including projected costs during 2003–04, are set out in the following table.

*Highways Agency: Infrastructure Improvement Schemes*

| *Category/Scheme Description* | *2003–04 Full Year Forecast (£000)* |
|---|---|
| *Safety Improvements* | |
| M6 Preston Signage and Road Markings, Junctions 30 to 32 | 145 |
| M6 Road Markings | 31 |
| A585 Thornton Roundabout Improvements | 127 |
| A585 Thistleton Junction Improvements | 178 |
| Safety Improvements—Minor Schemes | 478 |
| *Congestion Easing* | |
| A585 Singleton Crossroads | 33 |
| *Renewal of Roads* | |
| M6 North of Junction 34 to 35, Carnforth | 3,632 |
| M55 Broughton Crash Barriers | 1,710 |
| M6 Junction 32 Broughton Electric Cabling for Road Signs | 219 |
| Minor Capital Maintenance | 670 |
| *Renewal of Bridges and Structures* | |
| M6 Three Pinned Concrete Footbridge | 298 |
| M6 Forton Service Area Piers | 26 |
| M6 Golden Fleece | 10 |
| M6 Carnforth | 800 |
| M6 Occupation Bridges Bailtons | 3 |
| M6 Occupation Bridge Mount Pleasant | 100 |
| Block Allocation for other Bridge Schemes | 455 |
| *Accessibility Improvements* | |
| Improvements for Pedestrians, Cyclists and Horse Riders | 35 |
| *Tourism Signage* | |
| M6 Strategic Tourism Signing | 300 |
| Total | 8,950 |

## Road Safety

**Peter Bottomley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what reports from judges the Government have received in relation to concluded cases of failure to stop after a road crash. [154917]

**Mr. Leslie:** I have been asked to reply.

Failing to stop after an accident is a summary offence and as such it would normally be dealt with at a magistrates' court. Judges would not therefore deal with such offences unless they were committed for sentence to the Crown Court together with an indictable or triable either-way offence. My Department does not hold data centrally relating to reports from Judges who sat on particular cases.

## Road Resurfacing

**Mr. Robathan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the latest criteria for prioritisation of resurfacing of roads are. [155979]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The criteria for the prioritisation of resurfacing flexible trunk roads are related to the condition of the surface. The combined assessment of levels of rutting, surface crack intensity, unevenness, skid resistance, the general wear of the surface material and the frequency of accidents associated with the surface condition, is used to determine the programme for resurfacing. The aim is to maintain the trunk road network using the principle of minimising whole life costs, taking account of disruption to the road users and the need to keep the road in a safe and serviceable condition.

On concrete roads, priorities for dealing with the most pressing cases of traffic noise have been established as set out in the Secretary of State's announcement to the House on 1 April 2003, and these will be progressed as funding allows.

**Mr. Robathan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the criteria for categorisation of sites for each level of noise reduction road resurfacing programmes; and what the effect of each categorisation is. [155983]

**Mr. Jamieson:** Categorisation of sites for low noise surfacing is primarily based on maintenance need. In addition, we have criteria for categorisation for noise reduction of roads with concrete surfaces. I announced these criteria on 17 October 2001; they are:

1. that wherever possible the application of quieter surfaces will fit in with normal maintenance needs;

2. that priority will be given to those sites where treatment would benefit the greatest number of people;

3. that the works will be carried out in such a way as to minimise disruption to general public and users of the network;

4. that priority will be given to roads, opened since June 1998, where actual noise levels have turned out to be significantly higher than predicted at the time of Public Inquiry.

Priority is given to road surfaces that are deteriorating and to locations where road safety is an issue. Where the resurfacing is specifically for noise reduction purposes priority will be given to those cases in which the actual noise levels exceed those predicted by at least three decibels, or where more than 100 properties per kilometre are effected by excess noise.

**Mr. Robathan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what change there has been in estimated costs of resurfacing the M1 between junctions 20 and 21 since the initial announcement; and if he will make a statement. [155987]

**Mr. Jamieson:** Final cost details for resurfacing of the M1 between Junctions 20 and 21 will not be available until current investigations by the Highways Agency are completed. It was initially anticipated that part of this section of the M1 would be resurfaced in 2004 but Value Management assessments have shown that other areas of the network need to be given higher priority. The assessments demonstrated that better value for money would be obtained by undertaking more work than simply resurfacing, although this would result in increased capital cost.

## Rolling Stock

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what *(a)* actual and *(b)* percentage increase in power supply is required to operate an eight-car new third-rail train compared with its slam-door predecessor, assuming no change in average speed; and if he will make a statement. [155416]

**Mr. McNulty:** At lower speeds the new trains are more efficient. At higher speeds–up to 75mph–the traction draw is higher. The power draw for the new trains travelling at up to 75mph is capped at 1500 amps. For Mark I trains the draw is 750 amps. In percentage terms, a Siemens Class 450 Desiro train draws 39.6 per cent. more traction power than a Mark I train. A Bombardier Electrostar Class 375 draws 35 per cent. more traction power than a Mark I train.

### Shipping

**Mr. Carmichael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1235W, if he will introduce primary legislation to revise the eligibility criteria for the scheme; and what discussions his Department has had with representatives of seafarer trade unions concerning alterations to the Crew Relief Costs Scheme. [155511]

**Mr. Jamieson:** Primary legislation will be introduced when Parliamentary time is available. The proposed extension of the Crew Relief Costs Scheme was discussed with members of the Shipping Working Group, including seafarer trade unions, when the policy outlined in the White Paper "British Shipping: Charting a New Course" was being developed.

**Mr. Carmichael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1242W, if he will make a statement on the progress made towards implementing the actions contained in "British Shipping: Charting a New Course"; whether it is his policy to implement all the actions in the paper; and when his Department will conclude the implementation of these actions. [155513]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The Government's shipping policy is stated in the White Paper "British Shipping: Charting a New Course". Some of the actions are on-going and so will not have a date by which they will be completed. It is therefore not possible to issue a timetable showing when the implementation will be concluded. An update of the current status of the 33 actions from "Charting" has been placed in the Libraries of the House.

### Snowfall Measures

**Mr. Randall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what guidelines his Department issues for local authorities in respect of measures to deal with snowfall. [155798]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The Department for Transport strongly recommends that local highway authorities carry out winter maintenance in accordance with the Code of Practice for highway maintenance, "Delivering Best Value in Highway Maintenance", which was published in July 2001.

### Speed Cameras

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much funding his Department has provided for each speed camera partnership in England and which partners are involved in each partnership. [155213]

**Mr. Jamieson:** Eight partnerships, six in England, trialled the safety camera cost recovery scheme from April 2000 to March 2002. A further seven (six in England) joined during 2002.

Funding for the camera activities of the Safety Camera Partnerships in England, met from conditional fixed penalty fines for speeding and red light offences, for 2000–01 and 2001–02, is as follows:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| *2000–01* | |
| Cleveland | 771,901 |
| Essex | 1,846,480 |
| Lincolnshire | 512,721 |
| Nottingham | 622,371 |
| Northants | 1,702,404 |
| Thames Valley | 1,825,639 |
| Total | 7,281,516 |
| *2001–02* | |
| Cleveland | 486,891 |
| Essex | 3,003,763 |
| Lincolnshire | 516,818 |
| Nottingham | 778,536 |
| Northants | 2,247,838 |
| Thames Valley | 2,617,031 |
| Cambridgeshire | 113,760 |
| Derbyshire | 455,659 |
| Lancashire | 761,017 |
| Norfolk | 433,100 |
| Staffordshire | 629,246 |
| Warwickshire | 355,068 |
| Totals | 12,398,727 |

Information on the Partnerships' expenditure for 2002–03 is being prepared and will be published shortly.

Safety Camera Partnerships comprise representatives of the police force (or forces), local authorities and Magistrates' Courts Committees for the areas concerned. Some Partnerships also include representative of the Highways Agency and local Health Authorities.

**Mr. Chope:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his oral answer of 3 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 616, how many people were *(a)* killed and *(b)* seriously injured in the three years prior to the establishment of camera sites in the Christchurch constituency, and how many have been (i) killed and (ii) seriously injured since, in respect of each of the camera sites. [155507]

**Mr. Jamieson** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]*: My Department does not hold statistical information broken down by Parliamentary constituency areas. The hon. Member may wish to contact the Dorset Safety Camera Partnership for more detailed information.

## DEFENCE

### Armed Forces Retirement Age

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what criteria are in place to determine the *(a)* minimum and *(b)* maximum armed forces retirement age; and if he will make a statement. [154960]

**Mr. Caplin:** The question of retirement procedures is a complex one as each of the Services have their individual regulations and, indeed, within each Service retirement criteria can vary considerably depending on factors such as length of service, rank and professional specialty. In addition, the introduction of the Three Tier Commission (short, medium and full) in April 1999 and such initiatives as the Common Terms of Service for medical officers mean that the already complex situation is exacerbated as the legacy rights of personnel serving before the introduction of these schemes have to be taken into consideration. However, in order to offer some indication of the minimum and maximum retirement ages the following can be used as a generic guide. Further more detailed information can be provided on specific cases if required.

There is no standard minimum retirement age as personnel can leave at various points after enlistment. However, in general terms, to receive an immediately payable pension officers would have to serve a minimum of 16 years from the age of 21 (37), whilst non-commissioned officers would have to serve a minimum of 22 years from the age of 18 (40). Personnel who leave too early to receive the immediately payable pension may be entitled to a preserved pension, based on their length of service, which is payable at the age of 60.

The normal maximum retirement age is 55 but again this can vary depending on factors such as seniority and professional specialty. For example, a Medical Officer in a senior position could stay in post until the age of 65. It should also be noted that any individual may have their service extended beyond their normal retirement age if to do so would be of mutual benefit to the Service and the individual.

### Consultation Documents

**Mr. Brazier:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the individuals and organisations to whom *(a)* his Department, *(b)* its executive agencies and *(c)* non-departmental public bodies for which his Department is responsible sent a copy of the consultation document, "The Future of the Defence Diversification Agency". [153852]

**Mr. Caplin:** The Consultation Document "The Future of The Defence Diversification Agency" was published on 8 February 2001. I have placed a list of the individuals and organisations which were sent a copy of the document in the Library of the House.

### Defence Estates Core Sites

**Mr. Djanogly:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the Defence Estates Core Sites Report of March 2003 will be published. [155558]

**Mr. Caplin:** It is not our intention to publish the list, which is a working document and subject to constant detailed revision as the department undertakes further work to clarify where estate rationalisation may be possible. Any specific proposals arising from these studies will be subject to proper announcement to the House and full consultation.

### Iraq

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what measures United Kingdom forces have taken in the area of Southern Iraq under British control to ensure no weapons of mass destruction, their components, relevant explosives or contaminants are smuggled out of Iraq. [152318]

**Mr. Hoon:** Specific searches for WMD are the responsibility of the Iraq Survey Group, although UK forces routinely conduct a range of anti-smuggling operations as a part of continuing security operations in the UK area of responsibility in Southern Iraq. UK forces are also involved in training Iraqi border officials.

### Missile Defence Technology

**Sir Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 19 January 2004, to the hon. Member for Hereford (Mr. Keetch), *Official Report*, column 920W, if he will make a statement on the conclusions of the research projects funded by his Department, the Longer Range Threat, BMD studies and the Capability Gap Work; and if he will place reports relating to these projects in the Library. [155656]

**Mr. Hoon:** We keep the threat posed by ballistic missiles to the United Kingdom and its deployed forces—and the best means of countering this threat—under constant review. An unclassified summary of the Technology Readiness and Risk Assessment Programme referred to in my answer of 19 January to the hon. Member for Hereford *Official Report*, column 920W has already been placed in the Library. However, much of our work in this area must remain classified. The Longer Range Threat and the Capability Gap Work programmes, together with the Ballistic Missile Defence studies, form part of our new Ballistic Missile Defence programme, and no unclassified summary of this work is available.

### Nuclear Weapons

**Alan Simpson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the estimated costs of plans to upgrade nuclear weapons design and production facilities at Aldermaston are; how much has been allocated for this upgrade; and what the timetable is for its completion. [154079]

**Mr. Hoon:** The refurbishment and replacement of older facilities, and the decommissioning of those no longer required, is a continuing programme of work at AWE to meet safety, regulatory and operational requirements. We made clear in paragraph 3.11 of the Defence White Paper published in December (CM 6041–1) that we will take appropriate steps to ensure that the range of options for maintaining a nuclear deterrent capability is kept open until we need to take decisions on whether to replace Trident.

The costs of the continuing programme are included in the overall incentivised price of the 25-year AWE Management and Operation contract. The precise timing, scope and cost of all the investments required over the 25 year period have yet to be finalised with the

AWE contractor. The total cost of operating AWE for the current financial year is expected to be of the order of £310 million.

## SCOTLAND

### Benefit Fraud

**Mr. Webb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many staff in his Department have been *(a)* suspended, *(b)* dismissed, *(c)* prosecuted and *(d)* convicted for involvement in benefit fraud in each of the last six years; and what the amounts involved were in each of the cases listed. [154543]

**Mrs. McGuire:** The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. Since that date no disciplinary action or prosecutions have taken place against staff for involvement in benefit fraud.

### Census Records

**Mr. Carmichael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland in which years each of the 1851 to 1901 decennial censuses of population for Scotland were released for public inspection; and if he will make a statement on the timetable for release of the 1911 census records for Scotland. [153936]

**Mrs. McGuire:** The General Register Office for Scotland (GRO(S)), an associated department of the Scottish Executive, is responsible for carrying out periodic censuses of Scotland's population.

The Scottish Census returns for 1841–71 were opened to public inspection in 1923. The returns for 1881 and 1891 were opened to public inspection, though with some restrictions on copying, in 1955. The records for 1901 were opened to public inspection at the end of 2001.

I understand the returns for 1911 will not be opened to public inspection until 2011.

### Civil Servants

**Dr. Cable:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much space, expressed in square metres, the Office occupies for the offices of civil servants in *(a)* central London and *(b)* Greater London. [150278]

**Mrs. McGuire:** The Scotland Office occupies 1,857 sq m of Dover House in central London. The remaining space in the building is shared between a number of other Departments; the Scottish Executive: 320 sq m, Scottish Development International: 57 sq m and other parts of the Department for Constitutional Affairs: 111 sq m.

### Ministerial Travel

**Bob Russell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last used a train in connection with his ministerial duties. [155169]

**Mrs. McGuire:** The Secretary of State regularly travels by all modes of public transport. My right hon. Friend last travelled by train in connection with his ministerial duties on 2 February.

All ministerial travel on official business is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in "Travel by Ministers".

### Security Passes

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many security passes have been reported *(a)* lost and *(b)* stolen by staff in his Department in the last 12 months. [147981]

**Mrs. McGuire:** Staff of the Scotland Office have reported one security pass as stolen and four as lost in the last 12 months.

## CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### Gift Aid

**Mr. Don Foster:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what representations her Department has received from *(a)* the museum and *(b)* the heritage sectors in relation to introducing Gift Aid tax relief (i) in writing, (ii) in meetings and (iii) in any forms since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [156009]

**Mr. Caborn:** Such information as is available about the representations this Department has received from the museums and heritage sectors since 1997 in relation to Gift Aid tax relief is provided below. These relate to the changes to the Gift Aid Scheme announced in the Pre-Budget Report (Cm 6042).

Written representations have been received from The Charleston Trust, Chatham Historic Dockyard, Bronte Society and Dulwich Picture Gallery, Mr. G. Lovewell Blake and R. P. Heyworth.

In addition representatives from the following representative bodies and associations and DCMS sponsored bodies attended a recent meeting arranged by the Department with Inland Revenue officials to discuss the implementation of the proposed changes: Association of Independent Museums, Association of Leading Visitor Attractions, British Association of Leisure Parks, Piers and Attractions Ltd, Chatham Historic Dockyards Trust, ECSITE-UK, English Heritage, Historic Royal Palaces, Millennium Commission, Museums Association, National Maritime Museum, North of England Zoological Society, Visitor Attractions Forum, Zoological Society London.

The Government are consulting closely with charities that might be affected by changes to the Gift Aid legislation announced in the Pre-Budget Report, through their associations and representative bodies, on the detail of how the change may be best achieved.

### Ministerial Visits

**Miss Kirkbride:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the ministerial visits *(a)* she and *(b)* her Ministers have made in the last 12 months. [145600]

**Mr. Caborn:** I am arranging for a list of visits made by DCMS Ministers in the past 12 months to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

### Railway Carriages

**Mr. Peter Ainsworth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what representations she received concerning the campaign to retain Wagon-Lits railway carriage 2757 in the UK prior to its purchase by Dutch interests; and when, and how, the matter was first raised with her Department. [155992]

**Mr. Caborn** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* My right hon Friend the Secretary of State did not receive any representations concerning the campaign to retain the Wagon-Lits railway carriage 2757 in the UK prior to its purchase by Dutch interests in November 2003. The first representation received by the Secretary of State was a letter from the hon. Member for East Surrey (Mr. Ainsworth), on behalf of a constituent.

### Recruitment Advertising

**Pete Wishart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what her Department's expenditure on recruitment advertising was in each of the last three years, broken down by publication; and what proportion of such expenditure was *(a)* to advertise vacant posts and *(b)* in the form of other general recruitment advertising. [155518]

**Mr. Caborn:** The department's expenditure on recruitment advertising in 2002–03 and 2003–04 to date is shown as follows. Equivalent information for 2001–02 is no longer available.

2002–03: £59,922

2003–04: £51,349.

All expenditure is linked to the advertising of vacant posts. A breakdown of expenditure by publication is not recorded. However the Department will typically advertise senior posts in the Guardian and/or Times, and, where appropriate, in specialist publications (e.g Accountancy Age, Museums Journal). More junior posts are advertised in the local press.

### Tobacco Advertising

**Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent representations she has received from motorsport interests in connection with the cessation of tobacco advertising. [153036]

**Tessa Jowell:** I have received one representation from the motorsport industry relating to the ban, seeking clarification of the EU Directive. It is not a matter for DCMS and I have referred the query to the Department of Health.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Asylum/Immigration

**Ross Cranston:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it is Home Office policy to resist applications for adjournments of asylum cases where applicants prima facie fall within the amnesty. [152464]

**Beverley Hughes:** Home Office policy, generally, is not to oppose applications for adjournments of asylum appeals when asked for a view by Adjudicators in cases where applicants may fall for consideration under the indefinite leave to remain exercise announced by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary on 24 October 2003.

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what plans he has to make provision for children who are not offered temporary residence but whose parents are; [144614]

(2) what factors underlay the decision to grant non-British citizens longer stays in the UK than their children. [144613]

**Beverley Hughes:** It is our usual policy to grant dependent children leave to enter or remain in line with that of other parents or carers. As all applications are considered on their individual merits, there may from time to time be cases where a different period of leave is granted. There is no category of temporary residence under the Immigration Rules and there are no plans to introduce one.

**Mr. Tom Harris:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers were resident in Glasgow in the last year for which figures are available. [153730]

**Beverley Hughes:** The information is not available in the form requested.

Statistics on the location of asylum seekers in the UK are linked to the available information on the support that the asylum seeker receives. Asylum seekers currently in the UK are either in receipt of support from the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) or from local authorities, or are supporting themselves. Statistics regarding the location of asylum seekers not in receipt of NASS support are unavailable.

The table gives quarterly data on the number of asylum seekers supported by NASS in Glasgow.

| | *In NASS accommodation* | *In receipt of subsistence only support from NASS* |
|---|---|---|
| December 2002 | 5,665 | 140 |
| March 2003 | 6,070 | 140 |
| June 2003 | 5,885 | 140 |
| September 2003 | 5,730 | 125 |

*Note:*
Figures are rounded to the nearest five.

**Jonathan Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how he intends to track the outcomes of unaccompanied children returned under the new pilots to ensure that the return is in the best interests of the child; and what he will do if the assessment of the child's circumstances suggests that removal places him or her at risk. [155401]

**Beverley Hughes:** The returns programme is still in the early stages of development. The programme will include a monitoring and evaluation strategy. A child/young person will only be returned under the programme after an individual assessment has been made on their suitability for return. This assessment will be made in partnership with local authority Social Service Departments and will include a judgment as to whether a return is in the child's best interests and whether the child/young person faces any risk on return.

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the current backlog of cases is at each directorate of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate. [142926]

**Beverley Hughes:** At the end of December 2003, the latest date for which published data are available, the number of asylum cases awaiting an initial decision had continued to fall, to 24,500, the lowest level for a decade, and 40 per cent. lower than at the end of December 2002 (41,300). The number of initial decisions continues to exceed the level of applications. The speed of decision making is at record levels with initial decisions made and served within two months on 80 per cent. of applications[1] received in April to September 2003.

In October 2001 my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary announced a package of measures to improve the asylum process. Part of this package was to reduce the number of outstanding asylum cases to a steady state of work in progress. In order to do this the Immigration Appellate Authority (IAA) and the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) expanded their capacity to process asylum appeals from 4,000 to 6,000 asylum appeals a month by November 2002. These increases, added to other successes in reducing the asylum intake, have meant that the number of outstanding asylum appeals is now reducing down to frictional levels.

A record 81,725 appeals were determined by adjudicators in 2003, more than a quarter (27 per cent.) higher than in 2002 (64,405). The number of appeals determined by adjudicators in Q4 2003 was 22 per cent. higher than Q4 2002 (from 16,615 to 20,285). As a result, the number of asylum appeals lodged with the Home Office which had not been sent to 12,000, 60 per cent. lower than at the end of December 2002 (30,000). A proportion of asylum appeals lodged do not result in appeal bundles being sent to the IAA.

The available information on the number of cases dealt within is given in the Home Office Annual Report 2002–03, copies of which are available from the Library.

Information on the number of asylum cases awaiting an initial decision and on the number that had not been sent to the IAA is published quarterly on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate web site at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

[1] excluding withdrawals and third country cases.

**Paul Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many passports in the care of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate for the processing of applications have been *(a)* lost and *(b)* stolen in each of the last five years. [148498]

**Beverley Hughes:** Information dating back to 1998 for each of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate's (IND's) buildings is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. For the period 1 April 2003 to 31 January 2004, IND processed 451,974 applications. For the same period, 694 Loss of Passport Letters were issued. This represents 0.15 per cent. of applications received.

A range of measures including the setting up of secure handling areas and the early return of sponsors' passports have been put in place to improve IND's ability to find and return documents at the time of requests.

**Mrs. Brooke:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the maximum length of time is that a child has been detained in *(a)* Dungavel, *(b)* Tinsley House and *(c)* Oakington. [151865]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer 29 January 2004]:* Information on the maximum length of stay of people resident in Immigration Service Removal Centres is not available and could be obtained only by examination of individual case-files at disproportionate cost.

Information on the number of people detained solely under Immigration Act powers at 27 December 2003 is due to be published on 24 February in the Asylum Statistics: 4th Quarter 2003 publication on the Home Office website: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much was imposed in fines on *(a)* airlines and *(b)* other carriers for transporting illegal immigrants in the last year for which figures are available. [155958]

**Beverley Hughes:** Separate records are not kept of charges relating to air carriers only.

During 2003 the total demanded of all carriers under the Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act 1987 and under Section 40 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 was £7.55 million. These charges relate to persons arriving in the United Kingdom without the required documents. Such charges may arise where persons arrive with genuine passports but do not have the required visa, where they arrive with forged documents or impersonate the rightful holder of a document or where they arrive with no document. In the majority of cases the persons concerned are classified as inadequately documented passengers, rather than illegal entrants.

### Cannabis

**Mr. Tynan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the benchmark street price for cannabis used when calculating the value of seizures by his Department was in each of the last five years; what changes have been made to this figure in the last six months; and what the reasons for those changes were. [155559]

**Caroline Flint:** According to data collected by the National Criminal Intelligence Service the UK average street price for cannabis has been as follows over the last five years.

*£ per ounce*

| *As at December* | *Herbal Cannabis* | *Cannabis Resin* |
|---|---|---|
| 1999 | 89 | 100 |
| 2000 | 82 | 85 |
| 2001 | 80 | 77 |
| 2002 | 83 | 81 |
| 2003 | 72 | 66 |

In August 2003 the figures were £74 and £66. We are not aware of any other changes in recent months.

### Correspondence

**Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letters from the hon. Member for Manchester, Central dated *(a)* 16 September 2003 re: Mrs. MG, references PO14031/3 and G1057225/2 and *(b)* 29 October 2003 re: Mrs. FA, references 0/988549 and A544430. [154487]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer 12 February 2004]:* The information is as follows:

*(a)* I wrote to my hon. Friend on 12 February 2004.

*(b)* The Immigration and National Directorate (IND) wrote to my hon. Friend on 19 February.

### Crime (Havering and Romford)

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are being taken to reduce levels of youth crime in the London Borough of Havering. [154854]

**Ms Blears:** The Government are supporting a wide programme to tackle youth crime in all areas to prevent children being drawn into crime in the first place, with more targeted initiatives focusing on those young people most at risk, supported by effective youth justice interventions to reduce reoffending.

The programme in Havering sees a number of agencies, including the Youth Offending Team, the police, education, health, housing, community safety, and the youth service working together to reduce youth crime in the borough, by supporting a range of preventative and diversionary schemes. Specific programmes include the Positive Activities for Young People programme targeting young people during the school holidays; the London Connexions Truck which visits venues on a two-week basis to provide intensive

outreach work with young people at risk; the introduction of a Youth Inclusion and Support Panel to target those eight to 13-year-olds most at risk of both offending and anti-social behaviour; a dedicated outreach worker to provide drugs awareness and education information to young people; and the local "U" Project, working with year 11 school leavers who are not in education, training or employment.

There is also a clear focus on reducing reoffending by young people, including through the expansion of the Intensive Supervisions and Surveillance Programme which is targeted at the more persistent young offenders in order to tackle their offending behaviour.

### Crime and Disorder Partnerships

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the crime and disorder steering groups that include hon. Members; and if he will make a statement on the involvement of hon. Members on crime and disorder groups. [154314]

**Ms Blears:** We recognise that hon. and right hon. Members are in a unique position to reflect community concerns as a result of their dealings with their local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.

At a national level, there are two key groups that engage Ministers, who are Members of this House and another place, and drive forward the Government's crime reduction agenda. These groups are CJS(CR) and my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister's regular stocktakes.

The Ministerial Committee on the Criminal Justice System Sub-Committee on Crime Reduction (CJS(CR)) oversees the Government's programme to reduce crime. In addition, the Prime Minister has regular stocktakes with Ministers, officials and stakeholders to consider the pressing issues relating to crime reduction.

### Criminal Intelligence

**Mr. Brady:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidelines his Department has issued to police forces on the use of *(a)* criminal pattern analysis and *(b)* comparative case analysis. [154635]

**Ms Blears:** No formal guidelines have been issued although research studies have been published relevant to this area.

The Department has supported the roll out of the National Intelligence Model and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) has produced a set of minimum standards for the model. These were circulated to forces in 2003. The National Policing Plan expects forces to adopt the model to these minimum standards by April 2004. The standards include the creation of four intelligence products that inform the setting of local and force priorities and the making of tactical resourcing decisions. The four intelligence products are informed by nine analytical techniques, one of which is Crime Pattern Analysis (analysis of the criminal would form the basis of one of the model's intelligence products). The techniques are used by trained intelligence analysts operating at both Basic Commend Unit and force level.

Crime Pattern Analysis informs Comparative Case Analysis. Comparative Case Analysis is a standard analytical technique of the Serious Crime Analysis Section (SCAS) of the National Crime and Operations Faculty at CENTREX. The technique is predominantly utilised for, and suited to, serious crime and a code of practice on Serious Crime Analysis Compliance is nearing completion.

### Criminal Records

**Mr. Don Foster:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many volunteers working in athletics have *(a)* applied for and *(b)* been approved by Criminal Records Bureau checks in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [154129]

**Ms Blears:** I am unable to answer the hon. Member's question about the number of applications submitted by volunteers working in athletics to the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) in each year since 1997 because the Bureau does not hold information in that format. Nor can I provide details of the number of applications from volunteers working in athletics that have been approved by the Criminal Records Bureau. It is outside of the remit of the Bureau to do so.

The Criminal Records Bureau will process an application that has been submitted for a pre-employment check on an individual and issue a Disclosure that may or may not contain details of criminal convictions or other information that might be pertinent to the position sought. The information is presented to an employer, who will make a decision on the applicant's suitability.

### Hen Harriers

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions there have been under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 for persecution of hen harriers in England and Wales in each of the last 10 years. [154728]

**Ms Blears:** Information collected centrally by the Home Office on court proceedings under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 does not enable the type of bird involved to be identified.

### Identity Cards

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how he will ensure that *(a)* human rights and *(b)* civil liberties will not be violated under the proposed identity card scheme. [155340]

**Beverley Hughes:** As set out in "Identity Cards: The Next Steps" (Cm 6020), data held on the National Identity Register will be basic identity information. Only Parliament would be able to change the statutory purposes of the scheme or the information that could be held by the scheme. Organisations using the National Identity Register to verify identity will not be able to get to other personal information, for instance health or tax records via the register.

Police and other organisations will not have routine access to data stored on the National Identity Register. Access would only be authorised in specific circumstances. Such access would be subject to legal and

procedural safeguards and independent oversight. There will be no new power for the police to stop someone and demand to see their card.

Research suggests that a majority of people in minority ethnic communities overwhelmingly support the idea of a national identity card scheme and do not feel that the proposals would be discriminatory; however, we will continue to work with organisations like the Commission for Racial Equality to ensure this in practice.

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how he will ensure that the central register used in the identity card scheme will be more *(a)* accurate and *(b)* transparent than existing databases. [155342]

**Beverley Hughes:** The central register, the National Identity Register, will be built from scratch using information provided by individuals as they are issued with identity cards and will not rely on other sources of data that may have historical or other errors. However, before an entry is confirmed, it will be checked against other databases such as passports, driving licences and immigration records to establish a person's historical footprint. The register will also link each individual's record to biometric information that is unique to that person. This will help prevent multiple registrations and people's identities being stolen. The National Identity Register will therefore be a single, highly reliable record of a person's identity. By establishing in statute the National Identity Register, there will be transparency in the purposes of and in the data held by the scheme, which could only be changed by a decision of Parliament.

### Mobile Phones

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the effect of the initiative to deactivate stolen phones upon mobile phone theft. [154855]

**Ms Blears:** Home Office research ("Mobile Phone Theft", December 2001) found that mobile phone theft was fuelling the rise in street robbery. The Government have worked in partnership with the mobile phone industry and the police to address the issue through the Street Crime Initiative.

As part of this work, from 1 November 2002, all six UK network operators have shared a database on mobile phones so that lost and stolen handsets can be blocked from use across all UK networks. A publicity campaign has informed people of this. There are now over 1.1 million handsets on the UK database, making them less attractive as objects of theft. Street robbery went down 17 per cent. in 2002–03 compared with 2001–02 across the 10 street crime police force areas as a result of the implementation of this and other measures.

### Police

**Mr. Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers are undergoing firearms training; and what the figure was five years ago. [154686]

**Ms Blears:** The requested information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many serving police officers are qualified in the use of firearms; and what the figure was five years ago. [154687]

**Ms Blears:** The number of authorised firearms officers (AFOs) in police forces in England and Wales for years 1998–2003 is shown in the table.

| | *Number of authorised firearms officers (AFOs)* |
|---|---|
| 1997–98 | 6,585 |
| 1998–99 | 6,308 |
| 1999–2000 | 6,262 |
| 2000–01 | 6,064 |
| 2001–02 | 5,776 |
| 2002–03 | 5,763 |

**Tom Levitt:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what offences arrests can be carried out by a police officer only in uniform; and what the reason is for this condition. [154003]

**Ms Blears:** The full information requested is not readily available and further research is required to provide a comprehensive reply. I will write to my hon. Friend.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police cells are in use in Lancashire. [153505]

**Ms Blears:** The Chief Constable of Lancashire informs me that there are 176 cells in use within the police area.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police cells are available per head of population in each police force area. [153507]

**Ms Blears:** Information on the number of cells is not held centrally.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cells were used for housing prisoners in each police force area on the latest date for which figures are available. [153508]

**Ms Blears:** This information is not held centrally. This is an operational matter that falls within the remit of the individual Chief Constables.

**David Maclean:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what basis he has calculated the provisional increase in direct Home Office grant to police authorities for 2004–05. [151873]

**Ms Blears:** We decided, exceptionally, on an increase of 3.25 per cent. in general grant to meet general inflationary pressures and allow all police authorities to set budgets that do not place excessive burdens on local taxpayers.

**David Maclean:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures he has put in place to ensure that police authorities receive sufficient funding to meet their commitments under their statutory Police Plans. [151877]

**Ms Blears:** My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary's key priorities for policing over the next three years were set out in the National Policing Plan 2004–07. This national plan provides the framework within which local policing plans are prepared. Local policing plans and the funding of commitments contained in them are matters for individual police authorities.

All police authorities in England and Wales will receive a 3.25 per cent. increase in general grants next year. This exceeds projections of general inflation of around 2.6 per cent. On top of this, funding for a range of targeted programmes and capital provision will be made available.

**Mr. Lidington:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much money has been provided to each police authority from Airwave grant in 2003–04; and what the planned provision is from Airwave grant for each police authority for 2004–05. [150630]

**Ms Blears** *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* The distribution of money from the Airwave grant to police authorities in 2003–04 is as shown in the following annex 'A'.

In 2004–05, the Airwave grant payable to police authorities is to be absorbed within the general Home Office grant to the police.

This funding is to be distributed as shown in the following annex 'B'.

*Annex A: Allocation of Airwave grant 2003–04*

£000

| | Revenue | Capital | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Avon and Somerset | 505 | — | 505 |
| Bedfordshire | 233 | — | 233 |
| Cambridgeshire | 338 | — | 338 |
| Cheshire | 246 | 4,193 | 4,439 |
| City of London | 119 | — | 119 |
| Cleveland | 432 | — | 432 |
| Cumbria | 0 | — | 0 |
| Derbyshire | 307 | — | 307 |
| Devon and Cornwall | 0 | — | 0 |
| Dorset | 157 | — | 157 |
| Durham | 184 | — | 184 |
| Dyfed Powys | 0 | 577 | 577 |
| Essex | 443 | 1,884 | 2,327 |
| Gloucestershire | 154 | — | 154 |
| GMP | 1,128 | — | 1,128 |
| Gwent | 155 | — | 155 |
| Hampshire | 593 | 7,597 | 8,190 |
| Hertfordshire | 293 | — | 293 |
| Humberside | 341 | — | 341 |
| Kent | 0 | 7,153 | 7,153 |
| Lancashire | 541 | — | 541 |
| Leicestershire | 307 | — | 307 |
| Lincolnshire | 429 | — | 429 |
| Merseyside | 1,236 | 2,631 | 3,867 |
| Met | 3,355 | 11,663 | 15,018 |
| Norfolk | 0 | 3,232 | 3,232 |
| North Wales | 0 | 843 | 843 |
| North Yorkshire | 232 | — | 232 |
| Northamptonshire | 99 | 2,532 | 2,631 |

*Annex A: Allocation of Airwave grant 2003–04*

£000

| | Revenue | Capital | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Northumbria | 635 | — | 635 |
| Nottinghamshire | 943 | — | 943 |
| South Wales | 548 | — | 548 |
| South Yorkshire | 903 | 4,695 | 5,598 |
| Staffordshire | 0 | 4,357 | 4,357 |
| Suffolk | 207 | — | 207 |
| Surrey | 531 | 2,762 | 3,293 |
| Sussex | 0 | 1,873 | 1,873 |
| Thames Valley | 674 | — | 674 |
| Warwickshire | 40 | 2,023 | 2,063 |
| West Mercia | 340 | — | 340 |
| West Midlands | 860 | 14,687 | 15,547 |
| West Yorkshire | 866 | 3,227 | 4,093 |
| Wiltshire | 195 | | 195 |
| Totals | 18,569 | 75,929 | 94,498 |

*Annex B: Allocation of Airwave grant to general grant 2004–05*

£000

| | Allocation |
|---|---|
| Avon and Somerset | 840 |
| Bedfordshire | 320 |
| Cambridgeshire | 380 |
| Cheshire | 560 |
| City of London | 240 |
| Cleveland | 450 |
| Cumbria | 310 |
| Derbyshire | 530 |
| Devon and Cornwall | 870 |
| Dorset | 330 |
| Durham | 440 |
| Dyfed Powys | 260 |
| Essex | 840 |
| Gloucestershire | 310 |
| GMP | 2,040 |
| Gwent | 370 |
| Hampshire | 990 |
| Hertfordshire | 540 |
| Humberside | 600 |
| Kent | 950 |
| Lancashire | 950 |
| Leicestershire | 530 |
| Lincolnshire | 310 |
| Merseyside | 1,290 |
| Met | 9,460 |
| Norfolk | 430 |
| North Wales | 390 |
| North Yorkshire | 380 |
| Northamptonshire | 330 |
| Northumbria | 1,150 |
| Nottinghamshire | 660 |
| South Wales | 870 |
| South Yorkshire | 920 |
| Staffordshire | 570 |
| Suffolk | 340 |
| Surrey | 460 |
| Sussex | 820 |
| Thames Valley | 1,110 |
| Warwickshire | 260 |
| West Mercia | 560 |
| West Midlands | 2,080 |
| West Yorkshire | 1,550 |
| Wiltshire | 310 |
| Totals | 37,920 |

**Mr. Lidington:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the

Government's policy for the funding for 2004–05 and future financial years of police authority expenditure now financed by the Airwave grant. [150631]

**Ms Blears** *[holding answer 26 January 2004]:* The Government's policy is to give the police authorities maximum possible flexibility and discretion in the use of the grants provided to them by the Home Office. £38 million previously intended to be provided to police authorities as a grant specifically for Airwave in 2004–05 will now be provided to police authorities as part of the general Home Office grant to the police.

Funding for future years is the subject of discussion as part of the 2004 settlement.

### President Bush (Visit)

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the estimate of the cost of security for the recent visit of President Bush to the UK is; and whether he expects that figure to change. [154850]

**Ms Blears:** The Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis informs me the total cost to the Metropolitan Police Service relating to the state visit of the President of the United States between 18 and 21 November 2003 was £3,924,680. This includes additional costs of £1.45 million, of which £0.8 million was incurred in overtime payments. These figures are not expected to change as all claims have been processed.

The Chief Constable of Durham Constabulary tells me that the total cost to Durham Constabulary regarding the President's visit to Sedgefield on 21 November was £985,000. This figure may change.

### Ministerial Travel

**Bob Russell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he last used a train in connection with his ministerial duties. [154696]

**Mr. Blunkett:** I regularly use trains in the course of my ministerial duties.

All ministerial travel on official business is undertaken fully in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers, copies of which are in the Libraries of the House.

### Unaccompanied Children

**Jonathan Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the piloting of removals of unaccompanied children will involve their detention. [155444]

**Beverley Hughes:** There are no plans to detain unaccompanied children who will be removed under the returns programme. Unaccompanied children are only ever detained in the most exceptional circumstances and then normally only overnight while alternative care arrangements are made. Arrangements for return will be planned in partnership with Local Authorities; this will include an assessment of the child/young person's suitability for return and whether return is in their best interests.

**Jonathan Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what provision he intends to make to ensure that appropriate reception arrangements are in place for unaccompanied children who are removed under the new pilots. [155445]

**Beverley Hughes:** The returns programme for unaccompanied asylum seeking children who have been refused asylum is still in the early stages of development. We are currently exploring the kinds of reception arrangements that could be put in place. Before any child or young person was returned under the programme we would need to be confident that the arrangements put in place were of an acceptable standard and that the person's return was not in breach of our international obligations.

### Work Permits

**Mr. Baron:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many work permits were awarded to health workers to work *(a)* in the UK National Health Service and *(b)* the non-NHS sector for each of the last 10 years. [154602]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer 12 February 2004]:* Due to the structure of the Work Permits (UK) database a breakdown of the number of work permits awarded to health workers by employer type i.e. in NHS or non-NHS employment, can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Devolution

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost to public funds of setting up devolved government in Northern Ireland was. [154398]

**Mr. Paul Murphy:** It is not possible to determine the cost of setting up devolved government in Northern Ireland. However, any costs incurred by the Departments of the Northern Ireland Administration have been absorbed within the Northern Ireland block, which was not increased specifically as a result of devolution.

### Agreed Behaviour Contracts

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many agreed behaviour contracts (ABCs) have been issued in Northern Ireland since their introduction; and what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of ABCs in tackling anti-social behaviour. [153853]

**Mr. Spellar:** Acceptable behaviour contracts (ABCs) have not been introduced in Northern Ireland. They form part of the current consultation on measures to tackle anti-social behaviour. In considering proposals for consultation I have been informed by Home Office Research in England and Wales, which found that ABCs were effective in reducing anti-social behaviour by those young people subject to them.

### Batteries

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the dangers to the environment from batteries containing mercury and other toxic metals, being dumped in local waste dumps in Northern Ireland. [155506]

**Angela Smith:** The potential adverse environmental impacts from mercury are universally accepted. However, the EC Scientific Committee on Toxicity, Ecotoxicity and the Environment recognises that there is no methodology to assess the long-term risks of leachate from landfills.

Industry voluntary measures introduced in 1985 and EC legislation since 1991 have gradually reduced the amount of mercury in batteries, resulting in a reduction in landfilled mercury across the UK from an estimated 4.4t in 1994 to 0.028t in 2000; over time this amount will effectively fall to zero.

Other current EC legislation will increase the collection and recycling of spent batteries and ban the co-disposal of hazardous and non-hazardous waste at landfill sites.

### Cross-Border Bodies

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to increase the number of cross-border bodies. [154842]

**Mr. Pearson:** I have no such plans at present.

### Dental Health

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the standard of dental health of the Province's population. [154591]

**Angela Smith:** There has been a gradual improvement in the standard of oral health in adults in Northern Ireland over the last 10 years. However, the general level of oral health here is still considerably worse than in Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland, particularly among children.

The Chief Dental Officer has recently established a Steering Group to develop a new Oral Health Strategy, which will set the oral health agenda for the next 10 years. This new Strategy will identify the oral health needs of the population here, determine desired outcomes and identify areas where oral health can link into the wider health agenda.

### EU Regulations

**Mr. Nigel Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many European Union regulations relating specifically to Northern Ireland have been published in each year since 1997. [155579]

**Mr. Paul Murphy:** EU regulations have general application. They are binding in their entirety and are directly applicable in all member states.

Based on the records in the *Official Journal* of the European Union (copies available in the House Library) we assess that the number of EC, ECSC and Euratom regulations made was as follows.

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1997 | 2,339 |
| 1998 | 2,852 |
| 1999 | 2,802 |
| 2000 | 2,882 |
| 2001 | 2,600 |
| 2002 | 2,125 |
| 2003 | 2,176 |

### European Year of Disabled People

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action was taken in Northern Ireland to support the United Kingdom theme for the European Year of Disabled People to promote rights and participation. [154156]

**Mr. Spellar:** A Northern Ireland Regional Steering Group, representing a wide range of interests, was established to promote and develop a successful programme of activities within Northern Ireland consistent with the UK theme for the European Year of People with Disabilities 2003 of promoting rights and participation. It organised a range of events which also included Ministers.

A NI Grant Scheme resulted in 22 organisations in Northern Ireland collectively receiving £100,000 for projects which promote rights and participation. This adds to the £222,000 awarded to 12 other Northern Ireland projects from the UK fund for the year. A new award scheme was also launched by the Employers' Forum on Disability aimed at acknowledging best practice among employers who do most in Northern Ireland to promote employment of people with disabilities in the workforce. An awareness raising media campaign entitled "Think for a Change: It's Time for Change", highlighted disadvantage experienced by people with disabilities in terms of lower income, education and employment.

A two-day Conference entitled "Breaking the Barriers" recently took place aimed at exploring how services can be improved to take account of the needs and rights of people with disabilities. The European Year of People with Disabilities has since been extended to 31 March 2004 in Northern Ireland.

### Orthopaedic Surgeons

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to increase the number of consultant orthopaedic surgeons in Northern Ireland. [154592]

**Angela Smith:** The number of consultant orthopaedic surgeons increased to 41 by December 2003, representing a 37 per cent. increase in five years. In recognition that there is a need to further increase the number of consultants, the number of specialist trainees has also been increased to the current level of 23, an increase of over 50 per cent. in five years.

### Pension Books

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average length of time taken

to replace pension books when they expired was in Northern Ireland in the last year for which figures are available. [154411]

**Mr. Spellar:** Unfortunately the information requested is not available.

Renewal pension books are issued automatically three weeks in advance of the date of the first order in the new book.

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many pension books were issued in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [154412]

**Mr. Spellar:** The number of pension books issued in each of the last five years is shown in the table.

| | *Number of pension books* |
|---|---|
| 1999 | 196,000 |
| 2000 | 194,000 |
| 2001 | 191,000 |
| 2002 | 189,000 |
| 2003 | 166,000 |

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the impact of the introduction of automated credit transfer for payment of pensions in Northern Ireland. [154413]

**Mr. Spellar:** At December 2003, just over 34 per cent. of Pensions customers were paid by Direct Payment. Between April 2003 and January 2004, the Social Security Agency has contacted 159,000 pensioner customers asking them to convert to Direct Payment. Seventy nine thousand customers have provided account details and these will be activated as the current order book expires. A further 23,000 customers have responded positively to Agency correspondence.

A customer satisfaction survey was carried out in September 2003 for customers who had converted to Direct Payment and the results were very positive. A further survey is to be carried out in April 2004.

### Planning

**Mr. Trimble:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the determination of the application for planning permission, reference number P/2000/2176 was; when it was made; and when it was communicated to the applicant. [153626]

**Angela Smith:** Planning Service determined that the application should be approved. A Decision Notice was issued to the applicant's agent on 2 February 2004.

### Police

**Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will revoke the decision to disband the full-time police reserve in the light of on-going activity of terrorist organisations in Northern Ireland. [154836]

**Jane Kennedy:** The Government accepted, subject to the security situation, the recommendation in the Patten report that "the future police service should not include a Full Time Reserve". In October 2002 the Chief Constable put to the Policing Board a human resource strategy to meet the staffing needs of the Police Service over the next 8 to 10 years which the Policing board endorsed. This included a phased run-down of the Full-Time Reserve over an 18 month period from April 2005, subject to no further deterioration of the security situation and the continued success of the recruitment campaign for the Police Service.

Later this year the Chief Constable will put forward advice to the Board and the Secretary of State on these matters. The Government recognises the major contribution that members of the Reserve have made to the maintenance of law and order in Northern Ireland and the high price that they and many of their families have had to pay in doing so.

### Prisons

**Mr. Gregory Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost of maintaining the prison population in Northern Ireland was in the past three years; and what the average cost per prisoner was in each of those years. [153845]

**Jane Kennedy:** The cost of maintaining the prison population in Northern Ireland in the past three years and the average cost per prisoner place in each of those years was as follows:

£

| | *Cost* | *Cost per prisoner place* |
|---|---|---|
| 2000–01 | 93,230,000 | 74,580 |
| 2001–02 | 87,486,000 | 71,475 |
| 2002–03 | 95,564,000 | 68,999 |

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to reinstate the Braille Unit at HMP Maghaberry; and if he will make a statement. [153529]

**Jane Kennedy:** The implementation of the Steele recommendations has seriously impacted on the Governor's ability to maintain and sustain the regime and at present only a restricted range of services can be provided. It is hoped that with full implementation of Steele, the prison can quickly restore a fully resourced Integrated Regime including braille transcription and related services. It is intended that work will commence at the beginning of April 2004 to re-locate the Braille Unit to a much larger facility within the prison workshop area and to expand the range of services provided.

### Student Finance

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the impact of the introduction of variable top-up fees on university students in Northern Ireland. [152576]

**Jane Kennedy:** The Higher Education Bill, which includes proposals for the introduction of variable deferred tuition fees, does not, in the main, apply to Northern Ireland. It has, however, significant implications in view of the strong links between the higher education sectors and the level of student flows between Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

I have been giving careful considerations to the implications, taking into account discussions with local stakeholders and advice from the Northern Ireland Higher Education Council (NIHEC). It is my intention to bring forward proposals soon for the way forward in Northern Ireland.

### Work Force Statistics

**Mr. Gregory Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the composition of the monitored full-time work force was, broken down by religious designation, in *(a)* 1992 and *(b)* 2002. [155002]

**Mr. Spellar:** Information regarding the composition of the monitored full-time workforce, broken down by religious designation, can be found in the Fair Employment Commission Monitoring Report (No. 3), which summarises the 1992 monitoring returns and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland Monitoring Report (No. 13), which summarises the 2002 monitoring returns. Copies of both reports are available for reference from the Library of the House.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### Advisers' Discretionary Fund

**Paul Holmes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much has been spent on the Advisers' Discretionary Fund in each year since it was set up; what figures his Department collects on the breakdown of spending via the Advisers' Discretionary Fund; and if he will make a statement. [153460]

**Mr. Browne:** The total spend per year on the Advisers' Discretionary Fund, introduced in July 2001, is shown in the table.

*Advisers' Discretionary Fund*

£

| | *Spend* |
|---|---|
| July 2001 to March 2002 | 6,191,945 |
| April 2002 to March 2003 | 15,975,996 |
| April 2003 to December 2003 | 23,765,210 |
| Total | 45,933,151 |

The figures on breakdown of spending are not centrally collated.

### Pensions

**Mr. Webb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 4 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 957W, on pensions, if he will estimate the net Exchequer effects of the pension reforms set out in the answer, based on the additional assumption that all age-related income tax personal allowances are abolished as part of each reform package. [155568]

**Malcolm Wicks:** The information requested is set out in the table.

*£ billion*

| | *2004–05* | *2005–06* | *2006–07* | *2007–08* | *2008–09* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Over 65 | 8.0 | 8.2 | 8.7 | 9.4 | 10.1 |
| Over 70 | 5.6 | 5.8 | 6.2 | 6.7 | 7.2 |
| Over 75 | 3.6 | 3.8 | 4.1 | 4.4 | 4.7 |

*Notes:*

1. Figures are in 2003–04 price terms rounded to the nearest £100 million. It is assumed the change comes into effect from April 2004 on the same basis as the previous answer.
2. The costing assumes that aged and super aged personal allowances are reduced to the personal allowance level.
3. Gross costs are estimated by the Government Actuary's Department and are consistent with Budget 2003 assumptions. Estimates are all based on the new (2002) population projection and allow for recent revisions.
4. The costs take into account income related benefit offsets, which are calculated using the DWP policy simulation model and April 2004 benefit rates.
5. Additional income tax revenue is estimated by the Inland Revenue using 2004 tax rates.

### Benefit Fraud

**Mr. Webb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the *(a)* operational and *(b)* advertising costs of the National Benefit Fraud Hotline in each of the last six years. [151017]

**Mr. Pond:** The available information is in the table:

*National benefit fraud hotline*

£

| | *Operational costs* | *Advertising costs* |
|---|---|---|
| 1997–98 | [1]— | 225,000 |
| 1998–99 | [1]— | 290,247 |
| 1999–2000 | [1]— | 337,672 |
| 2000–01 | 627,804 | 425,178 |
| 2001–02 | 1,086,000 | [2]— |
| 2002–03 | 959,277 | [2]— |

[1] Not available.
[2] Not separately assessed.

*Notes:*

1. Operational costs for the National Benefit Fraud Hotline are only available for the last three years. Operational cost figures are not available prior to 2000–01.
2. The National Benefit Fraud Hotline (NBFH) number was advertised separately up until 2000–2001. Since the Targeting Fraud (now Targeting Benefit Fraud) advertising campaign started in 2001, the NBFH number has been included in the campaign advertising and has not been the subject of any advertising on its own.
3. Operational costs include staffing costs and goods and services costs.
4. The operational costs of administering the National Benefit Fraud Hotline include the costs of administering report-a-cheat-online. These costs cannot be separated.

*Source:*

Operational costs—National Benefit Fraud Hotline.
Advertising costs—DWP Communications Directorate.

**Mr. Webb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 2 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 731W, how many people have been found to have committed benefit fraud against his Department on *(a)* one, *(b)* two, *(c)* three, *(d)* four, *(e)* five, *(f)* six, *(g)* seven, *(h)* eight, *(i)* nine, *(j)* 10 and *(k)* more than 10 occasions since the powers to sanction benefits introduced by the Social Security Act 2001 took effect. [156023]

**Mr. Pond:** The information requested is not available.

**Mr. Webb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 2 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 731W, how many people have been *(a)* investigated and *(b)* prosecuted for committing benefit fraud against his Department on two or more occasions since the powers to sanction benefits introduced by the Social Security Act 2001 took effect. [156025]

**Mr. Pond:** The information on investigations is not available.

On prosecutions, our latest information is that 30 people have been convicted of benefit fraud on at least two occasions since the powers to sanction benefits introduced by the Social Security Act 2001 took effect. However, data is incomplete and subject to change due to late notification.

### Economic Inactivity

**Mr. George Osborne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what measures are in place to address the causes and effects of economic inactivity; and if he will make a statement. [152938]

**Mr. Browne:** Nearly three quarters of people of working age are in work—not just in one year but year-on-year. High levels of employment are not enough. Active labour market policies ensure people can take advantage of the many job opportunities coming up all the time. This is especially true for those most disadvantaged including the long-term unemployed, lone parents, people with disabilities and older workers.

There are a number of measures in place to tackle the causes of inactivity. For example, where people lose, or risk losing, their jobs due to illness, injury or disability, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is working to help employers, in partnership with their employees, to prevent long term sickness from turning into unemployment.

There are a number of programmes and initiatives aimed at helping people find and remain in work. The New Deal Programmes aim to help different groups of people who have been out of work to move into work or improve their prospects of doing so, through for example job search and skills training. The national minimum wage, tax credits and various other financial incentives ensure that people who do take up opportunities and find work are better off in work.

For example the New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP) available to all lone parents who are not working or working less than 16 hours per week offers lone parents advice with job seeking, training, in-work benefits and child care.

For people on incapacity benefit we are piloting reforms to support a return to work. More information is available in 'Pathways to Work: Helping people in employment; CM 5690'. This sets out the strategy for encouraging and assisting people with health problems and disabilities to return to work, and enable them to become and remain independent and enjoy the personal, social and financial benefits that having a job brings.

More help is also being provided for those who face the greatest barriers to work, for example former drug mis-users, the long-term unemployed and people from minority ethnic communities. In particular areas of labour market disadvantage Action Teams provide individually tailored, innovative ways to help jobless people overcome the barriers to work they may face. This might include, for example, debt counselling or help with work clothes and child care costs.

### Health and Safety

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will place an obligation on companies to publish, within their annual report, a statement containing *(a)* their health and safety policy and *(b)* initiatives that have been taken to implement these policies. [155820]

**Jacqui Smith:** I have been asked to reply.

The Government have no plans to place an obligation on companies to publish within their annual report a statement containing their health and safety policy.

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has to lift Crown immunity with regards to health and safety legislation. [155821]

**Mr. Browne:** The requirements of health and safety legislation apply to Crown bodies, but they are immune from statutory health and safety enforcement.

The Government will seek a legislative opportunity, when parliamentary time allows, to remove this immunity.

In the meantime the Health and Safety Executive uses non-statutory arrangements to enforce health and safety requirements in Crown bodies', including censuring Crown bodies in circumstances, where but for Crown immunity, prosecution would have been justified.

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the budget was in *(a)* cash and *(b)* real terms of the Health and Safety Executive for each year since 1997; and what the forecast budgets for the next three years are. [155822]

**Mr. Browne:** The annual budgets allocated to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) from 1997–98 to 2005–06 are set out in the table.

*HSE's annual budgets*

*£ million*

| | *Budget* [1] |
|---|---|
| 1997–08 | 174.1 |
| 1998–09 | 175.7 |
| 1999–2000 | 180.6 |
| 2000–01 | 181.3 |
| 2001–02 | 199.4 |
| 2002–03 | 210.4 |
| 2003–04 | 225.5 |
| 2004–05 | 225.5 |
| 2005–06 | 223.5 |

[1] The budget for HSE in 2006–07 will be confirmed by autumn this year as part of the 2004 spending review exercise.

*Notes:*

1. Budget figures are the total amount voted by Parliament to HSE. HSE's budgets up to and including 2000–01 were based on the Grant in Aid (cash) voted to the organisation. From 2001–02, Government replaced 'cash' allocations with Resource Accounting and Budgeting (RAB) arrangements. Under RAB, HSE bids for resources and produces accounts on an accruals

basis, which include costs for depreciation, the cost of capital and provisions for liabilities. The 'cash' and 'RAB' figures are not directly comparable.

2. Rounded to the nearest £100k.

3. Following the Cullen Inquiry additional ring-fenced funding was allocated to HSE to spend across years 2002–03 to 2004–05 to improve rail safety. This is not shown in the annual budget figures.

### Post Office Card Accounts

**Mr. Peter Duncan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans the Government has to promote the use of Post Office card accounts in Scotland. [155473]

**Mr. Pond:** Our nationwide direct payment information campaign has an important role to play in the way we take customers through the associated changes.

When it is their turn to change customers are being provided with all the information they need on all of their "account options". This information lists all the accounts, which can be accessed at post office branches and sets out how to apply for a Post Office card account. It will be for customers themselves to decide which account will best meet their needs and circumstances. Any benefit or pension customer who wishes to open a Post Office card account will be able to do so.

## TREASURY

### Alcohol Duty

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the level of duty is in *(a)* the UK, *(b)* France and *(c)* Spain on (i) beer, (ii) wine and (iii) spirits; [155234]

(2) if he will estimate the effect on United Kingdom duty revenues of equalising UK duty on *(a)* wine, *(b)* beer and *(c)* spirits with levels in France. [155239]

**John Healey:** Alcohol duty rates in European Union member states are published in the European Commission's 'Excise Duty Tables—Alcoholic Beverages'. The table gives figures for the UK, Spain and France from the tables published in December 2003, converted to pounds sterling from euros using the average exchange rate for December 2003 as published by the Office for National Statistics in Table 7.1A of "Financial Statistics", and converted to pounds per hectolitre per cent. of alcohol (where necessary) using an approximation of 12.5° Plato to 5 per cent. alcohol by volume (ABV).

| | | | *Wine* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | *Still* | | *Sparkling* | |
| *Excise duty rate* | *Spirits £/litre of alcohol* | *Beer £/h/l per cent. alcohol* | *ABV* | *£/hl* | *ABV* | *£/hl* |
| UK | 19.60 | 12.22 | >2 per cent. ≤4 per cent.<br>>4 per cent. ≤5.5 per cent.<br>>5.5 per cent. ≤15 per cent.<br>15 per cent. to 22 per cent. | 48.91<br>67.25<br>158.69<br>211.58 | >5.5 per cent. <8.5 per cent.<br>>8.5 per cent. ≤15 per cent. | 166.70<br>220.54 |
| Spain | 5.20 | 1.43 | | 0.00 | | 0.00 |
| France | 10.20 | 1.83 | | 2.39 | | 5.90 |

The second table shows the cost in excise duty and VAT revenue forgone if the UK were to apply the excise duty rates applicable in France in December 2003. These figures are derived from the HM Treasury alcohol demand model published in May 2003[1], which is used to estimate associated effects on demand. This shows that the total cost of equalising excise duty rates for beer, wine and spirits with those in France would be more than £6 billion, equivalent to a 1.5 per cent. increase in the standard rate of VAT or around 2p extra on the basic rate of income tax.

*Revenue Forgone*

| | *£ billion* |
|---|---|
| Spirits | 0.80 |
| Beer | 3.44 |
| Wine | 1.88 |
| Total | 6.12 |

[1] Further technical details relating to this econometric model can be found in Government Economic Service Working Paper No. 140.

### Parliamentary Questions

**Mr. Brady:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many days on average his Department took in Session 2002–03 to give a substantive answer to a parliamentary question for ordinary written answer; and what the greatest number of days taken to answer such a question was. [155915]

**John Healey:** In the 2002–03 Session, Treasury Ministers answered ordinary written questions substantively in an average of just under six working days. 2,548 of 3,343 questions concerned (76.2 per cent.) were answered within a week of tabling.

## DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

### EU Funding

**Ann Winterton:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 26 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 157W, whether the difference in the figures between already allocated EU funds and the total funding of €440 million for the North West, €136 million for the North East and €466 million for Yorkshire and Humber has yet to be allocated for the remaining period in 2000–06. [155045]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The figures tabled in the answer of 26 January related only to the European Regional Development Fund and did not include the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) or the

Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG). Allocations, in euros, for all European structural funds in the North East, North West and Yorkshire and Humber Government Office areas for Objective 1 and 2 programmes are tabled as follows. All the funds have been allocated to programmes but some of the funds have still to be awarded to actual projects.

*Allocation (€000)*

| *Programme* | *ERDF* | *ESF* | *EAGGF* | *FIFG* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| North East Objective 2 | 581,330 | 135,670 | 0 | 0 | 717,000 |
| North West Objective 1 | 893,048 | 434,300 | 5,500 | 0.400 | 1,332,848.4 |
| North West Objective 2 | 808,330 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 808,330 |
| Yorkshire and Humber Objective 1 | 785,558 | 363,842 | 23,050 | 0 | 1,172,450 |
| Yorkshire and Humber Objective 2 | 448,360 | 69,480 | 0 | 0 | 517,840 |

### Government Grants

**Ann Winterton:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister from which financial year the *(a)* £780 million Government grant for the North West, *(b)* £350 million grant for the North East and *(c)* £570 million grant for Yorkshire and the Humber referred to in the "Your Say" booklets is calculated. [155013]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The figures referred to in the "Your Say" leaflets for the North West, the North East and Yorkshire and the Humber were calculated on the basis of the 2002–03 financial year.

### Local Government

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many responses have been received to date in response to the consultation on the future configuration of local government in the North West Region from residents of *(a)* Cheshire, *(b)* Lancashire, *(c)* Cumbria, *(d)* Greater Manchester, *(e)* Merseyside and *(f)* the North West Region; what the cost has been of the consultations; what costs have been incurred by (i) Vale Royal Borough Council, (ii) Chester City Council, (iii) Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council and (iv) Cheshire County Council in relation to this issue and the consultation exercise; and what rights of recovery of these costs councils have in the event of a no vote in a referendum on an elected North West regional government. [155627]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The Boundary Committee's consultation on its draft recommendations is a matter for that independent Committee.

Councils that respond to the Boundary Committee's consultation exercise do so on their own initiative and have no right to recover any costs they incur.

### Public Funding

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what sources of public funding are available to local authorities other than Council Tax and central Government grant. [154920]

**Mr. Raynsford:** In addition to various forms of central Government grant, which includes National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR), local authorities are able to access other forms of grant such as European funding and lottery funding.

### Regional Assemblies

**Mr. Jenkin:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the size of central government grant to an elected regional assembly in *(a)* the North East, *(b)* the North West and *(c)* Yorkshire and the Humber in its first financial year. [155129]

**Mr. Raynsford:** Based on figures for 2002–03, and including European programmes, an elected regional assembly in the North East would be responsible for around £350 million a year, in the North West for £780 million and in Yorkshire and the Humber for £570 million. In addition each assembly will receive grant in respect of its Fire and Rescue responsibilities.

### "Supporting People"

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the funding of "Supporting People" in Lancashire. [153719]

**Yvette Cooper:** The final "Supporting People" grant awarded to Lancashire in 2003–04 was £30,781,847. This was the full verified amount submitted to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister by the Lancashire team. The Lancashire "Supporting People" team also received £767,000 to help with the administration of the programme.

### Thurrock Urban Development Corporation

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister for what reasons greenfield green belt land has been included within the boundary of the area of the Thurrock Urban Development Corporation. [153857]

**Yvette Cooper:** The Urban Development Corporation (UDC) boundaries are coterminous with the boundaries for Thurrock Council's administrative area. This provides the UDC with the flexibility to consider development opportunities across the borough, to create new settlements and to improve the sustainability of existing communities. It also enables the UDC to undertake a detailed appraisal of current land-use within the borough and to develop strategic proposals for regeneration, housing and economic development, which will ensure balanced and sustainable growth across the borough.

### Travellers

**Mr. Lilley:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what *(a)* estimate and *(b)* provision he has made for expenditure by local authorities on opening sites for temporary accommodation by Travellers in the coming financial year. [155549]

**Keith Hill:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has made £8 million available for 2004–05 via the Gypsy Sites Refurbishment Grant. Bids for 2004–05 are currently being evaluated.

It is for local authorities to determine, based on an assessment of need, whether they will bid for funding from this grant, or make provision from their own resources.

## CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

### Expert Witnesses

**Mrs. Anne Campbell:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, for the Home Department what proportion of criminal cases involved evidence from expert witnesses in each of the last five years; and what proportion of these witnesses were registered with the Council for the Registration of Forensic Practitioners. [147187]

**Mr. Leslie:** The information is not collected centrally and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### Court Fees

**Vera Baird:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) how the existence of the judicial power to waive or remit fees in the small claims track is publicised; [155377]

(2) how the power in Article Six of the County Court Rules to waive fees for exceptional circumstances involving exceptional financial hardship is publicised. [155379]

**Mr. Leslie:** There is no judicial power to waive or remit court fees. Court Service staff administer fees remissions on behalf of the Lord Chancellor. The provision for remission of court fees is publicised by way of posters displayed on public notice boards in court offices and also by cross-referencing in relevant forms and leaflets.

## EDUCATION AND SKILLS

### Connexions

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many Connexions Partnerships have established their working arrangements with voluntary youth services by way of a partnership agreement. [155646]

**Margaret Hodge** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* Information on the number of working agreements between Connexions Partnerships and voluntary youth services is not collected centrally.

All Connexions Partnerships are encouraged to work with their local Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) partners to meet the needs of young people and there is strong evidence of such working relationships across the country.

From 1 April 2004 each Connexion Partnership must develop a clear and systematic local strategy for the involvement of the VCS in service design, planning, delivery and evaluation.

### Contingency Planning

**Patrick Mercer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what terrorist contingency planning advice is available to schools and headteachers via the recently updated Teachernet website; [155677]

(2) how much funding was provided for *(a)* the recent updates to the Teachernet website and *(b)* educating schools and head teachers on contingency planning for terrorist attacks; [155678]

(3) what terrorist contingency planning advice is available for schools. [155679]

**Mr. Charles Clarke:** Specific detailed Government advice on terrorism is provided by the Home Office. The Teachernet website provides a link to their site. I refer my hon. Friend to *Official Report,* 5 February 2004, column 1033W for the cost of producing the emergency planning website on Teachernet. The purpose of the site was always to provide advice to schools, in one place, about drawing up an emergency plan for all types of emergencies and primarily on how to cope with the sudden death of a pupil. In an emergency, head teachers know that they should dial 999 and the emergency services will then take control of the situation. Local authorities have responsibility for emergency planning at local level and that includes schools.

### Education Funding

**Shona McIsaac:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which schools in *(a)* North Lincolnshire and *(b)* North East Lincolnshire which ran a deficit budget in 2001–02; and how much each deficit is. [155575]

**Mr. Miliband:** The information requested is contained within the following tables:

*North Lincolnshire schools which ran a deficit budget[1] in 2001–02*

| *School name* | *Deficit[1] (£)* |
|---|---|
| Frederick Gough School | 54,910 |
| Brumby School | 18,756 |
| St. Bernadette's Catholic Primary School | 9,457 |
| St. Mary's Catholic Primary School | 9,124 |
| Huntcliff School | 7,787 |
| Baysgarth School | 3,571 |
| Priory Lane Infant School | 621 |

[1] Deficit budget is taken from table 2 column 12—Balance Carried Forward.

*Notes:*

1. The balance to be carried forward represent total resources available to the school less school expenditure and unspent allocations.
2. The data are as reported by North Lincolnshire LEA within their 2001–02 Section 52 Outturn Statement (table 2) submitted to the DfES.

*North East Lincolnshire schools which ran a deficit budget[1] in 2001–02*

| *School name* | *Deficit[1] (£)* |
|---|---|
| The Lindsey School and Community Arts College | 81,554 |
| Welholme Infants' School | 35,105 |
| St. Joseph's RC Primary School | 6,005 |
| Healing Comprehensive School | 5,841 |

[1] Deficit budget is taken from table 2 column 12—Balance Carried Forward.

*Note:*

1. The balance to be carried forward represent total resources available to the school less school expenditure and unspent allocations.

2. The data are as reported by North East Lincolnshire LEA within their 2001–02 Section 52 Outturn Statement (table 2) submitted to the DfES.

**Mr. Laurence Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total education budget is in Gloucestershire in 2003–04; what percentage of that budget is spent in schools; and if he will make a statement. [153403]

**Mr. Miliband** *[holding answer 6 February 2004]:* The information requested is given in the following table.

*Gloucestershire education budget and percentage spent in schools for 2003–04*

| | £ | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Individual schools budget | 221,544,390 | 77 |
| Central elements within the schools budget | 35,695,453 | 12 |
| Total schools budget | 257,239,843 | 90 |
| Total LEA budget | 29,357,448 | 10 |
| Total education revenue expenditure | 286,597,291 | 100 |

*Notes:*

1. The data are as reported by Gloucestershire LEA within their section 52 Budget Statement (table 1) for 2003–04 submitted to the DfES at 9 February 2004. It is still subject to basic validation and could change

2. Percentages may not sum due to rounding.

3. Taken from line 1.0.1—Individual schools budget (ISB). This is the amount available for delegation to schools after provision has been made for retained items.

4. The central element within the schools budget is the total schools budget minus the ISB. This money is spent on schools rather than in schools. The data is not collected in such a way that we can say precisely how much of this central element is spent in schools.

5. Taken from line 1.7.1—Total schools budget.

6. Taken from line 2.8.1—Total LEA budget.

## Faith Schools

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what criteria need to be met for a new faith school to open within the state sector. [153270]

**Mr. Miliband** *[holding answer 6 February 2004]:* School Organisation Committees or Schools Adjudicators decide proposals for new schools on individual merit and in the light of local circumstances. They must have regard to statutory guidance which specifies the factors that have to be considered for all new schools including the effect on standards, need for places, costs, impact on community cohesion, views of interested parties etc. The guidance is available on the Department's website at www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolorg. Where a competition has been held for an additional secondary school, proposals are decided by the Secretary of State, taking into account comments by the SOC. While there are no factors that relate specifically to faith schools whether or not they are being considered as part of a competition or otherwise, the decision maker will take account of the level of parental demand for the type of school proposed.

## Free School Meals

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of children were entitled to free school meals in each school in a principal seaside town on the latest date for which figures are available, listed in descending order; and if he will make a statement. [154947]

**Mr. Miliband:** It is the Department's policy not to publish figures about individual schools unless the schools concerned have had the opportunity to check or confirm that information. Therefore, aggregate data for the principal seaside towns in England is shown in the table.

The definition of a seaside town has been taken from a report published by Sheffield Hallam University, entitled, "The Seaside Economy".

*Maintained primary schools[1]: number and percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals[2] January 2003: Principal seaside towns in England[3]*

| | All pupils[4] | Primary: Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | Primary: Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals |
|---|---|---|---|
| Blackpool | 11,180 | 2,890 | 25.8 |
| Bridlington | 3,100 | 670 | 21.4 |
| Southend-on-Sea | 7,470 | 1,590 | 21.2 |
| Clacton-on-Sea | 5,450 | 1,150 | 21.0 |
| Morecambe and Heysham | 4,680 | 980 | 21.0 |
| Hastings/Bexhill | 6,010 | 1,220 | 20.2 |
| Great Yarmouth | 9,490 | 1,780 | 18.7 |
| Scarborough | 6,000 | 1,110 | 18.5 |
| Isle of Wight | 7,270 | 1,310 | 18.1 |
| Lowestoft | 5,100 | 920 | 18.0 |
| Torbay | 10,330 | 1,850 | 17.9 |
| Brighton | 14,730 | 2,580 | 17.5 |
| Eastbourne | 7,210 | 1,200 | 16.7 |
| Penzance | 3,130 | 500 | 15.9 |
| Weston-super-Mare | 6,800 | 1,060 | 15.6 |
| Ilfracombe | 1,300 | 190 | 14.7 |
| St. Ives | 760 | 110 | 14.5 |
| Dawlish/Teignmouth | 2,010 | 290 | 14.2 |
| Minehead | 870 | 120 | 13.6 |
| Whitby | 1,840 | 240 | 13.1 |
| Exmouth | 2,720 | 360 | 13.0 |
| Deal | 2,700 | 350 | 12.8 |
| Falmouth | 2,170 | 280 | 12.8 |
| Skegness | 2,320 | 290 | 12.6 |
| Whitstable/Herne Bay | 5,260 | 620 | 11.7 |
| Southport | 7,340 | 850 | 11.5 |
| Folkstone/Hythe | 1,290 | 150 | 11.3 |
| Bournemouth | 11,490 | 1,170 | 10.2 |
| Newquay | 2,110 | 200 | 9.7 |
| Burnham-on-Sea | 1,040 | 100 | 9.5 |
| Bognor Regis | 4,510 | 430 | 9.4 |
| Sidmouth | 880 | 80 | 8.6 |
| Whitley Bay | 3,420 | 270 | 8.0 |
| Weymouth | 4,720 | 370 | 7.7 |
| Worthing | 8,910 | 650 | 7.3 |
| Swanage | 560 | 20 | 3.6 |

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.

[2] Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

[3] Based upon postal town of schools with the exception of Isle of Wight and Torbay for which the respective local education authorities have been used.

[4] Includes dually registered pupils and boarding pupils.

*Source:*

Annual Schools' Census

*Maintained secondary schools[1]: Number and percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals[2] January 2003: Principal seaside towns in England[3]*

| | All pupils[4] | Secondary: Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | Secondary: Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals |
|---|---|---|---|
| Blackpool | 8,670 | 1,840 | 21.2 |
| Clacton-on-Sea | 3,520 | 680 | 19.3 |
| Lowestoft | 6,790 | 1,290 | 19.0 |
| Morecambe and Heysham | 2,760 | 500 | 18.2 |
| Brighton | 7,080 | 1,250 | 17.6 |
| Folkstone/Hythe | 1,270 | 210 | 16.9 |
| Isle of Wight | 12,060 | 1,930 | 16.0 |
| Great Yarmouth | 4,550 | 710 | 15.7 |
| Penzance | 2,220 | 340 | 15.4 |
| Falmouth | 1,270 | 190 | 15.1 |
| Southend-on-Sea | 4,460 | 670 | 15.0 |
| Bridlington | 2,540 | 370 | 14.7 |
| Scarborough | 4,290 | 600 | 14.1 |
| Eastbourne | 5,570 | 780 | 14.0 |
| Torbay | 9,020 | 1,250 | 13.9 |
| Weston-super-Mare | 4,240 | 580 | 13.7 |
| Hastings/Bexhill | 4,670 | 640 | 13.6 |
| Whitstable/Herne Bay | 2,340 | 310 | 13.3 |
| Minehead | 1,860 | 250 | 13.3 |
| Skegness | 1,860 | 250 | 13.3 |
| Deal | 1,370 | 160 | 11.7 |
| Southport | 4,930 | 570 | 11.5 |
| Whitby | 1,810 | 200 | 11.1 |
| St. Ives | 720 | 80 | 10.5 |
| Dawlish/Teignmouth | 1,880 | 200 | 10.4 |
| Weymouth | 3,660 | 380 | 10.3 |
| Bournemouth | 9,960 | 1,000 | 10.0 |
| Newquay | 2,640 | 260 | 9.9 |
| Whitley Bay | 5,010 | 490 | 9.8 |
| Ilfracombe | 1,290 | 120 | 9.6 |
| Worthing | 4,860 | 420 | 8.7 |
| Exmouth | 2,290 | 170 | 7.5 |
| Bognor Regis | 3,860 | 280 | 7.1 |
| Sidmouth | 850 | 60 | 6.6 |
| Swanage | 460 | 20 | 4.8 |
| Burnham-on-Sea | [5]— | [5]— | [5]— |

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.
[3] Based upon postal town of schools with the exception of Isle of Wight and Torbay for which the respective local education authorities have been used.
[4] Includes dually registered pupils and boarding pupils.
[5] Not applicable, no schools of this type
*Source:*
Annual Schools' Census

**Mr. Willis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school pupils were eligible for free school meals in 2002–03, broken down by region; and if he will make a statement. [155457]

**Mr. Miliband** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* The information requested is shown in the following table.

*Maintained primary and secondary schools[1] number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals[2] As at January 2003. By Local Education Authority area*

| | All pupils[3]: Primary Schools: Number on roll | Primary Schools: Number of pupils known to be eligible for free schools meals | Primary Schools: Percentage known to be eligible for free school meals | Secondary Schools: Number on roll | Secondary Schools: Number of pupils known to be eligible for free schools meals | Secondary Schools: Percentage known to be eligible for free school meals |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| England | 4,309,780 | 727,630 | 16.9 | 3,308,490 | 478,920 | 14.5 |
| *North East* | 226,230 | 50,420 | 22.3 | 180,390 | 32,670 | 18.1 |
| 841 Darlington | 9,050 | 1,670 | 18.5 | 6,310 | 1,030 | 16.2 |
| 840 Durham | 44,250 | 8,770 | 19.8 | 32,580 | 5,610 | 17.2 |
| 390 Gateshead | 17,230 | 3,980 | 23.1 | 11,880 | 2,310 | 19.5 |
| 805 Hartlepool | 9,720 | 2,280 | 23.5 | 6,720 | 1,490 | 22.2 |
| 806 Middlesbrough | 14,820 | 4,300 | 29.0 | 7,030 | 2,270 | 32.3 |
| 391 Newcastle upon Tyne | 20,030 | 6,450 | 32.2 | 17,810 | 4,210 | 23.7 |
| 392 North Tyneside | 17,190 | 3,380 | 19.7 | 13,840 | 2,100 | 15.1 |
| 929 Northumberland | 20,420 | 2,810 | 13.7 | 30,680 | 3,460 | 11.3 |
| 807 Redcar and Cleveland | 14,450 | 3,270 | 22.6 | 10,380 | 2,180 | 21.0 |
| 393 South Tyneside | 14,040 | 3,930 | 28.0 | 10,410 | 2,340 | 22.5 |
| 808 Stockton-on-Tees | 18,520 | 3,590 | 19.4 | 12,790 | 2,300 | 18.0 |
| 394 Sunderland | 26,510 | 6,000 | 22.6 | 19,970 | 3,380 | 16.9 |
| *North West* | 629,440 | 130,710 | 20.8 | 470,930 | 88,610 | 18.8 |
| 889 Blackburn with Darwen | 15,060 | 3,760 | 25.0 | 9,560 | 2,420 | 25.3 |
| 890 Blackpool | 12,270 | 2,980 | 24.3 | 8,670 | 1,840 | 21.2 |
| 350 Bolton | 26,120 | 4,480 | 17.2 | 19,770 | 2,990 | 15.1 |
| 351 Bury | 16,830 | 2,300 | 13.6 | 11,940 | 1,690 | 14.2 |
| 875 Cheshire | 58,090 | 6,740 | 11.6 | 47,290 | 4,480 | 9.5 |
| 909 Cumbria | 42,360 | 5,810 | 13.7 | 34,610 | 3,940 | 11.4 |
| 876 Halton | 11,090 | 2,890 | 26.1 | 8,350 | 1,860 | 22.3 |
| 340 Knowsley | 17,110 | 5,780 | 33.8 | 10,280 | 4,010 | 39.0 |
| 888 Lancashire | 98,780 | 15,580 | 15.8 | 76,410 | 10,750 | 14.1 |
| 341 Liverpool | 41,300 | 14,450 | 35.0 | 33,750 | 10,720 | 31.8 |
| 352 Manchester | 41,690 | 18,180 | 43.6 | 24,070 | 10,090 | 41.9 |
| 353 Oldham | 23,660 | 5,480 | 23.1 | 16,780 | 3,610 | 21.5 |
| 354 Rochdale | 21,040 | 4,980 | 23.6 | 14,450 | 3,560 | 24.6 |
| 355 Salford | 21,150 | 6,050 | 28.6 | 12,700 | 3,150 | 24.8 |
| 343 Sefton | 25,120 | 4,650 | 18.5 | 21,280 | 3,770 | 17.7 |
| 342 St. Helens | 16,660 | 3,250 | 19.5 | 12,180 | 2,180 | 17.9 |

*Maintained primary and secondary schools[1] number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals[2] As at January 2003. By Local Education Authority area*

| | All pupils[3] | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Primary Schools | | | Secondary Schools | | |
| | Number on roll | Number of pupils known to be eligible for free schools meals | Percentage known to be eligible for free school meals | Number on roll | Number of pupils known to be eligible for free schools meals | Percentage known to be eligible for free school meals |
| 356 Stockport | 25,130 | 3,030 | 12.0 | 17,010 | 2,180 | 12.8 |
| 357 Tameside | 21,600 | 3,830 | 17.7 | 15,830 | 2,890 | 18.2 |
| 358 Trafford | 19,890 | 2,340 | 11.8 | 16,080 | 1,910 | 11.9 |
| 877 Warrington | 18,270 | 1,850 | 10.1 | 14,060 | 1,260 | 9.0 |
| 359 Wigan | 27,900 | 4,510 | 16.2 | 21,140 | 2,970 | 14.1 |
| 344 Wirral | 28,330 | 7,810 | 27.6 | 24,730 | 6,350 | 25.7 |
| *Yorkshire and The Humber* | 466,730 | 81,680 | 17.5 | 347,630 | 55,580 | 16.0 |
| 370 Barnsley | 21,470 | 3,990 | 18.6 | 13,490 | 2,930 | 21.7 |
| 380 Bradford | 51,270 | 11,480 | 22.4 | 34,510 | 9,150 | 26.5 |
| 381 Calderdale | 19,700 | 3,260 | 16.5 | 15,330 | 2,160 | 14.1 |
| 371 Doncaster | 29,110 | 5,490 | 18.9 | 21,720 | 3,480 | 16.0 |
| 811 East Riding of Yorkshire | 27,200 | 2,630 | 9.7 | 23,350 | 1,790 | 7.6 |
| 810 Kingston Upon Hull, City of | 24,430 | 6,160 | 25.2 | 16,310 | 3,960 | 24.3 |
| 382 Kirklees | 36,810 | 6,490 | 17.6 | 26,790 | 4,570 | 17.1 |
| 383 Leeds | 65,360 | 12,210 | 18.7 | 47,780 | 8,080 | 16.9 |
| 812 North East Lincolnshire | 15,350 | 3,330 | 21.7 | 11,830 | 2,220 | 18.8 |
| 813 North Lincolnshire | 14,380 | 2,030 | 14.1 | 10,820 | 1,340 | 12.3 |
| 815 North Yorkshire | 47,120 | 3,910 | 8.3 | 41,640 | 2,390 | 5.7 |
| 372 Rotherham | 25,260 | 4,650 | 18.4 | 20,160 | 3,110 | 15.4 |
| 373 Sheffield | 44,740 | 9,110 | 20.4 | 31,360 | 6,080 | 19.4 |
| 384 Wakefield | 30,680 | 5,600 | 18.3 | 22,210 | 3,560 | 16.0 |
| 816 York | 13,860 | 1,340 | 9.6 | 10,370 | 780 | 7.6 |
| *East Midlands* | 372,890 | 47,700 | 12.8 | 297,460 | 33,420 | 11.2 |
| 831 Derby | 22,350 | 4,400 | 19.7 | 15,260 | 2,750 | 18.0 |
| 830 Derbyshire | 66,290 | 8,130 | 12.3 | 49,650 | 4,940 | 9.9 |
| 856 Leicester | 29,150 | 7,150 | 24.5 | 18,250 | 4,100 | 22.5 |
| 855 Leicestershire | 50,300 | 3,650 | 7.3 | 46,370 | 2,680 | 5.8 |
| 925 Lincolnshire | 54,880 | 3,370 | 6.1 | 46,260 | 3,430 | 7.4 |
| 928 Northamptonshire | 53,990 | 4,960 | 9.2 | 50,700 | 4,950 | 9.8 |
| 892 Nottingham | 25,540 | 7,740 | 30.3 | 13,910 | 4,540 | 32.7 |
| 891 Nottinghamshire | 67,760 | 8,160 | 12.0 | 54,760 | 5,940 | 10.8 |
| 857 Rutland | 2,640 | 130 | 4.8 | 2,300 | 80 | 3.4 |
| *West Midlands* | 487,700 | 90,150 | 18.5 | 378,640 | 60,320 | 15.9 |
| 330 Birmingham | 103,580 | 33,410 | 32.3 | 70,620 | 22,320 | 31.6 |
| 331 Coventry | 27,980 | 5,650 | 20.2 | 21,460 | 3,670 | 17.1 |
| 332 Dudley | 29,950 | 4,280 | 14.3 | 20,710 | 2,910 | 14.0 |
| 884 Herefordshire | 13,930 | 1,200 | 8.6 | 10,330 | 850 | 8.2 |
| 333 Sandwell | 31,410 | 7,110 | 22.6 | 19,780 | 4,490 | 22.7 |
| 893 Shropshire | 22,220 | 2,050 | 9.2 | 18,260 | 1,400 | 7.7 |
| 334 Solihull | 21,090 | 2,320 | 11.0 | 15,780 | 1,640 | 10.4 |
| 860 Staffordshire | 67,430 | 7,530 | 11.2 | 62,290 | 5,420 | 8.7 |
| 861 Stoke-on-Trent | 21,850 | 6,040 | 27.7 | 15,200 | 3,210 | 21.1 |
| 894 Telford and Wrekin | 16,030 | 3,350 | 20.9 | 10,500 | 2,000 | 19.1 |
| 335 Walsall | 27,020 | 4,750 | 17.6 | 21,820 | 3,370 | 15.4 |
| 937 Warwickshire | 41,920 | 4,050 | 9.7 | 33,920 | 2,400 | 7.1 |
| 336 Wolverhampton | 24,230 | 5,020 | 20.7 | 16,870 | 3,310 | 19.6 |
| 885 Worcestershire | 39,040 | 3,410 | 8.7 | 41,110 | 3,340 | 8.1 |
| *East of England* | 454,950 | 53,690 | 11.8 | 383,910 | 36,720 | 9.6 |
| 820 Bedfordshire | 25,340 | 2,740 | 10.8 | 37,650 | 3,650 | 9.7 |
| 873 Cambridgeshire | 44,650 | 3,840 | 8.6 | 32,140 | 2,470 | 7.7 |
| 881 Essex | 111,150 | 12,390 | 11.1 | 89,500 | 7,990 | 8.9 |
| 919 Hertfordshire | 95,910 | 8,390 | 8.7 | 78,350 | 5,120 | 6.5 |
| 821 Luton | 18,910 | 4,360 | 23.0 | 12,450 | 3,090 | 24.8 |
| 926 Norfolk | 67,370 | 8,990 | 13.3 | 46,120 | 4,410 | 9.6 |
| 874 Peterborough | 15,560 | 3,100 | 19.9 | 12,970 | 2,030 | 15.6 |
| 882 Southend-on-Sea | 14,730 | 2,610 | 17.7 | 12,020 | 1,350 | 11.2 |
| 935 Suffolk | 47,250 | 5,170 | 11.0 | 54,220 | 5,440 | 10.0 |
| *London* | 632,950 | 163,370 | 25.8 | 417,940 | 100,470 | 24.0 |
| *Inner London* | 231,730 | 86,920 | 37.5 | 127,690 | 50,370 | 39.4 |
| 202 Camden | 11,430 | 4,880 | 42.7 | 9,600 | 2,860 | 29.8 |
| 201 City of London | 220 | 70 | 30.6 | [4] | [4] | [4] |
| 204 Hackney | 18,090 | 7,430 | 41.1 | 7,910 | 3,300 | 41.7 |
| 205 Hammersmith and Fulham | 9,690 | 4,200 | 43.4 | 7,300 | 2,390 | 32.8 |
| 309 Haringey | 22,030 | 7,450 | 33.8 | 10,890 | 4,090 | 37.6 |
| 206 Islington | 15,100 | 6,090 | 40.3 | 7,780 | 3,340 | 42.9 |
| 207 Kensington and Chelsea | 7,020 | 2,660 | 37.9 | 3,540 | 1,000 | 28.2 |
| 208 Lambeth | 19,990 | 7,470 | 37.4 | 7,400 | 2,710 | 36.7 |

*Maintained primary and secondary schools[1] number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals[2] As at January 2003. By Local Education Authority area*

| | All pupils[3] | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Primary Schools | | | Secondary Schools | | |
| | Number on roll | Number of pupils known to be eligible for free schools meals | Percentage known to be eligible for free school meals | Number on roll | Number of pupils known to be eligible for free schools meals | Percentage known to be eligible for free school meals |
| 209 Lewisham | 22,620 | 6,420 | 28.4 | 11,620 | 3,440 | 29.6 |
| 316 Newham | 31,530 | 10,760 | 34.1 | 18,110 | 7,810 | 43.1 |
| 210 Southwark | 23,820 | 8,610 | 36.1 | 10,820 | 5,080 | 46.9 |
| 211 Tower Hamlets | 22,060 | 11,780 | 53.4 | 14,340 | 8,890 | 62.0 |
| 212 Wandsworth | 17,440 | 4,950 | 28.4 | 10,090 | 2,590 | 25.7 |
| 213 Westminster | 10,700 | 4,170 | 38.9 | 8,300 | 2,880 | 34.6 |
| *Outer London* | 401,210 | 76,450 | 19.1 | 290,250 | 50,100 | 17.3 |
| 301 Barking and Dagenham | 18,640 | 4,300 | 23.1 | 11,670 | 2,820 | 24.2 |
| 302 Barnet | 25,950 | 4,700 | 18.1 | 21,050 | 3,150 | 14.9 |
| 303 Bexley | 21,680 | 2,870 | 13.2 | 17,700 | 1,710 | 9.7 |
| 304 Brent | 22,850 | 6,210 | 27.2 | 16,280 | 3,750 | 23.0 |
| 305 Bromley | 24,470 | 3,280 | 13.4 | 21,840 | 2,380 | 10.9 |
| 306 Croydon | 30,720 | 6,610 | 21.5 | 18,400 | 3,450 | 18.8 |
| 307 Ealing | 26,320 | 6,420 | 24.4 | 15,590 | 4,580 | 29.4 |
| 308 Enfield | 27,030 | 6,310 | 23.4 | 21,120 | 4,070 | 19.3 |
| 203 Greenwich | 20,680 | 7,320 | 35.4 | 13,550 | 3,950 | 29.1 |
| 310 Harrow | 19,550 | 2,840 | 14.5 | 8,980 | 1,590 | 17.7 |
| 311 Havering | 20,480 | 2,350 | 11.5 | 16,340 | 1,630 | 10.0 |
| 312 Hillingdon | 24,530 | 3,700 | 15.1 | 17,420 | 2,640 | 15.1 |
| 313 Hounslow | 19,150 | 4,190 | 21.9 | 16,500 | 3,120 | 18.9 |
| 314 Kingston upon Thames | 11,710 | 860 | 7.4 | 9,090 | 800 | 8.8 |
| 315 Merton | 14,490 | 1,980 | 13.6 | 8,560 | 1,380 | 16.2 |
| 317 Redbridge | 23,820 | 3,810 | 16.0 | 19,710 | 2,850 | 14.5 |
| 318 Richmond upon Thames | 12,430 | 1,210 | 9.7 | 7,390 | 1,200 | 16.2 |
| 319 Sutton | 15,400 | 1,920 | 12.5 | 15,400 | 1,230 | 8.0 |
| 320 Waltham Forest | 21,330 | 5,580 | 26.1 | 13,690 | 3,820 | 27.9 |
| *South East* | 645,590 | 65,790 | 10.2 | 507,310 | 42,410 | 8.4 |
| 867 Bracknell Forest | 8,990 | 580 | 6.5 | 5,990 | 330 | 5.5 |
| 846 Brighton and Hove | 17,580 | 3,090 | 17.6 | 12,470 | 2,000 | 16.1 |
| 825 Buckinghamshire | 40,490 | 2,200 | 5.4 | 34,220 | 2,150 | 6.3 |
| 845 East Sussex | 37,760 | 5,140 | 13.6 | 28,610 | 3,210 | 11.2 |
| 850 Hampshire | 100,760 | 8,650 | 8.6 | 72,610 | 4,550 | 6.3 |
| 921 Isle of Wight | 7,270 | 1,310 | 18.1 | 12,060 | 1,930 | 16.0 |
| 886 Kent | 113,760 | 14,010 | 12.3 | 96,740 | 8,380 | 8.7 |
| 887 Medway | 23,960 | 2,910 | 12.2 | 20,490 | 1,950 | 9.5 |
| 826 Milton Keynes | 22,520 | 2,680 | 11.9 | 12,480 | 1,330 | 10.7 |
| 931 Oxfordshire | 45,250 | 3,990 | 8.8 | 38,600 | 3,310 | 8.6 |
| 851 Portsmouth | 15,100 | 2,560 | 16.9 | 10,200 | 1,520 | 14.9 |
| 870 Reading | 10,260 | 1,620 | 15.8 | 6,290 | 750 | 12.0 |
| 871 Slough | 11,350 | 1,840 | 16.2 | 8,160 | 1,190 | 14.5 |
| 852 Southampton | 17,140 | 3,730 | 21.7 | 12,150 | 2,020 | 16.6 |
| 936 Surrey | 79,700 | 5,930 | 7.4 | 58,520 | 3,390 | 5.8 |
| 869 West Berkshire | 12,240 | 830 | 6.8 | 11,940 | 520 | 4.3 |
| 938 West Sussex | 60,470 | 3,680 | 6.1 | 44,500 | 2,830 | 6.4 |
| 868 Windsor and Maidenhead | 8,410 | 580 | 6.9 | 10,360 | 520 | 5.0 |
| 872 Wokingham | 12,620 | 480 | 3.8 | 10,930 | 520 | 4.8 |
| *South West* | 393,320 | 44,130 | 11.2 | 324,290 | 28,720 | 8.9 |
| 800 Bath and North East Somerset | 12,670 | 1,210 | 9.5 | 12,360 | 820 | 6.7 |
| 837 Bournemouth | 11,150 | 1,150 | 10.4 | 9,960 | 1,000 | 10.0 |
| 801 Bristol, City of | 30,690 | 7,130 | 23.2 | 17,830 | 3,490 | 19.6 |
| 908 Cornwall | 40,860 | 4,650 | 11.4 | 32,760 | 3,540 | 10.8 |
| 878 Devon | 55,680 | 6,220 | 11.2 | 41,700 | 3,590 | 8.6 |
| 835 Dorset | 25,090 | 1,380 | 5.5 | 30,240 | 2,010 | 6.6 |
| 916 Gloucestershire | 45,320 | 4,370 | 9.6 | 39,870 | 2,670 | 6.7 |
| 420 Isles of Stilly | 270 | 0 | 0.0 | [4] | [4] | [4] |
| 802 North Somerset | 14,920 | 1,580 | 10.6 | 12,780 | 980 | 7.7 |
| 879 Plymouth | 20,430 | 3,770 | 18.5 | 19,010 | 2,280 | 12.0 |
| 836 Poole | 10,900 | 600 | 5.5 | 8,560 | 480 | 5.5 |
| 933 Somerset | 38,390 | 3,630 | 9.4 | 32,740 | 2,710 | 8.3 |
| 803 South Gloucestershire | 23,330 | 1,770 | 7.6 | 16,870 | 1,160 | 6.9 |
| 866 Swindon | 17,350 | 2,070 | 11.9 | 11,590 | 1,050 | 9.1 |
| 880 Torbay | 10,330 | 1,850 | 17.9 | 9,020 | 1,250 | 13.9 |
| 865 Wiltshire | 35,960 | 2,770 | 7.7 | 28,990 | 1,710 | 5.9 |

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10. There may be discrepancies between the sum of constituent items and totals as shown.
[3] Includes dually registered pupils and boarding pupils.
[4] Not applicable, no schools of this type
*Source:*
Annual Schools' Census

### Homeless Young People

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what arrangements are made for the continuation of social services support for a young person who has been refused a home by his or her family and has not been made ward of court, once he or she becomes 16 years old. [155640]

**Margaret Hodge:** Local authority social service departments have a range of powers and duties under the Children Act 1989 to provide services for children in need in their area.

A general duty is placed on local authorities by section 17 of the Children Act 1989 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area who are in need by providing a range of services appropriate to those needs. The definition of a child in need is set out in section 17(10) of the Act, which applies to all children, regardless of whether or not they reside with their family.

There is also a duty under section 20 of the Children Act to provided accommodation for children in need if necessary.

### Jenny Gray

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to his answer of 30 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 579–80W, under which section of the Code of Practice on Access to Information he declined to provide the information requested; and whether Jenny Gray is a full-time employee of his Department. [153588]

**Mr. Charles Clarke** *[holding answer 6 February 2004]:* I refer the hon. Member to exemption 12 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information. In line with this exemption, it is not our policy to disclose information on individual civil servants that may constitute or could facilitate an invasion of privacy.

### Learning and Skills Councils

**John Mann:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what instruction he gives learning and skills councils on the extent of their written communications with hon. Members. [155240]

**Alan Johnson:** As an executive Non Departmental Public Body, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) comes within the remit of "The Code of Practice on / Access to Government Information". This includes a requirement to answer requests for information, and to provide full facts and analysis of major policy proposals.

As part of the Management Statement agreed with my Department, the LSC is required to answer correspondence and questions of an operational nature from hon. Members. We are also keen for the LSC to engage with hon. Members on major issues affecting post-16 learning within their constituencies.

### Medical Students

**Bob Russell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps he is taking to provide additional places for UK students wishing to train as a medical practitioner; and if he will make a statement. [155882]

**Alan Johnson:** The Higher Education Funding Council for England allocated, between 1999 and 2001, a total of 2,145 additional medical school places to higher education institutions. Eligible medical students have their fees paid by the NHS for the fifth and, where there is one, sixth years of their courses and receive a means-tested NHS Bursary of up to £2703 (in London) in those years. In addition, they may receive a maintenance loan under the student support regulations.

### Parliamentary Questions

**Mr. Brady:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many days on average his Department took in Session 2002–03 to give a substantive answer to a Parliamentary Question for ordinary written answer; and what the greatest number of days taken to answer such a question was. [155929]

**Mr. Charles Clarke:** At present, our records system does not allow us to retrieve the information requested without incurring disproportionate cost.

### School Capital Investment

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much was spent on new capital investments in each school in the City of Newcastle upon Tyne including private finance initiative projects in each year since 1997–98; and what type of project it was in each case. [154616]

**Mr. Miliband:** The majority of capital support is allocated to schools and local education authorities (LEAs) by formula, and they decide how to invest it in line with their asset management plans. The Department does not, therefore, have complete information about all the capital investments in each school; this should be held locally. The following table sets out the capital support made by this Government to Newcastle upon Tyne LEA since 1997–98, in total and by programme, including devolved formula capital grants to each school.

We have also allocated indicative funding for future years worth approximately £70 million in 2004–05 (this includes £60 million of PFI credits) and £5 million in 2005–06. Additionally we have just announced that Newcastle LEA will be part of the first wave of Building Schools for the Future commencing in 2005–06. We will be working with the LEA over the coming months to confirm details and funding of their plans.

*Capital allocations for Newcastle upon Tyne LEA*

*£000*

| *Newcastle upon Tyne LEA capital allocations* | *1997–98* | *1998–99* | *1999–2000* | *2000–01* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* | *2003–04* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Assistance with Asset Management Plans | — | — | 33 | — | — | — | — |
| Formulaic funding for VA schools | — | — | — | — | 45 | 262 | 340 |
| Basic Need | 407 | 451 | 896 | 644 | 241 | 79 | 181 |
| City Learning Centres | — | — | — | — | 1200 | — | — |
| Class Size initiative | — | 367 | 70 | 80 | 342 | — | — |
| Condition | — | — | — | — | 1955 | 3058 | 3907 |
| Devolved Formula | — | — | — | 1787 | 1434 | 2173 | 3351 |
| Energy | — | 70 | — | — | — | — | — |
| Modernisation | — | — | — | — | — | 1346 | 2533 |
| New Deal for Schools (NDS) 1 | 487 | — | — | — | — | — | |
| NDS2 | — | 4612 | — | — | — | — | — |
| NDS 3 | — | — | 6318 | — | — | — | — |
| NDS 4 | — | — | — | 3300 | — | — | — |
| Nursery Provision | — | — | — | 65 | — | — | — |
| Private Finance Initiative | — | — | — | — | 47100 | — | — |
| School Labs | — | — | — | 170 | 170 | — | — |
| School Security | 68 | 84 | 85 | 84 | 57 | 49 | — |
| Schools Access Initiative | 30 | 70 | 100 | 139 | 220 | 355 | 519 |
| Seed Challenge | — | — | — | 172 | 193 | 321 | 318 |
| Specialist Schools | — | — | — | 300 | — | — | — |
| Staff Workspace | — | — | — | — | — | 68 | 135 |
| Supplementary Credit Approvals | 1185 | 1394 | 605 | — | 353 | — | — |
| Targeted Capital Funding | — | — | — | — | 430 | — | — |
| Targeted Capital Funding—VA | — | — | — | — | — | | 4996 |
| Voluntary Aided School Grant | 837 | 702 | 237 | 328 | 1216 | 653 | — |
| Total | 3014 | 7750 | 8344 | 7069 | 54956 | 8364 | 16280 |

## Specialist Schools

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills in which year each *(a)* language college and *(b)* specialist school achieved specialist status; how many and what percentage of pupils at each obtained five A*-C GCSEs in each year since two years before it achieved specialist status; and how many language (i) GCSEs at A*-C grade and (ii) A-levels were obtained at each in each year since two years before it achieved specialist status. [155270]

**Mr. Miliband** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* The information requested has been placed in the Library.

The list below shows the year in which each specialist school, including Language Colleges (a specialism which has existed since 1995), achieved specialist status. The list also shows how many and what percentage of pupils at each school obtained five A*-C grades at GCSE in each year from two years before it achieved specialist status.

The information requested regarding language GCSEs and A-Levels is not published at school level. To collate this information would involve disproportionate costs.

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills in which year since 1992 each specialist school was established as such; in which year each of those schools which ceased to have specialist status did so; and what the value is of *(a)* capital grants and *(b)* revenue funding to each school consequent upon its specialist status since its establishment. [155276]

**Mr. Miliband** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]*: The following table shows the number of schools designated, re-designated, or de-designated as specialist schools, by specialism, for each of the years since the programme began in 1994. Funding information is not readily available at school level for each of these years. However, the table shows the overall level of capital grants and recurrent funding for each year.

Designated specialist schools receive a one-off £100,000 capital grant and £126 per pupil per annum for four years. At current rates, a typical specialist school of 1,000 pupils would receive £100,000 capital funding and £504,000 revenue funding over a four-year phase.

*Number of specialist school designations, de-designations and re-designations[1] by year*

| | *1994–95* | | | *1995–96* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Specialism* | *Designated* | *De-designated* | *Re-designated* | *Designated* | *De-designated* | *Re-designated* |
| Arts | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Business and enterprise | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Engineering | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Language | — | — | — | 6 | — | — |
| Mathematics and computing | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Science | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Sport | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Technology | 49 | — | — | 52 | — | — |
| Combined | — | — | — | — | — | — |

*Number of specialist school designations, de-designations and re-designations[1] by year*

| Specialism | 1994–95 Designated | 1994–95 De-designated | 1994–95 Re-designated | 1995–96 Designated | 1995–96 De-designated | 1995–96 Re-designated |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Totals | 49 | 0 | 0 | 58 | 0 | 0 |
| Year total | | 49 | | | 58 | |
| Cumulative | | 49 | | | 107 | |

| Specialism | 1996–97 Designated | 1996–97 De-designated | 1996–97 Re-designated | 1997–98 Designated | 1997–98 De-designated | 1997–98 Re-designated |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arts | — | — | — | 6 | — | — |
| Business and enterprise | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Engineering | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Language | 25 | — | — | 19 | — | — |
| Mathematics and computing | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Science | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Sport | — | — | — | 11 | — | — |
| Technology | 50 | — | — | 41 | 2 | — |
| Combined | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Totals | 75 | 0 | 0 | 77 | 2 | 0 |
| Year total | | 75 | | | 75 | |
| Cumulative | | 182 | | | 257 | |

| Specialism | 1998–99 Designated | 1998–99 De-designated | 1998–99 Re-designated | 1999–2000 Designated | 1999–2000 De-designated | 1999–2000 Re-designated |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arts | 11 | — | — | 12 | — | — |
| Business and enterprise | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Engineering | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Language | 11 | — | — | 15 | 1 | — |
| Mathematics and computing | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Science | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Sport | 15 | — | — | 11 | — | — |
| Technology | 46 | 13 | — | 42 | 4 | 1 |
| Combined | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Totals | 83 | 13 | 0 | 80 | 5 | 1 |
| Year total | | 70 | | | 76 | |
| Cumulative | | 327 | | | 403 | |

| Specialism | 2000–01 Designated | 2000–01 De-designated | 2000–01 Re-designated | 2001–02 Designated | 2001–02 De-designated | 2001–02 Re-designated |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arts | 28 | — | — | 34 | — | — |
| Business and enterprise | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Engineering | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Language | 28 | — | — | 27 | — | — |
| Mathematics and computing | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Science | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Sport | 30 | — | — | 34 | — | — |
| Technology | 51 | 5 | 2 | 56 | 4 | 2 |
| Combined | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Totals | 137 | 5 | 2 | 151 | 4 | 2 |
| Year total | | 134 | | | 149 | |
| Cumulative | | 537 | | | 686 | |

| Specialism | 2002–03 Designated | 2002–03 De-designated | 2002–03 Re-designated | 2003–04 Designated | 2003–04 De-designated | 2003–04 Re-designated | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arts | 82 | — | — | 57 | 3 | — | 233 |
| Business and enterprise | 18 | — | — | 64 | — | — | 82 |
| Engineering | 4 | — | — | 10 | — | — | 14 |
| Language | 31 | — | — | 32 | 1 | — | 196 |
| Mathematics and computing | 12 | — | — | 64 | — | — | 76 |
| Science | 24 | — | — | 97 | — | — | 121 |
| Sport | 60 | — | — | 68 | 1 | — | 230 |
| Technology | 78 | 2 | 1 | 59 | 4 | — | 564 |

| Specialism | 2002–03 Designated | 2002–03 De-designated | 2002–03 Re-designated | 2003–04 Designated | 2003–04 De-designated | 2003–04 Re-designated | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Combined | — | — | — | 10 | — | — | 10 |
| Totals | 309 | 2 | 1 | 461 | 9 | 0 | 1,526 |
| Year total | | 308 | | | 452 | | 1,446 |
| Cumulative | | 994 | | | 1,446 | | |

[1] The term re-designation is used here to indicate a school which was de-designated but subsequently regained specialist status.

*Note:*

The first specialist schools became operational in September 1994 under the technology specialism. Further specialisms have since been added with the first language colleges becoming operational in September 1995 followed by sports and arts colleges in September 1997. The first business and enterprise, science, maths and computing and engineering colleges became operational in September 2002. The first music and humanities colleges were designated in January 2004 but do not become operational until September 2004.

*Funding (calculated by financial year)*

*£ million*

| | Capital | Revenue | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1994–95 | 5.0 | 3.0 | 8.0 |
| 1995–96 | 7.0 | 9.0 | 16.0 |
| 1996–97 | 7.0 | 16.0 | 23.0 |
| 1997–98 | 7.5 | 25.6 | 33.1 |
| 1998–99 | 8.0 | 32.8 | 40.8 |
| 1999–2000 | 7.6 | 42.2 | 49.8 |
| 2000–01 | 13.2 | 58.7 | 71.9 |
| 2001–02 | 15.4 | 78.6 | 94.0 |
| 2002–03 | 30.8 | 114.4 | 145.2 |
| 2003–04 | 56.0 | 193.0 | 249.0 |
| Total | 158 | 573 | 731 |

## Statutory Sick Pay

**Mr. Goodman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people employed in his Department have claimed statutory sick pay for *(a)* less than one week, *(b)* one to three weeks, *(c)* four to six weeks, *(d)* seven to 12 weeks, *(e)* 13 to 20 weeks and *(f)* 21 to 28 weeks in each year since 1997. [148625]

**Mr. Charles Clarke:** The numbers of staff in my Department who have claimed statutory sick pay during the years 2000 to 2003 are as follows. The numbers include DfES staff working in the Government office regions. No records are held for the years prior to this.

| | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Less than one week | 598 | 667 | 692 | 694 |
| One to three weeks | 448 | 424 | 488 | 481 |
| Four to six weeks | 100 | 128 | 156 | 139 |
| Seven to 12 weeks | 93 | 121 | 131 | 120 |
| 13 to 20 weeks | 65 | 82 | 111 | 98 |
| 21 to 28 weeks | 41 | 64 | 84 | 53 |
| Total | 1,345 | 1,486 | 1,632 | 1,585 |

## Student Finance

**Chris Grayling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate he has made of the number of graduates in receipt of income contingent student loans who will take career breaks to bring up children; and what assumptions about the consequent subsidy costs have been included in the Government's overall estimates for student loan subsidy provisions. [155374]

**Alan Johnson:** Our estimates of the cost of subsidising both maintenance and fee loans in 2006–07 terms were published in the Regulatory Impact Assessment associated with the HE Bill. The economic cost of providing student loans is made up of the interest rate subsidy on loans together with the cost of any loans that are never repaid (e.g. due to death, permanent disability or loans being written-off after 25 years). Modelling this cost requires taking into account a great number of factors. Important factors include:

(i) The number of students in Higher Education;

(ii) The parental income of those students (or their own income if independent);

(iii) The proportions of students studying in London, at home or elsewhere;

(iv) The propensity of students to take out each loan;

(v) The distribution of fees actually charged by Higher Education institutions from 2006–7;

(vi) The distribution of lengths of courses (based on internal modelling);

(vii) The pattern of withdrawals from HE courses (based on internal modelling);

(viii) The earnings profiles of graduates; and

(ix) Macroeconomic conditions.

In relation to factor (vii), the modelling of the cost of providing student loans uses Labour Force Survey (LFS) data to inform the probability of borrowers being in employment, unemployment, or economically inactive. We have used the LFS data to take account of those people who take career breaks—to raise children or for other reasons. The impact of those who take career breaks to raise children is thus reflected in the modelling but it is not possible to estimate how many borrowers will take career breaks for this reason—or to estimate the cost associated with this factor—in isolation.

**Chris Grayling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what financial assumptions were made in calculating the provision of £25 million to cover the cost of writing off outstanding student loans after 25 years. [155375]

**Alan Johnson:** Our estimates of the cost of subsidising both maintenance and fee loans in 2006–07 terms were published in the Regulatory Impact Assessment associated with the HE Bill. The economic cost of providing student loans is made up of the interest rate subsidy on loans together with the cost of any loans that are never repaid (e.g. due to death, permanent disability or loans being written-off after 25 years). Modelling this cost requires taking into account a great number of factors. Important factors include:

(i) The number of students in Higher Education;

(ii) The parental income of those students (or their own income if independent);

(iii) The proportions of students studying in London, at home or elsewhere;

(iv) The propensity of students to take out each loan;

(v) The distribution of fees actually charged by Higher Education institutions from 2006–7;

(vi) The distribution of lengths of courses (based on internal modelling);

(vii) The pattern of withdrawals from HE courses (based on internal modelling);

(viii) The earnings profiles of graduates; and

(ix) Macroeconomic conditions.

The Regulatory Impact Assessment estimated the cost of writing-off loans at 25 years at £30 million. This is the extra economic cost of not collecting any repayments that would have been made on loans older than 25 years.

### Temporary Mobile Classrooms

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools in each London borough make use of temporary mobile classroom accommodation; and what the timetable for replacement of this accommodation is in each borough. [155091]

**Mr. Miliband** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* The following table shows the number of schools with temporary classrooms in each London borough. It is based on data provided to the Department in May 2002, by local education authorities as part of the asset management planning process.

The bulk of schools' capital is now allocated by formula to authorities and schools so that they can address their local priorities, including the replacement of temporary accommodation in poor condition. Prioritisation of need is through asset management planning and on an open and rigorous consultative process, based on the needs of all schools. The Department does not collect detailed information on investment plans or timetables of authorities.

*Numbers of schools in London boroughs with temporary building*

| *LEA* | *Number of schools with temporary buildings* |
|---|---|
| Barking and Dagenham | 7 |
| Barnet | — |
| Bexley | 56 |
| Brent | 36 |
| Bromley | 16 |
| Camden | 0 |
| City of London | — |
| Croydon | 60 |
| Ealing | 54 |
| Enfield | — |
| Greenwich | — |
| Hackney | 10 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 0 |
| Haringey | 21 |
| Harrow | 58 |
| Havering | 1 |
| Hillingdon | 44 |
| Hounslow | 40 |
| Islington | 9 |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 3 |
| Kingston upon Thames | 0 |
| Lambeth | 28 |
| Lewisham | 22 |
| Merton | 3 |
| Newham | 46 |
| Redbridge | 0 |
| Richmond upon Thames | 12 |
| Southwark | 8 |
| Sutton | 44 |
| Tower Hamlets | 9 |
| Waltham Forest | 11 |
| Wandsworth | 9 |
| Westminster | 0 |

Where no figures are shown, either no data have been supplied by LEAs, or there are clearly significant data anomalies.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Bankruptcies

**David Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many individuals in the East Riding of Yorkshire were declared bankrupt in each of the past five years. [154563]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** Bankruptcy figures are only available on the basis of the Official Receivers Office dealing with the cases, therefore it is not possible to separate bankruptcies pertaining to the East Riding of Yorkshire exactly. The following table gives annual figures for the number of individual bankruptcies dealt with by the Official Receivers Office in Hull, which covers the county courts of Beverley, Great Grimsby, Grimsby, Hull, Kingston-upon-Hull, Malton, Scarborough, Scunthorpe, Whitby and York. The Hull Office covers the majority of the East Riding of Yorkshire but also includes a number of county courts from neighbouring counties/unitary authorities. A small part of the East Riding of Yorkshire (the county court of Goole) is administered by the Official Receivers Office at Sheffield.

*Individual Bankruptcies Registered at the Official Receivers Office in Hull 1999–2003*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1999 | 690 |
| 2000 | 796 |
| 2001 | 907 |
| 2002 | 926 |
| 2003 | 906 |

**Mr. Swire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* personal and *(b)* corporate bankruptcies there were in East Devon in each of the past seven years. [155297]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** Insolvency figures are only available on the basis of the Official Receivers Office dealing with the cases, therefore it is not possible to identify precisely

insolvencies in East Devon. Company insolvencies are made up of Company Compulsory Liquidations and Creditors Voluntary Liquidations of which only Company Compulsory Liquidations are available on an Official Receivers Office basis. The following table gives annual figures for the number of individual bankruptcies and company compulsory liquidations dealt with by the Official Receivers Office in Exeter, which covers the county courts of Barnstaple, Exeter, Newton Abbott, Shaftsbury, Torquay and Yeovil.

*Individual bankruptcies and company compulsory liquidations registered at the Official Receivers Office in Exeter*

| | *1997* | *1998* | *1999* | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* | *2003* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Individual insolvencies | 494 | 628 | 761 | 566 | 795 | 919 | 902 |
| Company compulsory liquidations | 46 | 51 | 56 | 43 | 38 | 64 | 33 |

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* personal and *(b)* company bankruptcies in (i) Greater London and (ii) each London borough there were in each of the last three years for which figures are available; what assessment she has made of recent trends; and if she will make a statement. [155275]

**Mr. Sutcliffe** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* Insolvency figures are only available on the basis of the Official Receivers Office dealing with the cases, therefore it is not possible to identify precisely insolvencies in Greater London or in individual boroughs. Company insolvencies are made up of Company Compulsory Liquidations and Creditors Voluntary Liquidations of which only Company Compulsory Liquidations are available on an Official Receivers Office basis. The following table gives annual figures for the number of individual Bankruptcies and Company Compulsory Liquidations dealt with by the Official Receivers Office in London, which covers the county courts of Barnet, Bloomsbury and Marylebone, Bow, Brentford, Chingford, Clerkenwell, Edmonton, Lambeth, Marylebone, Bloomsbury, Mayor's and City of London, Shoreditch, Wandsworth, West London, Westminster and Willesden.

*Individual Bankruptcies and Company Compulsory Liquidations Registered at the Official Receivers Office in London*

| | *2001* | *2002* | *2003* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Individual Bankruptcies | 1,427 | 1,457 | 1,933 |
| Company Compulsory Liquidations | 911 | 1,147 | 864 |

### Broadband

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people in London have access to *(a)* broadband internet via satellite service and *(b)* average variable cost broadband; and if she will make a statement. [155272]

**Mr. Timms** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* Broadband internet access via satellite is available to the vast majority of households across the UK, including in London. Terrestrial broadband internet access services, such as ADSL and cable modem, which are generally available at less than £30 per month, are available to 85 per cent. of households in the UK including the vast majority of households in the London area.

### Business Link

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 2 February 2004, *Official Report,* column 642W, on Business Link, when her Department will publish the gross value-added measure for Business Link operators. [155356]

**Mr. Win Griffiths:** Initial Gross Value Added (GVA) data, covering the period April to June 2004, will be available from July 2004.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 2 February 2004, *Official Report,* column 642W, on Business Link, how many studies have been commissioned; what their titles are; and when they were published. [155359]

**Mr. Timms:** Since the introduction of Business Link there have been 17 studies which are available from the Small Business Service Analytical Unit (0114–279–4442):

KPMG Evaluation of Business Links: Final Report (1994)

MORI Business Links: the business advice market among small and medium sized enterprises (1994)

MORI Business Links (Wave 2): the business advice market among small and medium sized enterprises (March 1995)

MORI Business Links (Wave 3): Business advice among SME and the 'Business Link' campaign. (Sept, 1995)

MORI Business Links (Wave 4): Business advice among SME and the 'Business Link' campaign (April, 1996)

MORI Business Links (Wave 4): Business advice among SME and the 'Business Link' campaign (Sept, 1997)

Business Planning and Research International Mystery Enquirer Programme 1995–96. (1997)

Ernst and Young Evaluation of Business Links (1996)

Ernst and Young Business Link Follow-up study (1997)

Kingston Business School The Business Link Tracker Study, Published at 24th ISBA

Small Firms Policy and Research Conference proceedings (ISBN 9000862 45X)

Public and Corporate Economic Consultants Business Link—Value for Money Evaluation (1999)

ECOTEC Evaluation of Innovative Business Support Projects (1999) York Consulting Ltd Early Assessment of Centres of Expertise (2000)

CEEDR/Data Build Evaluation of High Growth Start up Programme (2002), Published at 25th ISBA Small Firms Policy and Research Conference proceedings (ISBN 1 901177 03 3) (2002)

Business Support Needs Study (June 2001)

Mystery Enquirer study of Business Link National Contact Centre (April 2002)

Mystery Enquirer study of Business Link Website (April 2002)

### Correspondence

**Mr. Steen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she will reply to the letter from the hon.

Member for Totnes of 9 December 2003 concerning Mr. Trevor Sams of Totnes and business practices on the Internet. [155099]

**Ms Hewitt** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* My Department has no record of receiving your letter of 9 December. We now have a copy, and I will ensure you receive a response in due course.

### Departmental Functions (Beer)

**Mr. Grogan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what her Department's policy is on the serving of beer at official functions. [155784]

**Ms Hewitt:** The decision whether to serve beer at official functions is made on an event by event basis depending upon the purpose, nature and format of the function.

### EU (High Level Group)

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list outstanding European Union issues due to come to the High Level Group under the International Accountancy Standards Board; what the United Kingdom position on each issue is; and what the membership of the High Level Group is. [154558]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** The high level European consultative group set up to advise the International Accounting Standards Board will be made up of senior officials from European banking, securities and insurance regulators and from the accounting, banking and insurance industries. The European Commission will be an observer on the group. The group will focus specifically on certain basic issues related to the application of accounting standards to financial institutions. Copies of the press notice announcing the group have been deposited and are available for reference in the Libraries of the House.

The Government take no position on the individual technical issues but do believe that it is important for a complete package of accounting standards to be available to companies as soon as possible in view of the move to International Accounting Standards from 2005.

### Fireworks

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many illegal fireworks were seized in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* the past five years. [154887]

**Mr. Sutcliffe** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* The question is taken to refer to three areas where fireworks could be illegal, those are: *(a)* fireworks seized that do not comply with the British Standards (BS 7114); *(b)* those seized at port by Customs and Excise; and, *(c)* those found to be illegally stored (in unregistered premises).

With regard to *(a)*, such information is not centrally available from Trading Standards Departments.

With regard to *(b)*, Customs and Excise have seized the amounts set out in the following table. The figures provided are for a three year period—as information prior to April 2000 is not available.

| | *Individual fireworks* | *Boxes of fireworks* |
|---|---|---|
| April 2000 to March 2001 | 2,681 | 8 |
| April 2001 to March 2002 | 142 | 5 |
| April 2002 to March 2003 | 702 | 27 |
| March 2003 to December 2003 | 17,872 | 24 |

The large number of fireworks seized last year can be put down to a single seizure of approx 3.5 tons (17.4000 individual fireworks) which were detected upon entry into the UK.

The figures compiled by Customs and Excise also include flares.

Finally, with regard to *(c)*, I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on 10 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 146W.

### Grocery Market

**John Mann:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment the Office of Fair Trading has made of the potential impact of encroachment by multiple stores into the convenience sector of the grocery market on *(a)* sustainability of the industry and *(b)* the independent retailers and small groups within it. [155241]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** These are matters for the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) as an independent competition authority. I have asked the OFT to respond to you directly on the points raised.

### Ministerial Speeches

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many speeches she made between 9 June 2003 and 1 February 2004; and where a copy of each speech can be obtained. [156155]

**Ms Hewitt:** I have spoken, in my Ministerial capacity, at a number of events during this period and my keynote speeches are available on the DTI website.

### National Minimum Wage

**Mr. Willis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research her Department has commissioned since 1998–99 to assess the impact of the National Minimum Wage on 16 to 17-year-olds participating in Government-supported training; and if she will make a statement. [155438]

**Mr. Sutcliffe** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* Work on the position of 16 to 17-year-old workers, including those on Government-supported training, is taking place in two strands. First, the Government asked the independent Low Pay Commission in spring 2003 to consider the case for introducing a minimum wage rate for 16 to 17-year-old workers. I understand that the Commission have commissioned research and consulted widely on this issue. A copy of the Government's evidence to the Commission can be found at www.dti.gov.uk/er/nmw. We expect to receive the Commission's report by the end of this month and then to publish it, with the Government's response, around the middle of March.

The Government have also been conducting a wider review which is looking at the financial incentives for young people to participate in education and training and the system of financial support for young people. We expect this review to report in the spring.

### Offshore Oil and Gas Facilities

**Mr. Nicholas Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what arrangements are in place to enforce the provisions of the EU Social Chapter throughout the supply chain in construction projects for Britain's offshore oil and gas industries; and what the relationship is between these obligations and her Department's licensing regime. [154269]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** The statutory employment rights provided by the Directives which the Government have implemented under the Social Chapter since 1997 extend to all those working in the United Kingdom in these industries.

Implementation of Directives under the EU Social Chapter does not impact the administration of the licensing regime under the Petroleum Act 1998.

### Qualifications

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the balance between the supply of *(a)* high, *(b)* intermediate and *(c)* lower level qualifications in the workforce and employers' requirements for qualifications across the UK. [155288]

**Ms Hewitt:** The evidence gathered to inform the National Skills Strategy highlighted the fact that 56.9 per cent. of the UK workforce have lower level qualifications, 27.7 per cent. intermediate and 15.4 per cent. higher level.

Understanding employers demand for skills and qualifications and encouraging effective deployment of skills in the workplace are key to my Department's agenda. I will continue to work with the Sectors Skills Development Agency and the Skills for Business Network to ensure that employers have the skills they require both now and in the future.

### Scientists (Productivity)

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on levels of productivity amongst scientists in the UK. [155258]

**Ms Hewitt:** A recent international benchmarking study commissioned by my Department confirmed that in addition to the high quality of UK science and UK scientists are highly productive. On widely accepted measures of scientific productivity UK leads the G8 in terms of both papers published and citations acquired per researcher in international scientific journals.

### Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

**Ms Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many small and medium-sized enterprises she estimates have started business in each of the last 10 years; and if she will make a statement. [155585]

**Mr. Timms:** Value added tax (VAT) registrations are the best official guide to the pattern of business start-ups. These cover businesses of all sizes. Large changes in the level of the VAT threshold mean that data before 1994 is unavailable on a consistent basis with the current series.

The number of businesses registering for VAT in each calendar year from 1994 to 2002 in the UK is as follows:

| | *VAT registrations in the UK* |
|---|---|
| 1994 | 170,000 |
| 1995 | 165,810 |
| 1996 | 171,005 |
| 1997 | 187,690 |
| 1998 | 187,515 |
| 1999 | 181,370 |
| 2000 | 184,035 |
| 2001 | 174,620 |
| 2002 | 175,800 |

*Source:*
Business Start-ups and Closures: VAT Registrations and De-registrations 1994–2002, Small Business Service

While the number of new VAT registrations peaked in 1997 there were still more registrations in each year from 1997 to 2002 than in any of the three years proceeding this period. The reason why VAT registrations have fallen since 1997 is not clear. Many factors influence the number of new VAT registrations. These include global economic conditions and attractiveness of salaried employment compared with self-employment. A stable economy with low interest rates, coupled with a range of government initiatives to help start-ups, has assisted the net growth of business in the UK—at the start of 2003 there were 117,000 more VAT registered businesses than at the start of 1997.

### University Science Funding

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on *(a)* current and *(b)* future funding levels for university scientists in the UK. [155261]

**Ms Hewitt:** The Government has invested heavily in the science and engineering base, of which the research conducted in universities forms the larger part. In the current spending review period the science budget is growing at 10 per cent. year-on-year in real terms, building on the average 7 per cent. growth over the previous spending review period, and reaching just short of £3 billion by 2005–06. The recent announcement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer of his intention to develop a 10-year investment framework for science and investment, to be announced at the time of the next spending review settlement, signals the Government's continuing long-term commitment to science.

Further details of current and future funding levels by Government Departments and Research Councils are set out in 'The Forward Look 2003 Government funded science, engineering and technology', copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

### Working Time Directive

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the

potential cost of prohibiting employees from working longer than an average 48 hours per week to *(a)* small businesses and *(b)* the UK economy as a whole. [153916]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** Employers are likely to respond in a variety of ways if legislation were passed to prevent employees from working longer than 48 hours on average. Firstly employers may absorb the curtailment in working hours either through reducing output or realising productivity gains through changed work arrangements. Alternatively, employers may replace in whole or part the lost hours by recruiting more staff or asking existing staff to work longer hours (while remaining below 48 on average).

The extent to which employers do not compensate employees for lost hours and reductions in overtime pay would partly offset employers' costs in replacing lost long hours worked. This makes any precise estimate of the cost of prohibiting employees working longer hours difficult.

However, DTI estimate that if one quarter of the hours worked over 48 per week were replaced by employers at extra cost then the value of those hours would be around £3 billion per annum. If three-quarters of long hours worked were replaced at extra cost then the value of these hours is estimated at around £9 billion per annum.

Estimates for small businesses are not available.

# Written Answers to Questions

*Wednesday 25 February 2004*

## LEADER OF THE HOUSE

### Parliamentary Questions

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Leader of the House if he will take steps to ensure that the texts of ministerial letters sent to hon. Members in respect of written answers are printed in the *Official Report*. [156641]

**Mr. Hain:** I have recently written to the Speaker assuring him that, following representations from hon. Members, my office is actively engaged with the House authorities and departments in exploring how we can best reduce the number of "will write" answers and make any subsequent ministerial letters more accessible.

## TRANSPORT

### Parliamentary Questions

**Mr. Brady:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many days on average his Department took in Session 2002–03 to give a substantive answer to a parliamentary Question for Ordinary Written Answer; and what the greatest number of days taken to answer such a Question was. [155932]

**Mr. McNulty:** In the Session 2002–03, the Department for Transport received 2,785 parliamentary questions for Ordinary Written Answer, of which 2,522 (91 per cent.) were answered on time. Records on average processing times for parliamentary questions are not collected and to compile such data would incur disproportionate cost. The greatest number of days taken to answer an Ordinary Written Question was 44 sitting days.

### Speed Cameras

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the relative effectiveness of *(a)* inconspicuous speed cameras accompanied by high-profile advertising and road signs and *(b)* single brightly-coloured speed cameras. [153021]

**Mr. Jamieson** *[holding answer 10 February 2004]:* The objective of the safety camera programme is to reduce injuries and crashes by deterring excessive speed at places with a history of speed related accidents. Visible cameras, clearly signed, help achieve this. Drivers can also obtain information on the location of cameras from local safety camera partnerships' websites.

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much money raised in fines from speed cameras during the last year for which records are available was spent in *(a)* West Sussex and *(b)* the East Worthing and Shoreham constituency. [154400]

**Mr. Jamieson:** Information on all the "Safety Camera Partnerships" expenditure for the financial year 2002–03 is being prepared and will be published shortly. This was the first year in which the West Sussex Safety Camera Partnership was operating.

We do not hold statistical revenue information broken down by parliamentary constituency areas. The hon. Member may wish to contact the West Sussex safety camera partnership for more detailed information.

### Speed Limits

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what changes to *(a)* emission levels, *(b)* fuel consumption, *(c)* accident rates and *(d)* severity of accidents he estimates would result from an increase in the motorway speed limit to 80mph. [155498]

**Mr. Jamieson** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* Although no detailed estimates are available for such an increase, there is evidence to indicate that emission levels, fuel consumption, accident rates and severity of accidents would all rise.

### Road Resurfacing

**Mrs. May:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what percentage of the trunk road network has been *(a)* re-surfaced and *(b)* re-surfaced with lower noise surfacing in each of the last three years. [155070]

**Mr. Darling:** Government policy is to encourage the implementation of technologies that reduce the noise arising from road traffic wherever these are cost effective and do not have adverse consequences on safety. Categorisation of sites for low noise surfacing is primarily based on maintenance need. In addition, we have criteria for categorisation for noise reduction of roads with concrete surfaces. We announced these criteria on 17 October 2001; they are:

1. that wherever possible the application of quieter surfaces will fit in with normal maintenance needs;

2. that priority will be given to those sites where treatment would benefit the greatest number of people;

3. that the works will be carried out in such a way as to minimise disruption to general public and users of the network;

4. that priority will be given to roads, opened since June 1988, where actual noise levels have turned out to be significantly higher than predicted at the time of Public Inquiry.

Priority is given to road surfaces that are deteriorating and to locations where road safety is an issue. Where the resurfacing is specifically for noise reduction purposes priority will be given to those cases in which the actual noise levels exceed those predicted by at least three decibels, or where more than 100 properties per kilometre are affected by excess noise.

During 2000–01 4.3 per cent. of the Highways Agency's core network was resurfaced including 3.5 per cent. with quieter surfacing. During 2001–02 the figures were 4.2 per cent. and 3.8 per cent. respectively, and in 2002–03 5.5 per cent. and 5.0 per cent. respectively. In the current year, 2003–04, the Highways Agency estimate these figures will be 5.0 per cent. and 4.6 per cent. respectively.

### Vehicle Insurance/Taxation

**Mr. Grogan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures his Department is taking to reduce the number of motor vehicles on the roads *(a)* without insurance and *(b)* without road taxation. [155791]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The Department is determined to take effective action to tackle the problem of uninsured driving,. To that end, we commissioned last August an independent review of motor insurance with uninsured driving as a key consideration. The reviewer, Professor David Greenaway of Nottingham University, is expected to report in April. We shall take a keen interest in his recommendations, with a view to taking appropriate action as soon as practicable.

We have considerably tightened the enforcement of Vehicle Excise Duty through the "continuous registration" package of measures. By introducing continuous registration and using modern technology, we are improving the accuracy of the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency's vehicle register to the benefit of law enforcement and the honest motorist. To deal with short term Vehicle Excise Duty evasion, we have introduced fines for those over a month overdue with relicensing their vehicle. We are tackling those vehicles already outside the system of registration and licensing with enhanced enforcement using wheel clamping and ANPR cameras. By enhancing the quality of the vehicle register these measures are intended to assist the police in the fight against crime, and to assist local authorities in tracking down and enforcing costs against those who abandon vehicles.

**Paul Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures he plans to take to reduce the number of uninsured drivers. [155888]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The Department is determined to take effective action to tackle the problem of uninsured driving. To that end, we commissioned last August an independent review of motor insurance with uninsured driving as a key consideration. The reviewer, Professor David Greenaway of Nottingham University, is expected to report in April. We shall take a keen interest in his recommendations, with a view to taking appropriate action as soon as practicable.

## WALES

### Structural Funding

7. **Chris Grayling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what recent discussions he has had with the Treasury on matching the funds of Objective 1 payments. [155774]

**Mr. Hain:** I have regular discussions with the Treasury on a wide range of subjects.

### Crime

9. **Mrs. Betty Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has received about the crime figures in North Wales. [155776]

**Mr. Touhig:** My right hon. Friend and I regularly discuss crime figures with various interested parties.

Recently, we have received correspondence from the Chief Constable of North Wales, clarifying the impact of important changes in the reporting of crime, and pointing out that the British Crime Survey's latest findings show that crime in England and Wales as a whole has gone down by 25 per cent. since 1997.

### NHS Funding

10. **Sir Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what recent discussions he has had with the National Assembly for Wales Government on the funding of the NHS in Wales. [155777]

**Mr. Touhig:** I regularly meet the Assembly Health Minister to discuss the NHS and health provision in Wales including funding.

### Renewable Energy

11. **Ian Lucas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make representations to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to provide fiscal incentives to support the manufacture of renewable energy products in Wales. [155778]

**Mr. Hain:** The Government attaches great importance to the renewable energy industry and will continue to support the development of all forms of alternative energy producing technology as outlined in our Energy White Paper.

### Prisoners

12. **Mr. Robathan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many Welsh residents are in English prisons. [155780]

**Mr. Touhig:** Information on a prisoner's place of residence prior to sentence or remand in custody is not held centrally.

At 30 November 2003, there were 1,580 prisoners in English prisons who had been committed or sentenced by courts in Wales.

### Toxic Waste

13. **Mr. Clifton-Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what assessment he has made of the transfer of toxic waste from Wales to England. [155781]

**Mr. Touhig:** I understand that the Assembly intends to consult later this year upon amendments to the existing legislation controlling the movement of hazardous wastes.

### Cockle Regulation

14. **Mr. Ben Chapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what recent discussions he has had with the First Secretary regarding the Dee Cockle Regulation Order. [155782]

**Mr. Touhig:** My right hon. Friend has regular meetings with the First Secretary and I meet the Assembly Secretary for Environment, Planning and Countryside to discuss a variety of issues, including the Welsh cockle industry.

### Antisocial Behaviour

**Huw Irranca-Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with the Home Office on the use of legislation to tackle anti-social behaviour in Wales. [155779]

**Mr. Touhig:** My right hon. Friend and I have regular discussions with Ministerial colleagues about matters affecting Wales.

Last October, the Government published its "Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan", setting out priority areas for reducing anti-social behaviour over the next two or three years. Key areas for intervention include: nuisance neighbours, environmental crime and begging.

### Flooding

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has held with the First Secretary of the National Assembly for Wales on flooding in Wales. [155969]

**Mr. Hain:** I have regular discussions with Assembly Ministers about issues affecting Wales. It is for flood and coastal defence authorities to bring forward proposals to improve flood defences where required. The Assembly offers financial assistance towards the cost of these works via grant schemes On 6 February, I visited homes in Ynysmeudwy and Pontardawe which were affected by a flash flood and saw, at first hand, the effects of flooding on families.

### Recruitment Advertising

**Pete Wishart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what his Department's expenditure on recruitment advertising was in each of the last three years, broken down by publication; and what proportion of such expenditure was *(a)* to advertise vacant posts and *(b)* in the form of other general recruitment advertising. [155519]

**Mr. Touhig:** None.

## PRIME MINISTER

### Iraq

**Norman Lamb:** To ask the Prime Minister what *(a)* opinion polling and *(b)* market research projects have been carried out by the Government on the issue of military action against Iraq since 2001, broken down by financial year; what the (i) title and (ii) nature of these projects were; how much each of these projects cost; what the findings of each project were; where the findings have been published; and if he will make a statement. [153466]

**Mr. Caplin:** I have been asked to reply.

No opinion polling or market research projects have been centrally commissioned by the Ministry of Defence specifically on the issue of military action against Iraq. However, we commission surveys of public perceptions of the Ministry of Defence, the armed forces and their equipment. As part of this work we monitor the impact of recent operations.

I am withholding information on the costs of these surveys under Exemption 13 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information (commercial confidences).

**Norman Lamb:** To ask the Prime Minister (1) what assessment he has made of whether Iraq could launch a chemical, biological or nuclear attack against the UK mainland before publication of the September 2002 dossier; and if he will make a statement; [155975]

(2) what assessment he has made of whether Iraq had considered using chemical or biological agents in terrorist attacks before military action was taken against Iraq; and if he will make a statement; [155976]

(3) what assessment he made before military action was taken against Iraq, of Iraq's ability to produce chemical and biological weapons while the UN inspection team was in Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [155977]

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave to the hon. Member for Worthing West (Mr. Bottomley) in my statement on 24 September 2002, *Official Report*, column 23 and to my hon. Friend, the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell), at Prime Minister's Questions on 4 June 2003, *Official Report*, columns 155–156 and in a written answer on 15 October 2003, *Official Report*, column 234W.

**Norman Lamb:** To ask the Prime Minister (1) what assessment he made of whether Iraq *(a)* had provided chemical and biological weapons to al-Qaeda and *(b)* intended to conduct chemical and biological terrorist attacks before military action was taken against Iraq; and if he will make a statement; [156006]

(2) what assessment he made of the effect of regime collapse in Iraq on the risk of transfer of chemical and biological weapons materials to terrorists; and if he will make a statement; [156007]

(3) what assessment he made of the effect of military action against Iraq on the threat posed by al-Qaeda before taking such action; and if he will make a statement. [156008]

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend, the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell), on 15 October 2003, *Official Report*, column 234W.

## DEFENCE

### Iraq

**Mr. Kidney:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many British Service personnel *(a)* have committed suicide in Iraq or since returning to the UK from Iraq and *(b)* have been returned to the UK from Iraq early because of mental stress. [153691]

**Mr. Caplin** *[pursuant to his reply, 12 February 2004, Official Report, c.1636W]:* Further information has come to my attention. The corrected answer to the question is:

During the period 10 January 2003 to 20 December 2003 no member of British service personnel committed suicide in Iraq. Among Service personnel who have since returned to the United Kingdom from Iraq; two have since died and been recorded by a coroner with a suicide or open verdict. An additional five cases have been referred to a coroner for a verdict but the inquests have not yet been heard. There is no change to part *(b)*.

### Operation Telic

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will investigate the concerns expressed by Justin Bowen, a Royal Army Medical Corps Private, and Vicky Bowen, a member of the Queen Alexandra Royal Army Nursing Corps, that their son, Scott, has suffered from Gulf War Syndrome symptoms after both parents served in Operation Telic in the Gulf. [153514]

**Mr. Caplin:** I am unable to comment on individual cases for reasons of medical confidentiality. However, the Ministry of Defence takes the health concerns of Service and former Service personnel very seriously. I therefore urge any personnel who served on Op TELIC who have concerns about health matters to consult their Service medical officer or general practitioner, who will investigate thoroughly. Service and ex-Service personnel are also entitled to be seen at the Gulf Veterans' Medical Assessment Programme (GVMAP) on referral from their doctor. The GVMAP provides as full a diagnosis as possible to veterans, assesses patients and recommends treatment.

The arrangements for dealing with individual health concerns are complemented by a comprehensive package of research into the health of those returning from Op TELIC, announced on 7 May 2003, *Official Report*, column 34WS. Scoping studies have been completed and, in March, a questionnaire will be issued to some 7,000 Op TELIC veterans to seek data on health status and exposures.

### Recruitment Advertising

**Pete Wishart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his Department's expenditure on recruitment advertising was in each of the last three years, broken down by publication; and what proportion of such expenditure was *(a)* to advertise vacant posts and *(b)* in the form of other general recruitment advertising. [155524]

**Mr. Caplin:** This information is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

### Service Medals

**Hugh Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will reassess the eligibility criteria for the award of gallantry medals in relation to operations in Iraq. [144012]

**Mr. Caplin** *[holding answer 15 December 2003]:* The eligibility criteria for the award of gallantry medals are a matter for the Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals. The Committee advises Her Majesty the Queen on all matters to do with honours and awards. The Committee has not been asked to consider any changes to the eligibility criteria.

## TREASURY

### European Council of Finance Ministers

**Mr. Hood:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the outcome was of the ECOFIN Council held on 10 February; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if he will make a statement. [154893]

**Mr. Gordon Brown:** I attended ECOFIN on 10 February.

ECOFIN discussed preparation for the Spring Council on 25–26 March. There was broad agreement that further action was needed to reduce the European regulatory burden, promote investment and innovation and improve European labour market flexibility. ECOFIN therefore mandated the Economic Policy Committee (EPC) and the Economic and Financial Committee (EFC) to produce a key issues paper for the spring European Council for adoption at the 9 March ECOFIN.

It was agreed that the next ECOFIN would start with a breakfast discussion of the four Presidencies regulatory reform initiative. I presented the Government's White Paper on the European Economic Reform[1], stressing that while important reforms had been undertaken, a lot of work remained to be done. ECOFIN also adopted conclusions on the Broad Economic Policy Guidelines Implementation Report and endorsed the EPC report on structural reform.

On the Savings Tax Directive, the Commission reported on the progress of its negotiations with Andorra, Monaco, Liechtenstein, San Marino and Switzerland. ECOFIN unanimously supported the Commission's negotiating position and agreed not to accept any further counter-requests. The Council also unanimously agreed that the agreement negotiated with Switzerland should be concluded without further delay.

No votes were taken at the meeting.

[1] HM Treasury, "Advancing long-term prosperity: Economic reform in enlarged Europe". Published February 2004.

### Financial Instruments

**Mr. Tynan:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the Government's policy on its use of derivatives and related financial instruments. [155560]

**Ruth Kelly:** The Government uses derivatives to manage interest rate and foreign exchange risk associated with some of its activities. These instruments may include equity swaps, FRAs, exchange rate forwards, currency and interest rate swaps, as well as interest rate futures. The Government does not use these instruments to speculate in the financial markets.

### Tax Credits

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people *(a)* have taken-up and *(b)* are entitled to tax credit in (i) the North West, (ii) Lancashire and (iii) Chorley. [156130]

**Dawn Primarolo:** The estimated number of families receiving the Child and/or Working Tax Credits in (i) the North West, (ii) Lancashire and (iii) Chorley at 5 January 2004 is shown in "Child and Working Tax Credit Statistics, Geographical analyses—January 2004", which is on the Inland Revenue website at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/menu.htm. The estimates are based on a sample of cases, and are subject to sampling uncertainty.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### Abandoned Vehicles

**Jeff Ennis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many abandoned vehicles have been recovered in South Yorkshire in each of the last three years. [155017]

**Mr. Morley:** The information requested for the local authorities in South Yorkshire is given in the following table.

| | *Number of abandoned vehicles collected in the financial year* | |
|---|---|---|
| *Local authority* | *2000–01* | *2001–02* |
| Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council | 248 | 549 |
| Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council | 410 | 1,313 |
| Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council | 150 | 410 |
| Sheffield City Council | 100 | 1,421 |
| Total | 908 | 3,693 |

Information on the number of vehicles abandoned was collected for the first time in the 2000–01 Municipal Waste Management Survey. 2001–02 is the most recent year for which data is available from the survey.

### Air Pollution

**Mr. Grieve:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what aircraft pollution monitoring arrangements are in place in the vicinity of Heathrow airport; and who operates each site. [154472]

**Mr. Morley** *[holding answer 11 February 2004]:* The following three air quality monitoring stations in the vicinity of Heathrow airport are part of Defra's Automatic Air Quality Urban and Rural Monitoring Network (AURN):

London Hillingdon is owned by Defra and has operated since July 1996. It is in a suburban location (Grid Reference: TQ 069786) and monitors ozone, oxides of nitrogen, carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide and particulate matter ($PM_{10}$).

Brentford Roadside is owned by the London borough of Hounslow and has operated since June 2003. It is in an urban roadside location (Grid Reference: TQ 175781) and monitors oxides of nitrogen and carbon monoxide. (During the period 1997–02, this site operated a short distance from its present location and was named Hounslow Roadside.)

Harlington is owned by BAA and has operated since April 2003. It is in an urban background location (Grid Reference: TQ 083778) and monitors ozone, oxides of nitrogen, carbon monoxide and $PM_{10}$.

These stations measure pollution arising from all sources not just aircraft and provide information on the overall pollutant concentrations to which residents in the area are exposed. Data from all three of these stations are quality assured to national standards.

Further information on these stations, data summaries and hour-by-hour pollutant concentrations can be found at www.airquality.co.uk (the site at Harlington is in the process of being incorporated into this system).

In addition, BAA and local authorities in the vicinity of Heathrow airport operate the following air quality monitoring stations at: Slough Town Hall; Slough, Colnbrook; Hillingdon, South Ruislip; Hillingdon Hospital; Hounslow, Cranford; Hounslow, Chiswick High Rd; and BAA Heathrow, LHR2 site close to northern airport runway.

Information about air quality in the vicinity of Heathrow airport can also be found at www.heathrowairwatch.org.uk

### Asbestos Cement Pipes

**Mr. Ben Chapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what guidance her Department offers on the use of asbestos cement pipes to carry drinking water. [155786]

**Mr. Morley:** Asbestos pipes have been used extensively by the water industry without giving rise to any quality problems. However, the Drinking Water Inspectorate issued an information letter on behalf of the Secretary of State, which reminded water companies of the Asbestos (Prohibitions) (Amendment) Regulations 1999 (SI 1999 No. 2373). These Regulations effectively precluded the use of new asbestos cement pipes to carry drinking water, because of health and safety issues associated with cutting the material, not because of any concerns about possible effects of asbestos pipes on drinking water quality.

### Aviation Emissions

**Mrs. Spelman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of the Government's target figure of carbon dioxide emissions in 2050 she estimates will be taken up by aviation emissions. [151195]

**Mr. Morley:** The Government estimate that domestic and international aviation emissions could account for 20–25 per cent. of UK carbon dioxide emissions by 2050. This calculation assumes that the 60 per cent. goal specified in the Energy White Paper for the domestic economy is achieved. If international aviation were to be

included in the 60 per cent. goal emissions from other sectors would have to be around 15–20 per cent. below their Energy White Paper target to compensate.

This calculation is based on an assumption of three new runways in the south east and does not reflect the impact of any economic instruments. It further assumes that emissions from all international departures from the UK are allocated to the UK inventory, as there is as yet no international agreement on ways of allocating international aviation emissions.

The above figures do not include the radiative forcing effect which emissions from aviation have at altitude, which are 2–4 times greater than that from carbon dioxide alone.

### Carbon Sinks

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the environmental benefits accruing from the ability of *(a)* sugar beet and *(b)* other crops to act as carbon sinks. [155664]

**Mr. Morley:** Separate estimates for sugar beet are not available but research sponsored by the Department suggests that an upper limit of 0.14 million tonnes carbon per year (Mt C/year) is accumulating in crop biomass as a whole in the UK, mainly as a result of increases in crop yield. This is small compared with the amount of carbon that is sequestered by forests, which is currently around 3 Mt C/year.

Agriculture and forestry sectors probably contribute most effectively to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions through the production of energy crops and wood fuel by displacing use of fossil fuels.

### Child Poverty

**Mrs. Roche:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department is taking to achieve the Government's targets of *(a)* ending child poverty by 2020, *(b)* halving it by 2010 and *(c)* reducing it by a quarter by 2004–05; and if she will make a statement. [154368]

**Alun Michael:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Pond) on 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1590W.

### Common Agricultural Policy

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on Common Agricultural Policy reform and help provided to poorer farmers under the policy. [153439]

**Alun Michael:** The EU agreed on 26 June 2003 to a radical shift in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). In future, the bulk of subsidies will no longer be linked to production, freeing farmers to produce the safe, high quality food which people want and bringing environmental improvements.

On 12 February my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, announced how she proposed to implement key features of that groundbreaking reform in England. We will decouple fully in 2005 and move over an eight year transition period towards a flat rate Single Farm Payment to farmers. England will be split into two regions—land in the severely disadvantaged areas (SDAs) of the less favoured areas (LFAs) and all other eligible land. Different rates will apply in these regions. This represents a decisive irreversible and forward-looking shift consistent with the direction that we have already set in the Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy (SFFS) and in the June 2003 CAP reform negotiations.

If farmers seize the market opportunities offered by these reforms, it is estimated that UK farm incomes could increase by around 5 per cent. relative to the 2003 Total Income from Farming, and farmers will be freed from some of the bureaucracy associated with the old subsidy schemes. For some of the poorer farms this change in support represents a chance to get off the treadmill of small scale and unprofitable commodity production.

There are also Defra led initiatives already available to help poorer farmers. These include the Farm Business Advice Service to help farmers adjust and respond to the difficult trading conditions of recent years and a number of benchmarking initiatives to help struggling farmers see how they can bring their performance up to the level of more successful businesses.

### Correspondence

**Mr. Wilshire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she will respond to the letter from the hon. Member for Spelthorne of 6 January 2004 regarding Mr. M. Gillard of Staines. [154345]

**Alun Michael:** My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State responded on 16 February 2004.

**Mr. Gordon Prentice:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs with reference to her reply to the hon. Member for Pendle of 6 November 2003 on the dedication of land under section 16 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, how she followed up correspondence to Government Departments; what has been the response; what further steps will be taken to promote dedication to public and private landowners; and whether incentives will be made available. [155557]

**Alun Michael:** I was pleased to issue non-statutory guidance to accompany the regulations on dedication in January this year. The Forestry Commission is currently in the process of using the guidance to make the first few dedications across its freehold estate.

I will be writing to a number of other large landowners in the public and private sectors soon to ask them to confirm their plans for dedicating land and am optimistic that this will lead to further successes. My officials are also considering ways to encourage dedications more widely.

### Endangered Species

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will

make a statement on the Government's policy on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. [154617]

**Mr. Morley:** We will maintain the UK's position as a leading supporter of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) in co-operation with EU member states and other contracting parties. CITES aims to ensure that where trade is carried out, it is done in a sustainable way that ensures the long-term survival of all species. It has been very successful in this respect and is widely respected for its ability to produce effective regulatory measures that are based on sound science. We will, therefore, continue to support CITES both practically and financially.

### English Meat

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department is taking to promote English *(a)* beef and *(b)* lamb. [153441]

**Alun Michael:** The promotion of English beef and lamb is a matter for the industry. The Meat and Livestock Commission's English Beef and Lamb Executive (EBLEX) is considering whether to introduce an English brand for beef and lamb produced in England, but any promotion of this would need to be in accordance with the EU's rules on state aids.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the spend of her Department is on the promotion of English *(a)* beef and *(b)* lamb in the current financial year. [153890]

**Alun Michael:** EU co-funding is available for promotion and information campaigns carried out by industry bodies such as the Meat and Livestock Commission. We work closely with such bodies and the EU Commission with a view to maximising the benefit to the UK industry. We also encourage the marketing and branding of local and regional produce. A processing and marketing grant is also available within the England Rural Development Programme. Our approach, in keeping with the Treaty of Rome and our policy to help create a sustainable future for farming and food, is about helping the farming industry to move away from dependency on subsidies. This also fits well with our policy for reforming the Common Agricultural Policy.

### Equine Passports

**Mr. Swayne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what assessment she has made of the impact of the proposal that veterinary surgeons complete silhouettes for equine passports on the practice of commoning in the New Forest; and if she will make a statement; [155267]

(2) which organisations were consulted on proposals that veterinary surgeons complete silhouettes for equine passports; and for what reasons the New Forest Commoners Defence Association was not included in the consultation. [155268]

**Alun Michael:** We have never said that only veterinary surgeons can complete and sign the silhouette in horse passports. The passport must be signed either by a vet or the competent authority—which is the passport-issuing organisation—in accordance with European rules.

When concerns were expressed to Defra that in some cases the person completing some silhouettes on behalf of the competent authority had no proven competency and that there was no independent verification of the details, I agreed to provide further guidance to all passport-issuing organisations. I explained this to a meting of all passport issuing organisations on 4 November 2003. The New Forest Verderers have informed Defra officials how they intend to meet the requirements in respect of silhouettes for animals in the New Forest, and officials have confirmed that these are within the guidelines issued.

### Farming

**Mr. Beith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the effect on farm diversification of pre-1983 agricultural tenancy conditions which refer to earnings from agriculture. [150885]

**Alun Michael:** Ministers have become increasingly concerned that agricultural tenancy legislation, together with the terms contained in agricultural tenancy agreements, combine to prevent some tenant farmers from participating in diversification and agri-environment activities. Income from diversified activities might also affect succession rights under the Agricultural Holdings Act 1986. In view of these concerns, we reconvened the Tenancy Reform Industry Group in November 2002. The Group was asked to make recommendations to improve the health of the tenancy sector, and in particular, to encourage greater participation in farm diversification among tenant farmers.

The Tenancy Reform Industry Group presented its report to Government in June 2003. The report, which has the support of all Group members, made a number of wide ranging recommendations for increasing flexibility within agricultural tenancies. These include updating the statutory succession provisions in the Agricultural Holdings Act 1986 to allow income derived from farm diversification projects undertaken with the consent of the landlord to be taken into account in assessing eligibility for succession to an agricultural tenancy. The Group also recommended a code of practice on diversification within agricultural tenancies, backed up by an independent adjudication scheme to which disputes can be referred when they cannot be settled between parties.

The Government responded to the Report of the Tenancy Reform Industry Group shortly before Christmas. The Government accepted all of the Group's recommendations for amendments to the existing tenancy legislation and the proposed code of practice. It is anticipated that changes to the legislation will be effected by means of an Order under the Regulatory Reform Act. It is hoped that a formal consultation document on the Regulatory Reform Order will be issued later in the year.

**Paddy Tipping:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the total amount of Common Agricultural Policy subsidy paid to English farms in 2003, broken down by county; and what the *(a)* highest, *(b)* lowest and *(c)* average individual payment in each county were. [151352]

**Alun Michael:** The following table shows the total amount and average individual payments made for each county[1] in England. However, we are unable to supply information on individual payments under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998 unless such details are allowed by any of the exemptions to the Act. If such exemptions can be identified then further consideration can be given to the request.

Financial figures represent the European Agriculture Guidance and Guarantee Fund 2003 accounting year which runs from 16 October 2002 to 15 October 2003.

[1] The county split is in line with NUTS 2 (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics) regional analysis.

| *County* | *Total amount (£)* | *Number of claims* | *Average payment (£)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tees Valley and Durham | 33,823,029.86 | 1,763 | 19,184.92 |
| Northumberland and Tyne & Wear | 66,327,723.89 | 1,872 | 35,431.48 |
| Cumbria | 72,822,877.45 | 4,852 | 15,008.84 |
| Cheshire | 16,210,308.85 | 2,110 | 7,682.61 |
| Greater Manchester | 4,320,959.33 | 560 | 7,715.99 |
| Lancashire | 23,156,928.16 | 2,639 | 8,774.89 |
| Merseyside | 2,762,820.68 | 188 | 14,695.85 |
| East Riding and North Lincolnshire | 56,488,361.31 | 2,166 | 26,079.58 |
| North Yorkshire | 111,619,984.91 | 6,108 | 18,274.39 |
| South Yorkshire | 14,762,236.39 | 809 | 18,247.51 |
| West Yorkshire | 14,179,485.69 | 1,469 | 9,652.47 |
| Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire | 55,531,457.94 | 3,596 | 15,442.56 |
| Leicestershire, Rutland and Northamptonshire | 78,391,446.46 | 3,232 | 24,254.78 |
| Lincolnshire | 98,095,650.80 | 3,432 | 28,285.65 |
| Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Warwickshire | 74,282,940.97 | 5,158 | 14,401.50 |
| Shropshire and Staffordshire | 78,969,277.49 | 6,222 | 12,691.94 |
| West Midlands | 2,380,209.55 | 210 | 11,334.33 |
| East Anglia | 186,325,648.48 | 8,097 | 23,011.69 |
| Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire | 35,191,734.37 | 1,243 | 28,311.93 |
| Essex | 51,179,181.00 | 1,746 | 29,312.25 |
| Inner London | 1,482,857.45 | 100 | 14,828.57 |
| Outer London | 1,964,304.69 | 145 | 13,546.93 |
| Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire | 77,024,191.94 | 2,987 | 25,786.47 |
| Surrey, East and West Sussex | 48,432,661.98 | 2,615 | 18,521.09 |
| Hampshire and Isle of Wight | 38,625,646.00 | 1,747 | 22,109.70 |
| Kent | 38,054,781.42 | 1,808 | 21,047.99 |
| Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and North Somerset | 88,933,774.97 | 5,315 | 16,732.60 |
| Dorset and Somerset | 65,335,288.74 | 5,570 | 11,729.85 |
| Cornwall and Isles of Scilly | 45,469,578.91 | 3,892 | 11,682.83 |
| Devon | 91,593,508.63 | 7,613 | 12,031.20 |

**Paddy Tipping:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many Common Agricultural Policy payments were made to farmers in each English county in 2003; and what the total area was that the subsidy related to, broken down by county. [151353]

**Alun Michael:** The number of Common Agriculture Policy payments made to farmers in each English county and the areas the subsidy related to are set out in the following tables. The county split for the number of claims paid is in line with NUTS 2 (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics) regional analysis.

| *County* | *Claims paid* |
|---|---|
| Tees Valley and Durham | 1,763 |
| Northumberland and Tyne and Wear | 1,872 |
| Cumbria | 4,852 |
| Cheshire | 2,110 |
| Greater Manchester | 560 |
| Lancashire | 2,639 |
| Merseyside | 188 |
| East Riding and North Lincolnshire | 2,166 |
| North Yorkshire | 6,108 |
| South Yorkshire | 809 |
| West Yorkshire | 1,469 |
| Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire | 3,596 |
| Leicestershire, Rutland and Northamptonshire | 3,232 |
| Lincolnshire | 3,432 |
| Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Warwickshire | 5,158 |
| Shropshire and Staffordshire | 6,222 |
| West Midlands | 210 |
| East Anglia | 8,097 |
| Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire | 1,243 |
| Essex | 1,746 |
| Inner London | 100 |
| Outer London | 145 |
| Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire | 2,987 |
| Surrey, East and West Sussex | 2,615 |
| Hampshire and Isle of Wight | 1,747 |
| Kent | 1,808 |
| Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and North Somerset | 5,315 |
| Dorset and Somerset | 5,570 |
| Cornwall and Isles of Scilly | 3,892 |
| Devon | 7,613 |

| County | Area (ha) |
|---|---|
| Bedfordshire | 73,816 |
| Berkshire | 43,578 |
| Buckinghamshire | 100,562 |
| Cleveland | 23,101 |
| Cambridgeshire | 216,721 |
| Cheshire | 108,343 |
| Cornwall | 218,073 |
| Cumbria | 415,450 |
| Derbyshire | 164,544 |
| Devon | 417,851 |
| Dorset | 148,170 |
| Durham | 140,407 |
| Essex | 215,356 |
| Gloucestershire | 165,425 |
| Hampshire | 163,909 |
| Isle of Wight | 18,562 |
| Hereford and Worcester | 225,024 |
| Hertford | 80,630 |
| Kent | 162,236 |
| Lancashire | 172,266 |
| Leicestershire | 170,573 |
| Lincolnshire | 398,284 |
| Merseyside | 13,153 |
| Greater London (ER) | 3,223 |
| Middlesex | 3,177 |
| Norfolk | 280,035 |
| Northamptonshire | 164,961 |
| Tyne and Wear | 13,370 |
| Northumberland | 339,728 |
| Nottingham | 118,970 |
| Oxfordshire | 177,769 |
| Avon | 62,751 |
| Shropshire | 226,462 |
| Somerset | 211,011 |
| Staffordshire | 157,099 |
| Suffolk | 225,151 |
| Isles of Scilly | 49 |
| Surrey | 35,421 |
| East Sussex | 71,501 |
| West Sussex | 79,980 |
| Warwickshire | 120,579 |
| Greater Manchester | 24,769 |
| Wiltshire | 214,649 |
| West Midlands | 11,518 |
| South Yorkshire | 70,288 |
| North Yorkshire | 483,462 |
| Beverly | 76,166 |
| North Yorkshire | 46,076 |
| Humberside | 230,332 |
| Total | 7,352,423 |

## Fisheries

**Mr. Paterson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the reliability of catch landing figures obtained by her Department is in determining fish stocks in British fishing waters; what her estimate is of the margin of error in estimations based on this information; what other information her Department uses to determine fish stocks; and what the estimated margins of error are using this information. [150305]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Fish stock assessments are undertaken by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) and are linked to the sea areas in which individual fish stocks are mainly found. They will often embrace the waters of more than one country as well as the high seas. Account is taken of data contributed by all of the main countries exploiting each stock and comprises officially recorded information on landings and fishing effort, plus scientific data on size and age structure, growth rate, maturity, and discard rates (when available). Most assessments also use the year to year trend in relative abundance estimated as catch per effort from independent national and international research vessel surveys. The absolute accuracy of assessments is difficult to estimate at the present time but judgments on the robustness of the underlying data will be reflected in the scientific advice provided regarding future levels of stock exploitation.

**Mr. Paterson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the effect is of the removal of large cod from a fishery on the overall levels of recruitment to a fishery. [150480]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Removing adult cod is expected to have relatively little effect on the survival or growth rates of juvenile cod, but could significantly affect the production of eggs.

**Mr. Paterson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the EU *(a)* Necessity and *(b)* Recovery research programme on selective gear is scheduled to start; what the cost of each project is; and what the United Kingdom contribution to each project is. [152170]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** The Necessity project begins on 1 March 2004 and is budgeted to cost Euro 2,806,946. The UK contribution is Euro 443,420. The Recovery project began on 1 November 2002 and was budgeted to cost Euro 7,725,285. The UK contribution is Euro 378,325.

## Flooding

**Mr. Michael Foster:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will estimate how many properties have benefited from flood defence funding since 1997 broken down by constituency. [155087]

**Mr. Morley:** Defra grant aids capital projects and related studies that meet specified economic, technical and environmental criteria and achieve the threshold priority score for the year in which they start. Decisions regarding which flood and coastal defence projects to promote, their timing and appropriate solutions are matters for the operating authorities—the Environment Agency (EA), local authorities and (in areas with special drainage needs) internal drainage boards.

The Department estimates that 290,000 houses have benefited from flood defence projects (excluding those for flood warning or primarily to protect against coastal erosion) approved between 1 April 1997 and 31 March 2003. The programme is a rolling one and other houses will have benefited from projects approved prior to 1997 which will have been funded in the period. There is likely to be an element of double-counting in these figures where different projects (for example for annual beach recharge) have benefited the same houses. Such double-counting could not be removed, and neither could the total be broken down by constituency, without incurring disproportionate cost. The Department has agreed Service Delivery Agreement (SDA) Target 27 with HM Treasury to reduce flood risk to a further 80,000 houses (with no double-counting) during the

Spending Review 2002 period—2003–04 to 2005–06. Because of the measurement method used for the SDA target (counting houses at project completion rather than approval) this figure will include some of the houses included in the 290,000 figure above.

**Mr. Michael Foster:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what flood defences were funded by her Department, broken down by constituency, since 1997. [155089]

**Mr. Morley:** Defra grant aids capital projects and related studies that meet specified economic, technical and environmental criteria and achieve the threshold priority score for the year in which they start. Decisions regarding which flood and coastal defence projects to promote, their timing and appropriate solutions are matters for the operating authorities—the Environment Agency (EA), local authorities and (in areas with special drainage needs) internal drainage boards.

The list which has been placed in the Libraries of the House, shows capital flood defence works projects (excluding those for flood warning or primarily to protect against coastal erosion) approved for grant since 1 April 1997. Of course the programme as a whole is a rolling one and some projects approved prior to 1997 will also have received funding in the period. I regret that I am unable to break the list down by constituency without incurring disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to protect houses that have been built on flood plains. [150380]

**Mr. Morley:** We recognise that there are around 1.9 million properties in England in flood risk areas that are at some risk of flooding.

Defra provides grant aid to the flood and coastal defence operating authorities to support their capital schemes to reduce flood risk, including through the improvement of flood warnings. These projects must meet specified criteria and an appropriate priority score to attract Defra funding but decisions regarding which projects to promote and their timing rest with these authorities. The principal operating authority for flood risk is the Environment Agency (EA) but local authorities (LAs) and, in areas with special drainage needs, internal drainage boards (IDBs) also carry out works on a much smaller scale overall.

The effective management of flood and coastal erosion risk is a priority for Government. This is demonstrated by the substantial increase in funding in recent years and for the SR2002 period. For example, total Government expenditure on flood and coastal defence was £310 million in 1996–97, £439 million estimated in 2003–04 and is planned to be £564 million in 2005–06.

Defra has two relevant SDA targets under SR 2002. One relates to the delivery of the enhanced flood and coastal defence capital programme over the SR2002 period, reducing the risk to life, to major infrastructure, environment assets and to some 80,000 houses. The other is to implement the outcomes of the flood and coastal defence funding review, including funding the Environment Agency's flood defence service through a single stream of Defra grant in aid and transferring to the Agency responsibility for all rivers creating the greatest flood risk.

In addition, Defra has initiated work on a major new Government strategy for flood and coastal erosion risk management, including consideration of possible new funding streams.

### Fuel Poverty

**Mr. Kidney:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the recommendations of the Fuel Poverty Advisory Group in its second annual report to increase resources for energy efficiency programmes by 50 per cent. [155873]

**Mr. Morley:** I am grateful to the Fuel Poverty Advisory Group for their report.

We are considering their report as we prepare our Fuel Poverty Implementation Plan and will respond to their recommendations in the Government's annual progress report on fuel poverty. We plan to publish both documents after the Easter recess.

### Gangmasters

**Mr. Luff:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to encourage employees to be proactive in preventing illegal working, as stated in paragraph 24 of her Department's response to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee's Fourteenth Report of Session 2002–03, HC 691, on gangmasters; and what data protection requirements inhibit her response to requests for assistance. [154662]

**Alun Michael:** Paragraph 24 of the Government's reply to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee's report on gangmasters actually refers to the role of employers, not employees. My reply assumes that this is the meaning intended in your question.

The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs is unlikely to be in a position to provide direct assistance to employers seeking advice on illegal working. However, My hon. Friend, the Minister for Citizenship, Immigration and Counter Terrorism, chairs the Illegal Working Steering Group which comprises representatives of the commercial sectors where illegal work is most prevalent. The steering group has examined ways in which employers can be encouraged and supported in carrying out checks under section 8 of the Asylum and immigration Act 1996. Following discussions with the steering group the Government have consulted on measures to strengthen the document checks of prospective employees that employers must make under section 8. The Government are now planning to bring forward revised measures.

The Government are not aware of any circumstances where the Data Protection Act would inhibit the disclosure of data held by a Government Department or employers necessary for the prevention of illegal working or the apprehension of offenders.

## GM Crops

**Gregory Barker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations the Devolved Administrations in *(a)* Wales and *(b)* Scotland have made to her Department regarding the growing of Chardon LL maize in the UK. [154705]

**Mr. Morley:** The transformation event T25, contained in Chardon LL, already has a Part C marketing consent under Directive 2001/18/EC. Ministers are currently considering the advice of the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment on the commercial cultivation of T25 maize in light of the results of the Farm Scale Evaluations. The UK's position will be decided in consultation with the Devolved Administrations. Discussions with the Administrations in Wales and Scotland are on-going on this matter.

The question of the possible addition of Chardon LL to the UK National Seed List is a matter for joint decision with the Devolved Administrations.

**Gregory Barker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the acceptable threshold under EU law is for the contamination of non-GM crops planted in the UK with GM traits. [154706]

**Mr. Morley:** The EU has agreed a general threshold of 0.9 per cent. for tracing and labelling the adventitious presence of approved GM traits in non-GM crops and food. The European Commission's guidance to member states is that co-existence arrangements should not go beyond what is necessary to ensure that adventitious traces of GMOs stay below the tolerance thresholds set out in Community legislation.

**Gregory Barker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make it her policy to refuse permission for the planting of GM crops before bringing laws into effect on *(a)* co-existence and *(b)* liability. [154707]

**Mr. Morley:** We are currently considering our policy on co-existence and liability in the light of the report on these issues by the Agriculture and Environment Biotechnology Commission. We will set out our response in due course.

**Mr. Peter Ainsworth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she will make in the Council of Ministers regarding the European Commission's decision to support a proposal to permit BT11 GM maize to be imported as food into Europe; and if she will make a statement. [152773]

**Mr. Morley:** This application has already been referred to our advisory body who have raised no objection on food and safety grounds. It will be discussed in Council in the normal way.

## Hen Harriers

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what the population of hen harriers in the UK was *(a)* at the latest date for which figures are available and *(b)* in each of the previous 10 years; [154710]

(2) how many breeding pairs of hen harriers *(a)* established nests and *(b)* successfully bred in the UK in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available; [154711]

(3) what analysis she has undertaken of the impact of agricultural changes on the breeding success of hen harriers; [154712]

(4) what steps she is taking to encourage the reintroduction of breeding pairs of hen harriers to lowland England. [154713]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** The most recent estimate of the hen harrier population is based on the results of the 1998 survey of hen harriers in the UK. A total of between 450–591 territorial pairs were found in the UK with a best estimate of 521 pairs. The full results were published in the journal Bird Study 48:341–353 in 2001. There are no directly comparable data for any of the previous 10 years but there is thought not to have been any overall change in the size of the population since the last estimate was published in 1993, for the period 1988–1989 (Bird Study 40: 1–11).

The information regarding breeding pairs of hen harriers is not available for the whole of the UK. However, there were 17 known breeding attempts by hen harriers in England in 2003. Just eight of these were successful. A further five attempts failed before it could be established whether eggs had been laid.

There are currently no steps being taken to encourage the reintroduction of breeding hen harriers to lowland England. The conservation effort for hen harriers in England is focused in upland moorland areas in northern England where hen harriers have nested regularly in recent decades. We believe that a cessation of illegal persecution in England, and elsewhere in the UK, would allow the population to recover naturally, obviating the need for any reintroduction programme. Furthermore, we believe that, in contrast to the Red Kite programme, the reintroduction would not be in accordance with IUCN guidelines, insofar as we cannot be certain that the factors which brought about their loss from the English lowlands (almost certainly habitat loss and persecution) no longer pertain.

The Government have not specifically conducted an analysis of the impact of agricultural changes on the breeding success of hen harriers. However, agricultural change and persecution are widely held to have been responsible for the historical decline, to currently low levels, of the UK population. Currently, illegal persecution appears to be the main factor limiting hen harrier population size and breeding success over much of its range.

This contrasts with Orkney, where the population has declined dramatically since the end of the 1970s. The decline here is thought to relate to declining prey availability, resulting from changes in agriculture, particularly a decrease in the area of rough grazing and an increase in sheep densities. Full details were published in Biological Conservation 111: 377–384 in 2003.

It should be noted that in the absence of illegal persecution, hen harrier numbers might be expected to increase, if moorland burning regimes for both agricultural and grouse management purposes are altered. This would allow the development of taller heather swards and thus an increase in the area of suitable nesting habitat available to hen harriers. English Nature's Hen Harrier Recovery Project has shown that the inappropriate burning of moorland is a serious problem for the small number of hen harriers nesting in England. This results in the loss of nesting habitat and, in some cases, the destruction of active nests.

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) when she last met *(a)* English Nature and *(b)* the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds to discuss hen harriers; [154719]

(2) what representations she has received from *(a)* English Nature and *(b)* the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds on hen harriers; [154720]

(3) when she last met the *(a)* British Association of Shooting and Conservation, *(b)* the Countryside Alliance, *(c)* the Game Conservancy Trust and *(d)* the Moorland Association to discuss hen harriers. [154721]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** With Regards to English Nature there has been no formal meeting to discuss, or specific representations received, on the position of hen harriers in England. However, we have received representations on habitats, including upland heathland, which support hen harrier populations, in relation to the condition of sites of special scientific interest. English Nature has also provided briefing on the establishment and progress of their Hen Harrier Recovery Project.

The RSPB met with my hon. Friend, the Minister of State for Environment, (Mr Morley), in late 2002 to discuss Hen Harriers. Ministers met with the Game Conservancy Trust in May 2000, after the publication of the Raptor Working Group final report. Discussions focussed on the issues and recommendations surrounding this report. A further meeting is in the process of being arranged, for which the agenda has not yet been determined.

I met with BASC in November last year, though we did not discuss hen harriers. I have been invited to meet with the Countryside Alliance. However, due to other pressing diary commitments I have had to decline. This meeting was not to specifically discuss the issue surrounding Hen Harriers. Ministers have not met with the Moorland Association regarding the position of hen harriers in England.

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee on *(a)* hen harriers and *(b)* Operation Artemis; [154722]

(2) what involvement she had in planning Operation Artemis; [154723]

(3) whether she intends Operation Artemis to be a long-term solution to the position of the hen harrier in England. [154726]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has had no direct discussions with JNCC concerning Operation Artemis, nor the position of hen harriers in England.

Operation Artemis is a police-led initiative aimed at combating the illegal persecution of hen harriers in the United Kingdom. Defra officials have had no direct involvement planning the Operation but outline proposals were presented at the Police and Customs Wildlife Enforcement Conference at Exeter in October 2003. This annual event is organised by Defra as part of its support for the Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime (PAW).

Chief Constable Richard Brunstrom (North Wales Police and co-chair of PAW) is due to launch Operation Artemis at the forthcoming PAW Open Seminar to be held in London on 24 February 2004. In the absence of full details of the range of activities planned by the Police Service and other partners, it is too early to assess whether or not this initiative is likely to offer a long-term solution to the issue of illegal persecution of hen harriers in England.

### Ivory Trade

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department is taking to ensure that the proposed sales of ivory stockpiles do not conceal illegal trade. [154618]

**Mr. Morley:** The decision to allow this one-off sale of ivory stockpiles was taken at the Conference of Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) in Chile in November 2002. One of several very strict pre-conditions which must be met before any sales can take place is that the CITES Secretariat must be satisfied that the importing countries are able to effectively regulate their domestic ivory trade to prevent any illegal ivory from entering into these markets. We will therefore be working in co-operation with the EU member states and other CITES parties to make sure that this, and all the other strict conditions, are met in full before any sales are allowed to go ahead.

### Large Combustion Plant Directive

**Mr. Laurence Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how she will implement the Large Combustion Plant Directive; and if she will make a statement. [155005]

**Mr. Morley** *[holding answer 25 February 2004]:* We have received a range of comments on the Regulatory Impact Assessment that was published in June 2003 with other consultation documents regarding the implementation of the Directive. We are continuing to assess the potential economic impact on UK industry of the introduction of the Directive, using both internal

analyses and independent research. We are also in detailed dialogue with industry to help us to understand their views as expressed in response to consultation.

We expect to make an announcement about our plans for implementation of the Directive as soon as possible after the further analysis has been completed and evaluated.

## Meat Imports

**Mr. Steen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much *(a)* beef and *(b)* lamb was imported into the United Kingdom from countries outside the EU in each of the last three years. [155096]

**Alun Michael:** The following table shows the level of *(a)* beef and *(b)* lamb/sheep meat and meat products imported into the United Kingdom from countries outside the EU in each of the last three years for which 12 months data is available.

*UK imports of beef and lamb/sheep meat from non-EU countries, 2000–02*

| Commodity type/country | 2000 | | 2001 | | 2002 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | t'000[1] | £ million | t'000[1] | £ million | t'000[1] | £ million |
| *Beef* | | | | | | |
| Brazil | 66 | 95 | 74 | 106 | 72 | 98 |
| Argentina | 10 | 19 | 6 | 11 | 24 | 39 |
| Uruguay | 9 | 19 | 9 | 14 | 15 | 27 |
| Botswana | 6 | 17 | 11 | 31 | 6 | 18 |
| Namibia | 6 | 20 | 9 | 29 | 7 | 25 |
| Others | 14 | 38 | 12 | 29 | 8 | 20 |
| Beef total | 111 | 208 | 121 | 220 | 131 | 227 |
| *Lamb/sheep* | | | | | | |
| New Zealand | 85 | 163 | 71 | 155 | 77 | 179 |
| Australia | 12 | 20 | 10 | 20 | 13 | 29 |
| Others | 2 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Lamb/sheep total | 99 | 186 | 82 | 177 | 91 | 213 |

[1] Product weight.
*Source:*
HM Customs and Excise.

## Migrant Workers (Cockle Industry)

**Angela Eagle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department is taking to tackle the illegal exploitation of migrant workers in the cockle industry, with particular reference to improving co-ordination with the Home Office. [154634]

**Alun Michael:** The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is one of the departments which participates in Operation Gang master. This multi agency initiative which also includes the Home Office Immigration Service, is designed to collate intelligence and to sponsor joint operations against those gang masters who break the law while operating in the informal economy. This includes the provision of labour to the cockle industry.

Government Departments also undertake individual compliance activity against illegal working. In this context the Immigration Service has conducted three operations with other agencies since June 2003 targeted at illegal working in the cockle industry in the Morecambe Bay area.

The Government are currently considering the details of the Gang master (Licensing) Bill presented by the hon. Member for West Renfrewshire (Jim Sheridan) as a private members bill. This provides for a licensing scheme which would, if introduced, regulate the activities of gang labour providers in the agriculture and related sectors.

## Milk

**Albert Owen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of milk imports to the UK came from Poland in the latest period for which figures are available; and what percentage of UK consumption this represents. [154892]

**Alun Michael:** Trade information up to November 2003 has been received by Defra from Customs and Excise. From January 2001 to 30 November 2003, there are no recorded imports of liquid milk from Poland.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much milk was imported in the last three years, broken down by country of origin; and what percentage of the total milk processed in the UK this was in each case. [155332]

**Alun Michael:** The following table shows *(a)* UK imports of milk and *(b)* percentage of total new UK supply, split down by country of despatch for the years 2000, 2001 and 2002.

*UK imports of milk, 2000–02*

| Country | 2000 | | 2001 | | 2002 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | t'000[1] | Percentage of total new UK supply | t'000[1] | Percentage of total new UK supply | t'000[1] | Percentage of total new UK supply |
| Irish Republic | 62 | 0.4 | 56 | 0.4 | 27 | 0.2 |
| France | 9 | 0.1 | 10 | 0.1 | 11 | 0.1 |
| Germany | 20 | 0.1 | 12 | 0.1 | 6 | 0.0 |
| Denmark | 26 | 0.2 | 10 | 0.1 | 1 | 0.0 |
| Belgium | 7 | 0.1 | 4 | 0.0 | 2 | 0.0 |
| Netherlands | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 0.0 | 2 | 0.0 |
| Others | 2 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Total | 126 | 0.9 | 93 | 0.6 | 49 | 0.3 |

[1] Product weight.
*Source:*
HM Customs and Excise/Defra.

### Ministerial Visit

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she last visited a grouse moor in an official capacity. [154724]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Within the last year I have visited three grouse moors; Ilkley Moor, in August, Brendon Hills in September and the Chilterns in December. I have also accepted an invitation to visit another moorland estate later this year.

### Organic Farms

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many organic farms there were in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley in each of the last three years. [151204]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** As of March 2003, there were 44 organic farms in Lancashire, of which two were located in Chorley. It is not possible to comment on the number of organic farms in each of these areas prior to this date since the Department has only just started to collate this information.

The following table does however show the number of organic farms who were benefiting from aid under the Organic Farming Scheme (OFS) in each of the years 2001, 2002 and 2003:

*Organic farming scheme*

| | *Lancashire* | *Chorley* |
|---|---|---|
| 2001 | 29 | 2 |
| 2002 | 29 | 2 |
| 2003 | 28 | 2 |

The OFS is an entirely voluntary agri-environment scheme which provides financial help during the conversion period to help farmers make the move from conventional to organic farming methods. From 30 May 2003, the OFS was re-launched with an optional option i.e. a maintenance option, which offers payments to all existing organic farmers to encourage the continued management of the land in an environmentally beneficial way.

### Public Bodies

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs who the members of the *(a)* Joint Nature Conservation Committee and *(b)* Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and whether they are remunerated. [151803]

**Mr. Morley:** The information requested is as follows:

*(a) Joint Nature Conservation Committee*

| *Name* | *Term of Office* | *Remuneration (£)* |
|---|---|---|
| *Acting chair* | | |
| Professor David Ingram | 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2005 | 34,765 |
| *Members* | | |
| Professor Peter Doyle | 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2006 | 8,536 |
| Professor Richard Pentreath | 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2006 | 8,536 |

*(b) Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee*

The appointments of the members of the Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee expired on 31 December 2003 and an announcement will be made shortly regarding the future of the committee.

### Raptors

**Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of *(a)* the impact of the UK Raptor Working Group and *(b)* the health of the raptor population; and what plans she has to reconvene the working group. [155177]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Ministers welcomed the final report of the Raptor Working Group, in 2000, as providing Government a consensus view from organisations representing statutory and non-governmental conservation, game-management and racing pigeon interests as to desirable actions to reduce conflicts with birds of prey. The statutory nature conservation agencies and others, co-ordinated through various fora, are taking the detailed recommendations of the Working Group forward. Monitoring of raptor populations provides feedback as to the status of different populations. To this end, the extent and scale of illegal persecution of birds of prey continues to give cause for concern, as does, in particular, the population status of the hen harrier in the UK.

There are no immediate plans to reconvene the Working Group.

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what means of control are available to a landowner where biodiversity on his land is endangered by an excess population of raptors. [154715]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Birds of prey are an important part of the natural biodiversity of the UK and the health of their populations is widely recognised as a key measure of ecosystem health. While we recognise that some specific conflicts occasionally arise with human interests, notably on grouse moors, with racing pigeons, and with lowland gamebirds, we are not aware of any land in the UK where biodiversity more generally is endangered by raptors. The legal means of control for raptors are limited. Government established a Raptor Working Group in 1995, involving a wide range of stakeholder interests, to advise, inter alia "on statutory and other mechanism for the resolution of problems". The UK Raptor Working Group's report, published in 2000, recommends "enhanced enforcement of existing legislation to seek to eliminate illegal killing of birds of prey". A copy of their final report is in the House of Commons Library.

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the current estimated population is of *(a)* buzzards, *(b)* peregrine falcons, *(c)* hobbies, *(d)* merlins, *(e)* ospreys, *(f)* goshawks and *(g)* marsh harriers; and what the population of each was in each of the previous 10 years. [154716]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Annual population statistics do not exist for buzzard, peregrine or merlin. The most recent UK population estimates are set out as follows. The

estimate for buzzard is known to be a significant underestimate, but there has been no formal survey of its current UK population size.

| *Species* | *Year of most recent UK survey* | *Population estimate* |
|---|---|---|
| Buzzard | 1983 (Northern Ireland) and 1988–91 (Great Britain) | 12,000–17,000 pairs |
| Peregrine | 2002 (UK and Isle of Man) | 1,402 pairs |
| Merlin | 1993 and 1994 | 1,300 ± 200 pairs |

Annual UK population estimates are available for the following species, based on the collation of best available information by the Rare Breeding Birds Panel. Collated national totals are not yet available for the 2002 or 2003 breeding seasons.

| | *Hobby (confirmed and possible breeding pairs)* | *Osprey (occupied territories)* | *Goshawk (confirmed and possible breeding pairs)* | *Marsh harrier (breeding females)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1991 | 469 | 73 | 229 | 91 |
| 1992 | 582 | 76 | 243 | 107 |
| 1993 | 493 | 88 | 299 | 110 |
| 1994 | 500 | 95 | 225 | 129 |
| 1995 | 430 | 99 | 319 | 156 |
| 1996 | 454 | 104 | 213 | 136 |
| 1997 | 624 | 111 | 347 | 132 |
| 1998 | 675 | 131 | 249 | 138 |
| 1999 | 553 | 136 | 293 | 145 |
| 2000 | 711 | 151 | 322 | 206 |
| 2001 | 697 | 158 | 255 | 195 |

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what systems her Department has for monitoring the *(a)* numbers and *(b)* impact of raptors in the UK; [154717]

(2) what analysis she has made of the impact of raptors on *(a)* the brown hare population, *(b)* game birds and *(c)* new born lambs. [154718]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Raptor populations in the UK are monitored through a number of schemes. Information on these schemes is comprehensively summarised in table 2.4 of the final report of the UK Raptor Working Group, a copy of which is in the House of Commons Library. There is no national provision for monitoring the impact of raptors in the UK.

There have been no studies conducted on the impacts of raptors on the brown hare population. But the impact of raptors on game birds was studied and reviewed in the report of the UK Raptor Study Group.

With regards to lambs the Scottish Executive and Scottish Natural Heritage, commissioned a study of the interaction between white-tailed eagles and lambs on Mull, in 1999 and 2000.

The results showed that the diet of 11 pairs of white-tailed eagles during the breeding season was species-diverse but included lambs. While most pairs took few lambs, one pair took twice as many lambs as any other pair under study. A lack of alternative prey (rabbits) and the proximity of the nest to a lambing area in 1999 may have been responsible for higher lamb predation then. There was no information as to whether lambs killed by eagles would otherwise have survived.

The study found that the number of lambs was small compared with overall lamb mortality, but sufficient to be an important loss to an individual farmer if eagle predation of lambs was additive and concentrated on one farm. There is no information to suggest that raptors take significant numbers of lambs elsewhere in the UK. Further information on this study is available in: Birds of Prey in a Changing Environment, pp471–479, published in 2003 by The Stationery Office.

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the *(a)* cost and *(b)* efficacy of English Nature's raptor programmes. [154725]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Raptor conservation projects form a small element of English Nature's conservation work. The two significant projects currently ongoing are the Red Kite Reintroduction Programme and the Hen Harrier Recovery Project, with costs to English Nature in 2003–04 of approximately £10,000 and £90, 000 respectively.

The Red Kite Reintroduction Programme is a partnership between English Nature, RSPB and a wide range of other organisations and funding bodies. The majority of funding for this programme comes from external sources, including the Heritage Lottery Fund and sponsorship from private companies. The Red Kite re-establishment programme in England, together with a similar programme in Scotland and effective conservation measures for the species in Wales, has increased Red Kite numbers to a level where they constitute a small but significant proportion of the European total. As was intended at the outset, the project has helped enhance the international status of Red Kite, a species whose global distribution is restricted to Europe.

English Nature's Hen Harrier Recovery Project is now entering its third year. It is staffed by a project coordinator and three seasonal fieldworkers. It has so far been successful in improving our understanding of the status of the hen harrier in England and of the factors affecting breeding numbers and success.

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the outcome of the red kite reintroduction programme in England. [154714]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** The on-going red kite reintroduction programme is widely recognised as one of the most successful projects of its kind. It has already resulted in the re-establishment of self-sustaining red kite populations in three areas of England, with estimates of about 200 breeding pairs in the Chilterns, 30 in the Midlands and 16 in Yorkshire in 2003. Despite the success of the programme, less than 5 per cent. of the bird's potential British range has been recolonised. Further releases are anticipated, and from spring 2004, birds will be released in north-east England in order to encourage recolonisation of this part of the bird's former range.

The red kite programme has also been instrumental in raising public awareness of conservation by focusing interest on a flagship species such as the red kite. It has

also highlighted issues that still adversely affect birds of prey more generally in Britain. This includes the use of illegal poison baits in the open countryside and accidental secondary poisoning by modern, highly toxic rodenticides. The high profile of the red kite project has been utilised to help promote effective measures to tackle these issues, which will benefit a wide range of wildlife in addition to the red kite.

### Single Farm Payments

**Mr. Steen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects the first Single Farm Payments to be made. [155098]

**Alun Michael:** The Single Payment Scheme will be introduced in 2005; the earliest date provided for in the June 2003 CAP reform agreement. The payment window for 2005 payments will open at the start of December 2005 and run to the end of June 2006. We will endeavour to commence payments as soon as possible within that period.

### Trophy Hunting

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the Government's policy on trophy-hunting. [155256]

**Mr. Morley:** Many of the species that are hunted for trophies are listed under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), which is implemented in the EU under Council Regulation 338/97. Under these Regulations, the import of hunting trophies is allowed only where it has been established that this will not be detrimental to the populations concerned. We shall not hesitate to use the powers that are available to refuse the import of hunting trophies where there is evidence that these have been taken illegally, or that such hunting is itself unsustainable.

### Warm Front

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action she is taking to improve the effectiveness of the Warm Front programme following the recommendations of the Fifth Report of the Public Accounts Committee of Session 2003–04. [155117]

**Mr. Morley:** We are currently considering options for the future format of Warm Front. We expect to publish our conclusions as part of the Fuel Poverty Implementation Plan which we plan to publish after the Easter Recess.

### Wind Turbines

**Dr. Murrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research she plans to commission into the effects on health of low frequency noise from wind turbines. [154765]

**Alun Michael:** Defra is not currently researching the effects of low frequency noise from wind turbines on health. However, as part of Defra's research programme on noise and nuisance issues, research has been let to better understand the assessment, management and effects of low frequency noise as a whole.

### World Environment Day

**Mr. Peter Ainsworth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to mark World Environment Day on 5 June; and if she will make a statement. [153743]

**Mr. Morley:** The Department is currently considering a number of options regarding Environment Day but no firm or detailed decisions have yet been made.

## CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### Departmental Minutes

**Mr. Lilley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether it is her Department's policy to make notes of *(a)* meetings and *(b)* telephone conversations involving Ministers; and under what circumstances no notes would be taken. [149531]

**Mr. Caborn** *[holding answer 20 January 2004]*: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport follows the central "Guidance on the Management of Private Office Papers" which makes clear that good record management procedures are necessary not least to ensure accountability and provide an audit trail. Among the records covered by the guidance are Ministers' meetings and telephone conversations.

### Parliamentary Questions

**Mr. Brady:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many days on average her Department took in Session 2002–03 to give a substantive answer to a parliamentary question for ordinary written answer; and what the greatest number of days taken to answer such a question was. [155918]

**Mr. Caborn:** Ministerial colleagues and officials at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport attach great importance to answering parliamentary questions accurately and to time. We aim to ensure that all Members receive a substantive response to an ordinary written question within a working week of it being tabled.

It is not possible to provide information in the format requested without incurring disproportionate cost. However, during the Session 2002–03, 1,224 ordinary written questions were tabled to DCMS, excluding those withdrawn or transferred to another Department. 642 (52.5 per cent.) were answered within the target date. Of those questions remaining, 63.9 per cent. (372 questions) were answered within the next one to five working days.

The greatest number of days taken to answer an ordinary written question was 132 working days.

### Tobacco Task Force

**Mr. Randall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she expects the Tobacco Task Force to *(a)* report next and *(b)* be wound up. [155803]

**Mr. Caborn:** The Tobacco Task Force is not scheduled to deliver any further reports. Any outstanding business of the Tobacco Task Force is expected to be concluded by August 2005 at which time the ban on tobacco sponsorship will cover 'global sports'.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Work Permits (Health Workers)

**Mr. Baron:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many work permits were issued to health workers for each of the top 10 medical specialties in each of the last 10 years. [155984]

**Beverley Hughes:** The total number of work permits approved by the top 10 medical specialties from 2000 to the third quarter of 2003, the period for which information is available, is as follows:

| | *Number of work permits approved* |
|---|---|
| *2000* | |
| Hospital consultants (undefined) | 1,917 |
| Pharmacist | 415 |
| Dentist | 302 |
| Psychiatrist | 121 |
| Radiographer | 99 |
| Occupational Therapist | 90 |
| Optician | 58 |
| Speech Therapist | 42 |
| Anaesthetist | 35 |
| Psychologist | 34 |
| Total | 3,113 |
| *2001* | |
| Hospital consultants (undefined) | 2,141 |
| Pharmacist | 474 |
| Dentist | 319 |
| Physiotherapist | 261 |
| Psychiatrist | 240 |
| Radiographer | 155 |
| Occupational Therapist | 135 |
| Optician | 97 |
| Speech Therapist | 63 |
| Anaesthetist | 43 |
| Total | 3,928 |
| *2002* | |
| Hospital consultants (undefined) | 5,900 |
| Pharmacist | 443 |
| Radiographer | 390 |
| Physiotherapist | 378 |
| Dentist | 357 |
| Psychiatrist | 352 |
| Occupational Therapist | 238 |
| Anaesthetist | 213 |
| Optician | 194 |
| Biomedical Scientist | 181 |
| Total | 8,646 |
| *2003 (Figures for the first three quarters only)* | |
| Hospital consultants (undefined) | 6,970 |
| Radiographer | 364 |
| Pharmacist | 315 |
| Physiotherapist | 311 |
| Dentist | 293 |
| Psychiatrist | 262 |
| Occupational Therapist | 163 |
| Anaesthetist | 156 |
| Speech Therapist | 155 |
| Biomedical Scientist | 130 |
| Total | 9,119 |

### Asylum Seekers

**Mr. Colman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will make a decision on the asylum application ref: R333201 of the Saudi Arabian constituent of the hon. Member for Putney. [154603]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer 12 February 2004]:* As you are aware, this is a complex case, which is still being actively considered. I am unable at this time to say when a decision on the asylum claim will be made. I have written to my hon. Friend on 25 February with further details.

### Car Crime

**Mr. Michael Foster:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* car thefts and *(b)* thefts from cars were reported in Worcester in each year since 1997. [155037]

**Ms Blears:** The table shows the recorded crime figures for the Worcester Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP). Figures for 2002–03 will have been altered by the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard (April 2002). Figures were not collected for any previous financial years.

| | *Theft of a motor vehicle* | *Theft from a motor vehicle* |
|---|---|---|
| 2002–03 | 417 | 1,388 |
| 2001–02 | 353 | 912 |
| 2000–01 | 402 | 753 |
| 1999–2000 | 457 | 906 |

### Crime (Havering and Romford)

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons under the age of 18 were convicted of criminal offences last year in *(a)* Romford and *(b)* the London Borough of Havering. [154853]

**Paul Goggins:** The available information relates to 2002 and shows that 338 persons aged under 18 years were convicted in the Havering Petty Sessional Area, the magistrates court which sits at Romford. The figure includes eight persons convicted at the Crown court, having been committed for trial from Havering PSA.

Statistics for 2003 will be available in the autumn.

### Criminal Records Bureau

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 28 January 2003, *Official Report*, column 440W, regarding the Criminal Records Bureau, if he will place a copy of the survey in the Library. [155052]

**Ms Blears:** Once the report has been finalised, a copy will be made available and placed in the Library.

I will write to you again to confirm when this has been done.

**Mrs. Ellman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will introduce legislation to enable the Criminal Records Bureau to access information from Customs and Excise and Immigration authorities. [155667]

**Ms Blears** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* From the outset, the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) has been able to access conviction data in relation to cases brought by non-"Home Office" police forces and other agencies such as Customs and Excise, through the Police National Computer. Similarly, the CRB would have access to relevant local intelligence held by the police arising from a joint operation involving the police and an agency such as Customs and Excise. We are committed to bringing forward legislation as soon as parliamentary time allows to enable the CRB to access intelligence information held by non-"Home Office" police forces and other law enforcement agencies such as Customs and Excise and, in due course, the Serious Organised Crime Agency. It is currently open to bodies such as Customs and Excise, if they have information that, for example, connects a school employee to the smuggling of child pornography, to notify the relevant authorities of such information.

**Mrs. Ellman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will commission research to assess the effectiveness of the Criminal Records Bureau in protecting children. [155978]

**Ms Blears** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* We shall build on research conducted in early 2003 which showed that employers found information supplied by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) useful in making recruitment decisions, and that some one in five had decided not to appoint someone on the basis of information supplied by the CRB.

## Female Prisoners

**Mrs. Brooke:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many girls aged *(a)* 15, *(b)* 16 and *(c)* 17 years were held in prisons in England and Wales in each of the last five years; in which establishments they were held; and whether there are girls of these ages in prison now. [154217]

**Paul Goggins:** The number of girls aged *(a)* 15, *(b)* 16 and *(c)* 17 held in prisons in each of the last five years and on 30 November 2003, by establishment, is given in the table.

The Youth Justice Board issued a commitment to remove all 16-year-old girls from Prison Service custody by 31 December 2003. This commitment was achieved. However, in exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to detain a 16-year-old girl in a Young Offenders Institution in the future.

*Number of girls aged 15,16 and 17 in prisons by age*

| | *15* | *16* | *17* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *June 1999* | | | |
| Brockhill | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Bullwood Hall | 4 | 4 | 9 |
| Drake Hall | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Eastwood Park | 0 | 1 | 8 |
| Foston Hall | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Holloway | 1 | 3 | 7 |
| New Hall | 1 | 7 | 21 |
| Styal | 1 | 6 | 7 |
| *June 2000* | | | |
| Brockhill | 0 | 2 | 7 |
| Bullwood Hall | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| Drake Hall | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Eastwood Park | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| Holloway | 1 | 3 | 12 |
| Low Newton | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| New Hall | 0 | 6 | 7 |
| Styal | 0 | 8 | 18 |
| *June 2001* | | | |
| Brockhill | 1 | 0 | 6 |
| Bullwood Hall | 2 | 2 | 21 |
| Eastwood Park | 0 | 2 | 9 |
| Holloway | 1 | 1 | 8 |
| Low Newton | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| New Hall | 3 | 7 | 22 |
| Styal | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| *June 2002* | | | |
| Brockhill | 0 | 4 | 9 |
| Bullwood Hall | 2 | 2 | 25 |
| Eastwood Park | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| Holloway | 0 | 3 | 10 |
| Low Newton | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| New Hall | 6 | 15 | 27 |
| Styal | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| *June 2003* | | | |
| Brockhill | 0 | 2 | 7 |
| Bullwood Hall | 0 | 3 | 11 |
| Eastwood Park | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Holloway | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| Low Newton | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| New Hall | 0 | 1 | 34 |
| *November 2003* | | | |
| Brockhill | 0 | 1 | 12 |
| Bullwood Hall | 0 | 0 | 15 |
| Eastwood Park | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| Holloway | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| New Hall | 0 | 1 | 23 |

## Fixed Penalty Notices

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fixed penalty notices have been issued by community support officers; and for what offences. [155055]

**Ms Blears:** Information on how many fixed penalty notices have been issued by Community Support Officers (CSOs) in individual forces is not collected centrally.

CSOs may be given powers to issue penalty notices for a variety of offences. Designating CSOs with these powers, and determining the appropriate recording procedure, is a matter for the Chief Officer in each force which has CSOs. The following fixed penalty notice powers may be given to CSOs:

penalty notice for riding a bicycle on the footpath;

penalty notice for litter;

penalty notice for dog fouling;

penalty notice for disorder offences; and

those CSOs who are also appointed as Traffic Wardens, may issue traffic penalty notices available for that role.

The following are available to CSOs under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act and have not yet been commenced.

penalty notice to parents for truancy—due to commence 27 February;

penalty notice for graffiti—due to commence 31 March; and

penalty notice for fly posting—due to commence 31 March.

### Forensic Science Service

**Mr. Grogan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the Oral Answer of 19 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1073, on the Forensic Science Service, what extra resources the Forensic Science Service requires in *(a)* one-off capital investment and *(b)* additional annual revenue. [155935]

**Ms Blears:** The independent McFarland Review found the Forensic Science Service (FSS) to be significantly under-capitalised, a situation compounded by the constraints of Trading Fund status. The actions we are taking to develop the FSS as a Public Private Partnership (PPP) will ensure it has the commercial freedoms necessary to develop and build on its proven ability as a world leader.

The future financial requirements of the FSS are currently being addressed in work under way to produce an outline business case that will look in greater detail at how best to optimise its performance and economic prospects.

### Identity Theft

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of the individuals arrested in operations against identity theft of British passports have been *(a)* charged and *(b)* convicted; what the sentence was in each case; and how many passports were recovered. [144252]

**Beverley Hughes:** It is not possible for me to provide the hon. Member with the details sought within this question. This information is not routinely collected and could be retrieved only at disproportionate cost.

### Leyhill Prison

**Mr. Peter Ainsworth:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the events which led to the escape of Mr. Roddy Maclean from Leyhill Prison. [154968]

**Paul Goggins:** I received the final investigation report into the abscond of Roderick McLean on 10 February. I am studying the report and will write to the hon. Member.

### New Prisons

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who is carrying out the survey to identify suitable sites for new, large prisons; and what the terms and conditions of the survey are. [153985]

**Paul Goggins:** The Prison Service is actively seeking urban sites that are suitable for the development of prison establishments. The size and function of new prison establishments is determined by the size and mix of the projected population. The details of individual sites cannot be disclosed at this stage for commercial reasons.

### Police

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many plain-clothes officers are deployed by police forces in England and Wales. [155048]

**Ms Blears:** The requested information is not available centrally.

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what provision is made for police drivers to receive *(a)* initial and *(b)* refresher training; and if he will make a statement. [155056]

**Ms Blears:** Police driver training is a matter for individual forces.

A national driver training package was produced in 2000 which was endorsed by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and recommended to forces. It consists of three core courses:

Basic—assessment to ensure driving competence;

Standard—training which may include emergency response driving; and

Advanced—further training to perform roles which require a high level of driving skill.

It is recommended that periodic formal assessments should take place every three to five years, accompanied by refresher training, if required.

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance his Department has published on *(a)* the vision levels that police drivers need to achieve and *(b)* how frequently they should receive eye checks. [155058]

**Ms Blears:** The Home Office has not issued guidance on eyesight standards specific to drivers in the Police Service.

The Association of Police Officers Joint Working Group on Health, Safety and Welfare Medical Sub Group produced guidance on visual driving standards in 1994. This was set as a minimum visual acuity of 6/18.

The guidance also states that advanced drivers should undertake a medical assessment, including eyesight test, every three years until aged 45 and then annually.

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what standards of driving test police drivers are required to meet; and what the failure rate was in each year since 1997. [155059]

**Ms Blears:** Police driving standards, ranging from basic to pursuit, are published on the Association of Chief Police Officers website: www.acpo.police.uk/policies/index.html

There is no central collection of data on failure rates.

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidelines are published by his Department on the disciplinary code for police drivers. [155060]

**Ms Blears:** The Code of Conduct set out in the Police (Conduct) Regulations 1999 sets out the principles which guide police officers' conduct and applies to officers working in all areas and of all ranks.

There is no specific code or principle that relates to police drivers. The Association of Chief Police Officers issues Police Driving Guidelines, which all police forces follow.

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what disciplinary measures are taken against police drivers who are involved in road accidents. [155061]

**Ms Blears:** Discipline measures are taken against those police officers who are found to have breached the Code of Conduct.

Police drivers who are involved in road traffic accidents are not automatically assumed to have breached the Code of Conduct. However, if an allegation or report of a breach is made a disciplinary investigation will be undertaken and this can result in a hearing. If the case is proved against the officer the disciplinary hearing will determine the appropriate sanction, which, if serious can be dismissal from the force.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what Government criteria there are for *(a)* siting of police cells, *(b)* the number of police cells and *(c)* conditions of police cells. [153771]

**Ms Blears:** The number and siting of police cells is a local operational matter for the Chief Constable and the Police Authority.

The conditions of police cells are subject to National and European legislation such as the Health and Safety Act, the Disability Discrimination Act and the Human Rights Act.

The Home Office has issued the Police Design Buildings guidance and intends producing a Design Quality Guide. Police Authorities and forces are also advised on building projects by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE).

**Mr. Kidney:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research his Department has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the displacement of crime from areas subject to intensive policing initiatives to neighbouring areas. [155874]

**Ms Blears:** Research in London has found very little evidence of geographic or functional displacement as a consequence of the Street Crime Initiative (SCI). While there was some evidence of local shifts within the boroughs, this was not considered significant.

Under the Crime Reduction Programme there were a number of evaluations which included some estimation of whether activity had led either to a displacement of crime, or conversely to what is termed a diffusion of benefits (reductions in crime across a larger area, or across a wider range of crime types, than were being targeted).

For instance a report detailing the impact of 63 evaluated Reducing Burglary Initiative (RBI) projects is soon to be published, and this report will include estimates of displacement and diffusion of benefits. Under the RBI, a methodological report was also produced by one of the evaluation teams that examined the complex issue of how one measures crime displacement, and proposed a new statistical technique for doing so.

However, it has to be acknowledged that there remains no agreed methodology for assessing whether policing initiatives result in a displacement of crime or a diffusion of benefits. Nevertheless, past research evidence from outside the Home Office indicates that displacement of crime resulting from police or related crime reduction activities is by no means inevitable, and indeed crime reduction gains usually outweigh any possible displacement of crime.

## Prisons

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the prison health care centre in Liverpool has entered into a commercial cleaning contract. [155248]

**Paul Goggins:** There is no commercial contract for cleaning in the health care centre at Liverpool prison.

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many suicides there have been in safe cells in each of the last two years; [151687]

(2) what estimate he has made of the average costs of a suicide in prison; [151688]

(3) what plans he has to change the design of safe cell units; [151689]

(4) what consultatons his Department has had with suppliers of safe cell units. [151691]

**Paul Goggins:** Safer cells have several design features which can assist staff in the task of managing those at risk from suicide, such as specially designed furniture and fixtures which are manufactured and installed to make the attachment of ligatures very difficult, and access to window bars prevented via non-opening windows with integral ventilation grills. Realistically, no cell can be considered totally 'safe' and the Prison Service's preferred terminology is 'safer cell.' Safer cells can complement (but not replace) a regime providing care for at risk prisoners.

The Prison Service employs the term 'self-inflicted death' rather than 'suicide.' This includes all those deaths where it appears the person may have acted specifically to take his/her own life. In 2002, of the 95 self-inflicted deaths in prisons, four occurred in safer cells. In 2003, of the 94 self-inflicted deaths in prisons, three occurred in safer cells. In 2004 to date (28 January), of the 10 self-inflicted deaths in prison, one has occurred in a safer cell.

An independent evaluation of safer cells, carried out by the Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science in 2003, including interviews with prisoners and staff, revealed that the ventilation design in safer cells may require revision. Otherwise, the Institute concluded that the safer cells programme has much to commend it, and recommended that the programme continue. Three prisoners stated to evaluators that being in a safer cell had prevented them from killing themselves.

The Prison Service is already looking into alternative safer ventilator designs to meet the report's finding. In those cases where ligature points have been identified in particular types of safer cells, remedial action has been taken and guidance issued to prisons. Also, funding has been agreed to progress the design and production of second generation safer cell furniture, building on the original safer cell furniture design, and by using mass production techniques reducing costs and enhancing robustness.

The competition for the framework agreement for the supply and installation of safer cell furniture was procured under European Union rules. A notice was issued in the Official Journal of the European Community in June 2001. Nine companies responded to the Notice, and five were subsequently short-listed to receive the tender documentation. Tenderers' responses were evaluated, both commercially and technically to see which offered overall best value for money, three companies being awarded the framework agreement. Those companies were: MT Hogjaard, Premier Custodial Group Ltd. and Newcastle Joinery Ltd. Premier Custodial Group Ltd. have subsequently withdrawn from the framework. The framework agreement was for a period of twelve months commencing on 23 January 2003. The framework agreement has been extended for six months and is now due to expire 23 July 2004. The Authority does have the right under the Agreement to extend the framework for a further two periods of three months each.

The total cost of a self-inflicted death in prison is £132,660.

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners escaped from prisons in each of the past six years, broken down by *(a)* date, *(b)* category of offender and *(c)* prison; and on what date each was recaptured. [154121]

**Paul Goggins:** The following tables list the information requested for the past five financial years, and so far in the current year. Escapes where the prisoner was recaptured within 15 minutes are not included. The security categories are A, B, C or D for adult male prisoners; A, closed or open for female prisoners and Restricted Status, closed or open for young offenders.

Unsentenced prisoners are not security categorised and are termed Unclassified. Escapes can take place only from closed establishments; an escape from an open prison is counted as an abscond. There have been no category A or YO restricted status escapes since 1995.

*Table 1: Numbers of escapes*

| *Year* | *Number of escapes from prisons* |
|---|---|
| 1998–99 | 28 |
| 1999–2000 | 30 |
| 2000–01 | 10 |
| 2001–02 | 15 |
| 2002–03 | 5 |
| 2003–04 | 10 |

*Table 2: Details of escapes*

| *Establishment* | *Security Category of Prisoner* | *Date of Escape* | *Date of Recapture* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Guys Marsh | C | 5 May 1998 | 5 May 1998 |
| Guys Marsh | C | 5 May 1998 | 5 May 1998 |
| Altcourse | Unclassified | 21 May 1998 | 21 May 1998 |
| Werrington | YO closed | 25 May 1998 | 29 May 1998 |
| Werrington | YO closed | 25 May 1998 | 25 May 1998 |
| Werrington | YO closed | 25 May 1998 | 25 May 1998 |
| Werrington | YO closed | 25 May 1998 | 25 May 1998 |
| Werrington | YO closed | 25 May 1998 | 30 May 1998 |
| Aldington | C | 14 June 1998 | 21 August 1998 |
| Featherstone | C | 19 July 1998 | 20 July 1998 |
| Lindholme | C | 2 September 1998 | 7 September 1998 |
| Eastwood Park | Female closed | 23 September 1998 | 23 September 1998 |
| Everthorpe | C | 26 September 1998 | 1 October 1998 |
| Deerbolt | YO closed | 26 October 1998 | 30 October 1998 |
| Deerbolt | YO closed | 26 October 1998 | 26 November 1998 |
| Glen Parva | YO closed | 5 November 1998 | 27 November 1998 |
| Glen Parva | YO closed | 5 November 1998 | 12 November 1998 |
| Pentonville | C | 26 November 1998 | 26 November 1998 |
| Castington | YO closed | 20 December 1998 | 21 December 1998 |
| Castington | YO closed | 20 December 1998 | 21 December 1998 |
| Littlehey | C | 30 December 1998 | 30 December 1998 |
| Wormwood Scrubs | Unclassified | 31 January 1999 | Not recaptured |
| Featherstone | C | 7 February 1999 | 13 November 1999 |
| Featherstone | C | 7 February 1999 | 30 April 1999 |
| Featherstone | C | 7 February 1999 | 27 October 1999 |
| Feltham | YO closed | 27 February 1999 | 17 March 1999 |
| Lincoln | C | 10 March 1999 | 19 March 1999 |

*Table 2: Details of escapes*

| *Establishment* | *Security Category of Prisoner* | *Date of Escape* | *Date of Recapture* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dover | YO closed | 25 March 1999 | 13 April 1999 |
| Featherstone | C | 1 April 1999 | 12 April 1999 |
| Thorn Cross | YO closed | 23 May 1999 | 23 May 1999 |
| Huntercombe | YO closed | 24 May 1999 | 24 May 1999 |
| Risley | C | 29 May 1999 | 29 May 1999 |
| Parc | Unclassified | 23 June 1999 | 23 June 1999 |
| The Mount | C | 26 June 1999 | 24 December 1999 |
| Rochester | YO closed | 19 July 1999 | 20 July 1999 |
| Rochester | YO closed | 19 July 1999 | 20 July 1999 |
| Rochester | YO closed | 19 July 1999 | 3 August 1999 |
| Lindholme | C | 7 August 1999 | 13 August 1999 |
| Lindholme | C | 7 August 1999 | 15 March 2000 |
| Lindholme | C | 7 August 1999 | 4 September 1999 |
| Styal | Female closed | 8 August 1999 | 8 September 1999 |
| Styal | Female closed | 8 August 1999 | 12 August 1999 |
| Styal | Female closed | 8 August 1999 | 15 August 1999 |
| Styal | Female closed | 8 August 1999 | 14 August 1999 |
| Liverpool | Unclassified | 8 August 1999 | 9 September 1999 |
| Lindholme | C | 23 September 1999 | 23 June 2000 |
| Lindholme | C | 7 October 1999 | 12 October 1999 |
| Lindholme | C | 7 October 1999 | 14 October 1999 |
| Lindholme | C | 7 October 1999 | 14 October 1999 |
| Lindholme | C | 7 October 1999 | 14 October 1999 |
| Haverigg | C | 21 November 1999 | 21 November 1999 |
| Stocken | C | 12 November 1999 | 29 November 1999 |
| Littlehey | C | 26 November 1999 | Not recaptured |
| Hollesley Bay | YO closed | 1 March 2000 | 1 March 2000 |
| Hollesley Bay | YO closed | 1 March 2000 | 1 March 2000 |
| Hollesley Bay | YO closed | 1 March 2000 | 1 March 2000 |
| Deerbolt | YO closed | 12 March 2000 | 12 March 2000 |
| Deerbolt | YO closed | 12 March 2000 | 12 March 2000 |
| Guys Marsh | C | 22 June 2000 | 19 September 2000 |
| Erlestoke | C | 23 July 2000 | 23 July 2000 |
| Blantyre House | C | 30 August 2000 | 22 August 2002 |
| Portland | YO closed | 1 October 2000 | 1 October 2000 |
| Risley | C | 16 November 2000 | 6 February 2001 |
| Brinsford | YO closed | 29 December 2000 | 7 August 2001 |
| Downview | D | 5 January 2001 | 19 January 2001 |
| Kirklevington | C | 10 January 2001 | 7 February 2001 |
| Lancaster Castle | C | 14 January 2001 | 14 January 2001 |
| Lancaster Castle | C | 14 January 2001 | 14 January 2001 |
| Guys Marsh | C | 3 July 2001 | 24 July 2001 |
| Guys Marsh | C | 3 July 2001 | 9 July 2001 |
| Guys Marsh | C | 3 July 2001 | 24 July 2001 |
| Feltham | YO closed | 29 July 2001 | 14 September 2001 |
| Wealstun | C | 14 August 2001 | 11 October 2001 |
| Grendon | B | 30 September 2001 | 30 September 2001 |
| Grendon | B | 30 September 2001 | 1 October 2001 |
| Grendon | C | 30 September 2001 | 1 October 2001 |
| Doncaster | Unclassified | 8 November 2001 | 9 January 2001 |
| Winchester | B | 10 December 2001 | 15 December 2001 |
| Erlestoke | C | 30 January 2002 | 2 February 2002 |
| The Verne | C | 7 February 2002 | 14 March 2002 |
| Norwich | Unclassified | 14 February 2002 | 16 February 2002 |
| Rye Hill | B | 18 March 2002 | 19 March 2002 |
| Rye Hill | B | 18 March 2002 | 26 March 2002 |
| Brixton | Unclassified | 30 June 2002 | Not recaptured |
| Norwich | C | 18 July 2002 | 31 July 2002 |
| Cardiff | Unclassified | 10 November 2002 | 12 December 2002 |
| Littlehey | C | 13 November 2002 | 20 November 2002 |
| Weare | C | 9 February 2003 | 19 February 2003 |
| Brinsford | YO closed | 26 May 2003 | 28 May 2003 |
| Brinsford | YO closed | 26 May 2003 | 26 May 2003 |
| Brinsford | YO closed | 26 May 2003 | 26 May 2003 |
| Brinsford | YO closed | 26 May 2003 | 26 May 2003 |
| Dartmoor | C | 16 June 2003 | 22 June 2003 |
| Dartmoor | C | 16 June 2003 | 9 July 2003 |
| Lindholme | C | 23 July 2003 | 27 July 2003 |
| Bullingdon | C | 8 August 2003 | 26 August 2003 |
| Parc | Unclassified | 10 October 2003 | Not recaptured |
| Leicester | Unclassified | 8 December 2003 | 9 December 2003 |

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list by prison the number of out-of-cell hours that prisoners are permitted. [152709]

**Paul Goggins:** The average number of daily hours that prisoners have spent out of their cells on weekdays and weekends during the financial year to the end of December is given in the table.

| *Establishment* | *Weekdays* | *Weekends* |
|---|---|---|
| Acklington | 10.4 | 9.2 |
| Albany | 10.0 | 7.4 |
| Altcourse | 13.0 | 13.0 |
| Ashfield | 10.0 | 9.3 |
| Ashwell | 15.5 | 15.5 |
| Askham Grange | 16.0 | 16.0 |
| Aylesbury | 8.7 | 6.2 |
| Bedford | 7.9 | 5.7 |
| Belmarsh | 8.6 | 4.4 |
| Birmingham | 7.6 | 6.9 |
| Blakenhurst | 7.9 | 7.5 |
| Blantyre House | 15.3 | 15.3 |
| Blundeston | 10.1 | 7.4 |
| Brinsford | 8.7 | 6.3 |
| Bristol | 8.0 | 6.0 |
| Brixton | 4.5 | 3.6 |
| Brockhill | 8.7 | 7.1 |
| Buckley Hall | 13.4 | 13.1 |
| Bullingdon | 10.2 | .6.4 |
| Bullwood Hall | 11.1 | 7.3 |
| Camp Hill | 10.7 | 8.5 |
| Canterbury | 7.5 | 7.1 |
| Cardiff | 9.1 | 5.9 |
| Castington | 7.7 | 5.3 |
| Channings Wood | 9.8 | 6.9 |
| Chelmsford | 9.7 | 7.3 |
| Coldingley | 12.5 | 10.0 |
| Cookham Wood | 7.7 | 7.5 |
| Dartmoor | 9.3 | 7.0 |
| Deerbolt | 9.1 | 5.4 |
| Doncaster | 11.3 | 11.3 |
| Dorchester | 11.6 | 10.6 |
| Dovegate | 12.6 | 11.2 |
| Dover | 12.0 | 11.9 |
| Downview | 10.6 | 9.3 |
| Drake Hall | 16.0 | 16.0 |
| Durham | 9.8 | 4.7 |
| East Sutton Park | 15.1 | 17.0 |
| Eastwood Park | 10.7 | 8.3 |
| Edmunds Hill | 9.5 | 9.5 |
| Elmley | 8.6 | 7.7 |
| Erlestoke | 11.0 | 10.0 |
| Everthorpe | 11.1 | 8.8 |
| Exeter | 8.5 | 7.5 |
| Featherstone | 8.2 | 10.1 |
| Feltham | 6.9 | 9.5 |
| Ford | 13.3 | 13.3 |
| Forest Bank | 12.4 | 7.7 |
| Foston Hall | 10.5 | 9.1 |
| Frankland | 9.3 | 7.0 |
| Full Sutton | 9.5 | 7.5 |
| Garth | 10.0 | 7.5 |
| Gartree | 10.0 | 7.3 |
| Glen Parva | 7.0 | 3.5 |
| Gloucester | 6.8 | 5.0 |
| Grendon | 14.0 | 11.7 |
| Guys Marsh | 8.2 | 7.4 |
| Haslar | 11.2 | 10.4 |
| Haverigg | 11.9 | 11.9 |
| Hewell Grange | 24.0 | 24.0 |
| High Down | 6.2 | 4.4 |
| Highpoint | 10.0 | 7.5 |
| Hindley | io.q | 8.9 |
| Hollesley Bay | 15.5 | 15.5 |
| Holloway | 7.1 | 6.4 |
| Holme House | 5.4 | 4.9 |
| Hull | 5.6 | 5.2 |
| Huntercombe | 9.9 | 8.6 |
| Kingston | 12.1 | 7.7 |
| Kirkham | 13.5 | 13.0 |
| Kirklevington | 19.0 | 19.0 |
| Lancaster | 10.0 | 7.5 |
| Lancaster Farms | 9.9 | 8.6 |
| Latchmere House | 19.0 | 19.0 |
| Leeds | 8.7 | 8.0 |
| Leicester | 9.3 | 6.5 |
| Lewes | 7.5 | 6.5 |
| Leyhill | 16.01 | 16.0 |
| Lincoln | 6.2 | 1.3 |
| Lindholme | 11.0 | 7.8 |
| Littlehey | 9.1 | 8.6 |
| Liverpool | 7.1 | 5.4 |
| Long Lartin | 9.2 | 9.2 |
| Low Newton | 10.5 | 8.4 |
| Lowdham Grange | 12.8 | 12.8 |
| Maidstone | 8.8 | 6.6 |
| Manchester | 10.8 | 8.5 |
| Moorland | 11.4 | 5.1 |
| Morton Hall | 15.0 | 15.0 |
| Mount | 8.4 | 6.7 |
| New Hall | 11.0 | 9.3 |
| North Sea Camp | 21.6 | 21.6 |
| Northallerton | 8.3 | 6.4 |
| Norwich | 8.4 | 6.6 |
| Nottingham | 7.8 | 5.0 |
| Onley | 8.3 | 7.6 |
| Parc | 9.8 | 10.0 |
| Parkhurst | 8.9 | 6.8 |
| Pentonville | 7.6 | 7.0 |
| Portland | 8.2 | 5.6 |
| Preston | 8.2 | 6.5 |
| Ranby | 9.9 | 9.1 |
| Reading | 7.9 | 6.6 |
| Risley | 10.5 | 10.1 |
| Rochester | 6.7 | 6.5 |
| Rye Hill | 11.7 | 11.6 |
| Send | 12.9 | 12.9 |
| Shepton Mallet | 10.5 | 9.1 |
| Shrewsbury | 9.4 | 17.1 |
| Stafford | 9.6 | 4.8 |
| Standford Hill | 12.0 | 12.0 |
| Stocken | 10.8 | 6.2 |
| Stoke Heath | 10.3 | 10.1 |
| Styal | 11.6 | 11.4 |
| Sudbury | 20.7 | 20.7 |
| Swaleside | 9.8 | 7.3 |
| Swansea. | 8.9 | 8.6 |
| Swinfen Hall | 10.4 | 6.8 |
| Thorn Cross | 12.5 | 15.3 |
| Usk·Prescoed | 14.5 | 13.4 |
| Verne | 16.0 | 16.0 |
| Wakefield | 9.0 | 6.5 |
| Wandsworth | 6.0 | 3.9 |
| Warren Hill | 10.3 | 9.0 |
| Wayland | 10.3 | 8.8 |
| Wealstun | 12.0 | 12.0 |
| Weare | 9.7 | 8.9 |
| Wellingborough | 9.8 | 8.0 |
| Werrington | 11.0 | 9.7 |
| Wetherby | 9.8 | 6.1 |
| Whatton | 12.0 | 9.2 |
| Whitemoor | 9.7 | 7.5 |
| Winchester | 8.8 | 6.5 |
| Wolds | 12.6 | 10.4 |
| Woodhill | 8.9 | 7.5 |
| Wormwood Scrubs | 7.1 | 5.4 |
| Wymott | 10.7 | 10.1 |

### Sentences

**Mrs. Brooke:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1290W, on sentences, whether the extension of penalty fines to 10 to 16-year-olds outlined in the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 will be introduced before the publication of the evaluation of the operation of the scheme for 16 to 17-year-olds. [155451]

**Ms Blears** *[holding answer 24 February 2004]:* We will be evaluating the operation of the scheme for 16 to 17-year-olds, on an interim basis after six months and again after 12 months. We expect to pilot penalty notices for disorder in some areas for 10 to 15-year-olds later this year, taking account of early experience with 16 and 17-year-olds.

### Serious Organised Crime Agency

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the proposed total headcount is for *(a)* agents, *(b)* management and *(c)* administrators for the Serious Organised Crime Agency; and what the headcount is for the agencies that it will replace. [155115]

**Ms Blears:** It is expected that the new agency will have approaching 5,000 staff but it is too early to provide a breakdown of that number into agents, management and administrators. As precise details of all the numbers to be transferred have yet to be determined, it is not possible to provide a comprehensive indication of the headcount for the agencies that it will replace.

### Women Prisoners (Drug Offences)

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many women are in prison for *(a)* drug offences, *(b)* drug trafficking offences and *(c)* supply offences; and of these groups of women, what percentage (i) have dependent children, (ii) are UK nationals and (iii) are non-UK nationals, giving countries of nationality in each case. [143408]

**Paul Goggins:** Information as at the end of June 2003 on the number of women in prison in England and Wales for drug offences, drug trafficking offences and supply offences, and the percentage of these who are UK nationals and non UK nationals are given in the following tables.

Information on the number of women in prison for drugs offences who have dependent children is not available.

*Females by custody type and drugs offence type and nationality*

| | *Unlawful import/ export* | *Unlawful supply* | *Possession with intent to supply* | *Possession* | *Other drugs offences* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *UK nationals* | | | | | |
| Sentenced | 278 | 33 | 143 | 276 | 9 |
| Untried | 18 | 4 | 11 | 33 | 0 |
| Convicted unsentenced | 9 | 7 | 6 | 27 | 0 |
| Fine defaulters | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Non-criminals | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| *Foreign nationals* | | | | | |
| Sentenced | 508 | 4 | 20 | 41 | 4 |
| Untried | 26 | 1 | 4 | 11 | 0 |
| Convicted unsentenced | 12 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| Fine defaulters | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| *Nationality not known* | | | | | |
| Sentenced | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

*Females by drug offences and nationality*

*Percentage*

| | *Unlawful import/ export* | *Unlawful supply* | *Possession with intent to supply* | *Possession* | *Other drugs offences* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| United Kingdom | 36 | 86 | 87 | 88 | 64 |
| Nationality Missing | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Belgium | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Brazil | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Colombia | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| France | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Germany | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Ghana | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| India | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 |
| Irish Republic | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Jamaica | 38 | 11 | 10 | 6 | 14 |
| Netherlands | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Nigeria | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Portugal | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| South Africa | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Spain | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

*Females by drug offences and nationality*

*Percentage*

| | *Unlawful import/ export* | *Unlawful supply* | *Possession with intent to supply* | *Possession* | *Other drugs offences* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| United States | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| Venezuela | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Other | 4 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

*Note:*
Figures are rounded and therefore may not add to 100.

### Young Offenders Institutions

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether resources available for young offenders institutions will be increased during 2004. [155254]

**Paul Goggins:** At this time baselines for individual establishments have been finalised for 2004–05. The position will be clearer when the distribution of budgets within the Prison Service has been actioned during March.

## EDUCATION AND SKILLS

### Child Trafficking

**Mr. Chaytor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what resources are available under the Children Act 1989 for local authorities to care for child victims of trafficking; and if he will make a statement. [152341]

**Margaret Hodge:** It is for local councils to decide the level of resources they allocate to services for children in their area, including the child victims of trafficking.

Overall the local government settlement has increased resources for Children's Social Services from almost £3.7 billion in 2003–04 to just over £4.0 billion in 2004–05. This provides for an increase in total resources of some 8.7 per cent. overall.

### Children's Fund

**Mr. Byers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what reductions he intends to make in the allocation of funding to the Children's Fund; what consultation has taken place with the key stakeholders; what estimate has been made of the impact of funding reductions on individual programmes; and if he will make a statement. [154880]

**Margaret Hodge** *[holding answer 12 February 2004]:* Allocations to Children's Fund partnerships were originally planned to reduce by £24.6 million in 2004–05, from £164.6 million to £140 million. However, following representations from affected projects I have been able to identify additional resources outside the programme which means that a total of £160 million plus a contingency amount of £6 million will be available to partnerships in 2004–05.

I have consulted key stakeholders through the Children's Fund Advisory Forum which is made up of the main voluntary sector organisations involved in the Fund, the LGA and the ADSS. The Department is assessing the impact of its decisions directly with partnerships through both the Advisory Forum and its regional teams. Final decisions on 2005–06 will not be taken until I know the outcome of the 2004 Spending Review.

### Civil Servants

**Dr. Cable:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many civil servants, broken down by grade, there are in the Department and the agencies for which the Department is responsible; and what the figures were in January 1997. [150271]

**Mr. Charles Clarke:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Alexander) on 10 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1294W.

The number of staff in the former Department for Education and Employment as at 1 January 1997 was 37,598. This comprised 4,999 in the core Department (including the Government Offices) and 32,599 in the former Employment Service Agency. A grade breakdown could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

### Education Funding

**David Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much was spent from central government funds per pupil on *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary education in (i) the East Riding of Yorkshire and (ii) the UK in each of the last five years. [155329]

**Mr. Miliband:** My right hon. Friend is responsible for education in England only, so the following table gives a comparison between the East Riding of Yorkshire and the England average.

*Per pupil funding from 1999–2000 to 2003–04*

| | *East Riding of Yorkshire* | | | *England average* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *SSA/EFS* | *Grants* | *Total* | *SSA/EFS* | *Grants* | *Total* |
| *Primary (aged 3–10)* | | | | | | |
| 1999–2000 | 2,210 | 150 | 2,350 | 2,410 | 150 | 2,560 |
| 2000–01 | 2,270 | 310 | 2,580 | 2,470 | 310 | 2,780 |
| 2001–02 | 2,330 | 390 | 2,730 | 2,520 | 420 | 2,940 |
| 2002–03 | 2,320 | 430 | 2,750 | 2,570 | 450 | 3,010 |
| 2003–04 | 2,620 | 300 | 2,930 | 2,850 | 350 | 3,200 |
| *Secondary (aged 11–15)* | | | | | | |
| 1999–2000 | 3,000 | 80 | 3,080 | 3,250 | 100 | 3,360 |
| 2000–01 | 3,110 | 230 | 3,340 | 3,370 | 270 | 3,630 |
| 2001–02 | 3,150 | 320 | 3,470 | 3,420 | 400 | 3,820 |
| 2002–03 | 3,200 | 340 | 3,530 | 3,480 | 420 | 3,900 |
| 2003–04 | 3,140 | 370 | 3,520 | 3,460 | 500 | 3,960 |

*Notes:*
1. Figures reflect education SSA/EFS settlement (all sub-blocks). Total funding also includes all revenue grants in DfES Departmental Expenditure Limits relevant to EPS pupils aged 3–10 and 11–15.
2. Figures exclude EMAs and grants not allocated at LEA level and the pensions transfer to EPS and LSC for 2003–04.
3. The pupil numbers used are those underlying the EPS/EPS settlement calculations plus PLASC three-year-old maintained pupils and estimated three to four-year-olds funded through state support in maintained and other educational institutions where these are not included in the SSA pupil numbers.
4. 2003–04 and 2002–03 figures are provisional estimates as some grants have not yet been finalised/audited. Data are as reported by LEAs.
5. Real terms figures are based on GDP deflators as at 6 January 2004 (2002–03 prices).
6. Per pupil figures are rounded to the nearest £10 so may not sum.

### Employer Training Pilot

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the roll-out of the Employer Training Pilot. [155808]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* Employer Training Pilots (ETP) were introduced in six local Learning and Skills Council areas in September 2002 to test new measures to improve access to training. ETPs offer a package of support to help low-skilled people in work gain their first level 2 or basic skills qualification. The pilots were subsequently extended for a further year (to August 2004) and doubled in number to cover a total of 12 LSC areas.

An independent evaluation of the first year of the pilots, published in December 2003, showed that ETPs are proving successful at engaging employers and their low-skilled employees in training. Building on this success, the Pre-Budget Report in December announced that ETPs are being extended for a third year and that a further six pilots will be launched in September 2004. This will mean that the pilots cover over a third of England and will enable the Government to explore further the impact of the pilots on the demand for training.

My officials are currently consulting with the Learning and Skills Council's Regional Directors over the locations for the new pilots and an announcement will be made in due course.

### Foundation Degrees

**Chris Grayling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students have started Foundation Degrees since they were introduced; and what proportion have completed the courses. [142032]

**Alan Johnson:** The latest data from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), showing the number of students starting Foundation Degrees, is given in the table. Completion rates are not calculated by the Department, but figures published in January by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) show that in 2002/03, 1,100 students successfully completed Foundation Degrees.

We welcome the increase in numbers. We now need to build on this as we look to make Foundation Degrees the standard two year qualification at this level.

*Students starting Foundation Degrees HE and FE institutions in England*

| *Academic year* | *Full-time* | *Part-time* |
|---|---|---|
| 2001/02 | 2,331 | 1,922 |
| 2002/03 | 4,805 | 4,170 |
| 2003/04 | 8,274 | 6,966 |

*Source:*
Higher Education Funding Council for England.

### Millennium Volunteers

**Mr. Goodman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when the Department will announce which organisations will deliver the Millennium Volunteers programme. [155930]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* Local projects should now know their funding allocations for the period to March 2006. We hope to notify national projects about their allocations in the near future.

### Specialist Schools

**Mr. Chaytor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* specialist schools and *(b)* non-specialist schools are designated under section 102 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998; and how many and what percentage of pupils they have selected in each year since their designation. [155624]

**Mr. Miliband:** The Department does not collect data on the number of schools which have partial selection by aptitude as part of their admission arrangements; or how many individual pupils are selected as a result of such tests. However, we do know that of the 685 specialist schools operational in September 2001, 6 per cent. reported that they were selecting a percentage of their pupils on aptitude in a chosen specialist subject.

### Student Finances

**Mr. Clappison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 5 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1030W, by the Minister for Education (Lifelong Learning and Higher Education), to the hon. Member for Hertsmere, on student finance, if he will break down the financial assistance available to students by each £1,000 band of family income between £15,000 and £35,000 under *(a)* the present arrangements and *(b)* his proposed arrangements for higher education funding from 2006–07. [154768]

**Alan Johnson:** The following table summarises the financial assistance available to students by each £1,000 of income between £15,000 and £35,000 under the present arrangements:

*Present arrangements—2003/04*

£

| *Residual income* | *Fee remission* | *Maintenance loan* |
|---|---|---|
| £15,000 | 1,125 | 4,000 |
| £16,000 | 1,125 | 4,000 |
| £17,000 | 1,125 | 4,000 |
| £18,000 | 1,125 | 4,000 |

*Present arrangements—2003/04*

£

| *Residual income* | *Fee remission* | *Maintenance loan* |
|---|---|---|
| £19,000 | 1,125 | 4,000 |
| £20,000 | 1,125 | 4,000 |
| £21,000 | 1,077 | 4,000 |
| £22,000 | 972 | 4,000 |
| £23,000 | 866 | 4,000 |
| £24,000 | 761 | 4,000 |
| £25,000 | 656 | 4,000 |
| £26,000 | 551 | 4,000 |
| £27,000 | 445 | 4,000 |
| £28,000 | 340 | 4,000 |
| £29,000 | 235 | 4,000 |
| £30,000 | 129 | 4,000 |
| £31,000 | 24 | 4,000 |
| £32,000 | 0 | 3,919 |
| £33,000 | 0 | 3,814 |
| £34,000 | 0 | 3,708 |
| £35,000 | 0 | 3,603 |

*Note:*
Maintenance loan rates given are for students living away from home and studying outside London (and not in the final year of their course).

I refer my hon. Friend to my response to the hon. Member for Epsom and Ewell (Chris Grayling) on 10 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1398W, that indicates the size of loan available under the arrangements outlined in the Government's discussion paper "Moving toward a single combined grant for higher education".

More detailed information will be available in due course as details such as tapers for the single combined grant are finalised.

### UK Students Overseas

**Mr. Heathcoat-Amory:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many UK students studied abroad on full-time courses in *(a)* the EU, *(b)* the USA and *(c)* the Commonwealth in the most recent year for which figures are available. [140898]

**Alan Johnson:** The latest available information is tabulated as follows. The figures are from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and show the number of students studying overseas. Mode of study is not available.

*Students from the UK in tertiary education abroad: 2001*

| *Country of study* | *Student numbers* |
|---|---|
| *European Union: (reporting)* | |
| Austria | 214 |
| Belgium | 231 |
| Denmark | 388 |
| Finland | 147 |
| France | 2,721 |
| Germany | 2,397 |
| Ireland | 1,939 |
| Italy | 145 |
| Netherlands | 648 |
| Spain | 2,363 |
| Sweden | 791 |
| Total | 11,984 |
| *USA* | |
| Total | 7,059 |

*Students from the UK in tertiary education abroad: 2001*

| *Country of study* | *Student numbers* |
|---|---|
| *Commonwealth Countries (reporting)* | |
| Australia | 4,529 |
| Malaysia | 66 |
| New Zealand | 149 |
| Total | 4,744 |

*Source:*
"Education at a glance 2003" published by OECD

### Universities

**Helen Jackson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the age profile is of first degree entrants to UK universities *(a)* in 2003–04, *(b)* five years ago and *(c)* 10 years ago, broken down by those aged (i) 20–30, (ii) 31–40, (iii) 41–50, (iv) 51–60 and (v) 60 years and over. [142600]

**Alan Johnson:** The latest available data are shown in the table. Comparable data for earlier years is not held centrally.

*Full-time First Degree Entrants to UK HE Institutions*[1]

| *Age* | *1994/95* | *1997/98* | *2002/03* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Under 20 years | 181,630 | 212,270 | 235,141 |
| 20–30 years | 97,465 | 96,444 | 96,661 |
| 31–40 years | 16,301 | 16,090 | 14,523 |
| 41–50 years | 5,330 | 4,985 | 5,011 |
| 51–60 years | 846 | 984 | 987 |
| 61 years or over | 249 | 346 | 257 |
| Unknown | 474 | 954 | 210 |
| Total | 302,295 | 332,073 | 352,790 |

[1] Figures cover all domiciles and are based on a census count as at 1 December.

*Note:*
Figures for 2002/03 are provisional.

*Source:*
Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Cyprus Travel Advice

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what advice he provided to tourists inquiring about the safety of travel to Cyprus in mid to late March 2003. [155515]

**Mr. MacShane** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* Our advice to British holidaymakers and other visitors with effect from 19 March 2003 was:

"*Terrorism*: There have been a number of car bombs in the Limassol area and Nicosia over the past few years. Although the perpetrators have not been identified, these activities are restricted for the most part to in-fighting among the criminal fraternity."

"But UK nationals should be aware of the risk of indiscriminate terrorist attacks, in all countries of the world, against civilian targets in public places, including tourist sites."

"Cyprus is not directly affected by the situation in Iraq. We therefore see no reason for holiday plans to be changed. Please monitor the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website for updates to the travel advice for Cyprus, or contact Consular Section at the British High Commission in Nicosia."

### European Union (Criminal Injuries Compensation)

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what schemes are available for UK citizens injured in *(a)* an EU member state and *(b)* an EU accession state to have access to criminal injuries compensation. [155804]

**Mr. MacShane:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Chesham and Amersham (Mrs. Gillan) on 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1254W.

Historical information about the amount of compensation paid and the number of applications received during one year under the state compensation schemes in each EU member state was given at paragraph 3.8 of the European Commission's Green Paper, 'Compensation to crime victims' (reference COM(2001)536) issued on 28 September 2001. The paper can be accessed via the Internet at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/off/green/index_en.htm.

### Chechnya

**Dr. Julian Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the extent of human rights abuses by Russian forces in Chechnya. [146684]

**Mr. Rammell:** We continue to be concerned over the human rights situation in Chechnya and consistent reports of human rights abuses. We are especially concerned over reports of rising numbers of disappearances and abductions. I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to him on 12 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 524W, for our most recent representations in this area.

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of Japan on the current human rights situation in *(a)* North Korea and *(b)* China. [155573]

**Mr. Mullin:** We are concerned about reports of serious human rights violations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and China. We have regular human rights dialogues with the Japanese Government both in Japan and the UK. The most recent round of talks took place on 30 January 2004. Human rights issues in both DPRK and China were raised in these talks. We are consulting closely with the Japanese on how to handle the question of North Korea at the forthcoming Commission on Human Rights, given the DPRK's failure to respond to the resolution passed there at the Commission's 2003 session.

## INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Parliamentary Questions

**Mr. Brady:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many days on average his Department took in Session 2002–03 to give a substantive answer to a parliamentary question for ordinary written answer; and what the greatest number of days taken to answer such a question was. [155917]

**Hilary Benn:** In Session 2002–03, DFID was asked a total of nearly 2,500 parliamentary questions, the information requested is not held centrally and we are unable to provide it without incurring disproportionate cost.

The effective handling of parliamentary questions is an issue to which my ministerial colleague and I attach great importance. We try to respond to parliamentary questions within the parliamentary deadlines whenever possible.

## CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

### House Prices (Seaside Towns)

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the average house price was in each ward in each principal seaside town in England and Wales in the latest month for which figures are available, with figures for Welsh Seaside Town clusters disaggregated. [154933]

**Mr. Lammy:** The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. My hon. Friend might be interested in viewing the property price data on the Land Registry's website. This provides average sale prices for properties in England and Wales down to postcode sector level for each county or unitary authority.

### Outstanding Debt (Preston Courts)

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much outstanding debt is held in the Preston courts. [155403]

**Mr. Leslie:** Preston county court issued 4,472 claims for money in 2002 and 4,215 in 2003. All civil county courts have a computerised record system. The system, however, is unable to collate a figure to show how much debt claims have been issued for. As the debtor has to make the payment direct to the creditor there is no access to information of the value of debt outstanding to creditors within the court. The only way to access up to date information would be to extract the court files from Preston county court and to contact each creditor individually to ask how much debt is outstanding. This information could be obtained only at a disproportionate cost.

At the end of 2003, the total outstanding debt at Preston magistrates court for financial penalties was £1,631,433.00. This figure includes the Crown court fines, costs, Crown Prosecution Service costs, Legal Aid and compensation that is collected by the magistrates court. The figure does not include civil financial orders (maintenance, forfeiture of recognisance etc.) as no data is collected on civil matters.

### Postal Voting

**Mr. Jenkin:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs on what evidence he based his decision that *(a)* Yorkshire and the Humber and *(b)* the North West region was suitable to pilot all-postal voting in the June elections. [155139]

**Mr. Leslie:** The European Parliamentary and Local Elections (Pilots) Bill, currently in Parliament, will allow pilots of innovative voting methods at this year's European and combined local elections. The Government asked the Electoral Commission to recommend where pilots should take place and the Commission published its recommendations on 8 December 2003.

The Commission identified the North East and East Midlands regions as 'highly suitable' and 'suitable'. The Commission also identified four regions that 'could potentially be suitable', These were, in descending order of suitability, Scotland, Yorkshire and the Humber, the North West and the West Midlands. It regarded the remaining regions as 'not suitable'.

The Government accepted the recommendations regarding the North East and East Midlands on 16 December. Other options were then carefully considered. An approach of holding discussions with electoral administrators in the potentially suitable regions was decided upon, to establish what their concerns were and whether or not these could be addressed.

Scottish Returning Officers had written to the Commission expressing various concerns. While Government viewed these as being about the same practical issues that affect the other regions, and despite efforts to allay their concerns, the Returning Officers remained concerned about their capacity to ensure an effective election. As a consequence of these concerns about operational capability, the Government decided not to impose a pilot in Scotland.

There has already been positive experience of all-postal pilots in local elections in Yorkshire and the Humber and the North West. Discussions with these regions showed that they were confident that successful pilots could be arranged for June and the North West in particular had commenced work to prepare for a possible pilot. It was, therefore, decided that both of these regions should hold pilots, in addition to the two regions already announced.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Business Support

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much funding has been allocated by her Department to supporting *(a)* science, *(b)* innovation, *(c)* enterprise and *(d)* competition for each year between 1997 and 2007 in (i) real terms and (ii) as a proportion of the overall departmental budget; and if she will make a statement. [153534]

**Ms Hewitt:** The Government have invested heavily in the science and engineering base. In the current spending review period the science budget is growing at 10 per cent. year-on-year in real terms, building on the average 7 per cent. growth over the previous spending review period, and reaching just short of £3 billion by 2005–06. The recent announcement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer of his intention to develop a 10-year investment framework for science and investment, to be announced at the time of the next spending review settlement, signals the Government's continuing long-term commitment to science.

Successive departmental reports have provided breakdowns and explanations of my Department's expenditure. However, figures can be provided only on a consistent (resource) basis from 1998–99; further, spending plans for 2006–07 have not yet been agreed, so figures are shown up to 2005–06 only.

The following table is based on information published in the 1999 to 2003 Departmental Reports, where more details and explanations can be found:

| | *Years*[1] | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *1998–99* | *1999–2000* | *2000–01* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* | *2003–04* | *2004–05* | *2005–06* |
| | *Outturn* | *Outturn* | *Outturn* | *Outturn* | *Working provision* | *Plans* | *Plans* | *Plans* |
| *Science*[3] | | | | | | | | |
| Real (£ million)[2] | 1,764.7 | 1,798.6 | 1,894.7 | 1,944.9 | 2,222.0 | 2,349.0 | 2,566.5 | 2,810.8 |
| Percentage of total | 53 | 38 | 27 | 29 | 28 | 40 | 57 | 53 |
| *Innovation*[4] | | | | | | | | |
| Real (£ million) | 298.2 | 287.5 | 307.4 | 303.2 | 322.3 | 333.0 | 339.5 | 354.3 |
| Percentage of total | 9 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 7 |
| *Enterprise*[5] | | | | | | | | |
| Real (£ million) | 166.8 | 208.4 | 293.8 | 283.8 | 423.4 | 394.0 | 348.7 | 358.6 |
| Percentage of total | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| *Competition*[6] | | | | | | | | |
| Real (£ million) | 6.5 | 8.7 | 9.2 | 10.5 | 25.9 | 26.5 | 28.9 | 29.5 |
| Percentage of total | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |

[1] Figures are shown from 1998–99 (the first year for which resource information was produced) to 2005–06 (the final year of the current Spending Review period).

[2] Figures are shown in real terms at 2002–03 prices (using GDP deflators from the HM Treasury website) and as a proportion of total DTI expenditure (resource and capital), as listed on pages 190 and 194 of "Central Government Supply Estimates 2003–04 Supplementary Budgetary Information" (Cm 5797, May 2003), where a breakdown is available.

[3] The figures from the Departmental Reports have been revised to ensure a consistent (resource) basis because prior to 2002–03 reporting of the Research Councils' expenditure was on a cash (grant in aid) basis.

[4] Outturn not available for 2001–02 due to a change in the budget structure, so a 'working provision' is provided. Excludes "Office of Science and Technology" expenditure on space (except for 2003–04 plans, which include BNSC budgets transferring to the Science budget from 2003–04).

[5] Covers expenditure on Small Businesses and Enterprise (Small Business Service).
[6] Expenditure shown for the Competition Commission and (from 2003–04) the Competition Service.
*Source:*
1999–2003 Departmental Reports (Cm 4211, March 1999; Cm 4611, April 2000; Cm 5112, March 2001; Cm 5416, June 2002; and Cm 5916, May 2003).

### Departmental Staff

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 2 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 642–43W, to the hon. Member for Twickenham (Dr. Cable) if she will break down the staff in each grade by *(a)* regional and *(b)* national locations; and what percentage of the staff in each grade each represents. [154649]

**Ms Hewitt:** This information is not held centrally and therefore this information cannot be provided without disproportionate cost.

### EU Structural Funds

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what *(a)* capital and *(b)* revenue expenditure was provided through (i) EU structural funds and (ii) by regional development agencies in each of the past seven years for each principal town in England and Wales, with figures for Welsh Seaside Town clusters disaggregated; and if she will make a statement. [155003]

**Jacqui Smith** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* The information requested is not held either centrally or regionally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

### EU Trade

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations she has made to European commissioners on the strengthening of multilateral trading systems; and if she will make a statement. [155151]

**Ms Hewitt:** I have spoken on several occasions to Commissioner Lamy on the need to strengthen the multilateral trading system, particularly in favour of the world's poorest countries.

Since the WTO Ministerial meeting in Cancun last September, I have met Mr. Lamy in London and in Brussels and I have also spoken to him on the telephone on a number of occasions. The strengthening of the multilateral trading system is always high on our agenda.

My officials remain in regular contact with the Commission, on issues relating to the WTO and the strengthening of the WTO multilateral trading system.

### Export Credits Guarantee Department

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Export Credits Guarantee Department has been approached for political risk insurance claims by *(a)* ANZ Bank, *(b)* Standard Chartered Bank and *(c)* ABN Amro in relation to the Dabhol Power Company in India. [155011]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** Yes.

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether *(a)* Kier International and *(b)* Whessoe have approached the Export Credits Guarantee Department for a claim in relation to the Dabhol Power Project in India. [155012]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** No. We can find no record of such an approach.

**Mr. Arbuthnot:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when the Export Credits Guarantee Department will next produce a report on the comparison of export credit agencies; and if she will make a statement. [155655]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien** *[holding answer 24 February 2004]:* ECGD is currently updating its research on the comparison of export credit agencies and hopes to be able to make its findings public in April.

### Gas Network System

**Mr. David Stewart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what plans she has to work with industry to extend the gas network system; [155893]

(2) if she will make a statement on the use made of European structural funds in the extension of the gas network across the UK. [155894]

**Mr. Timms:** In May 2003, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry announced the establishment of a new Design and Demonstration Unit of private sector secondees to support the Sustainable Energy Policy Network. Among the activities being undertaken by the Unit, which is based in the Department of Trade and Industry, are pathfinder projects to extend the gas network to non-gas areas. The first of these, in Llay in North Wales, began in October 2003, and is now completed. Three other projects are currently in the process of being developed. In addition, during 2003, the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets reviewed the charging arrangements for connections to independent gas transporters' (IGTs) networks. It is expected that, by allowing those providing connections to the existing network (known as "infill" projects) to charge a premium over Transco transportation charges, more IGTs will be encouraged to enter the infill market. Detailed information on the use of structural funds for individual projects is not held centrally by DTI. However, if my hon. Friend wishes to have information about a particular project, he should write to me, and I shall endeavour to obtain the relevant information. The Design and Demonstration Unit will be exploring whether the funds can provide support for the pathfinder projects that it is developing.

### Near Earth Objects

**Lembit Öpik:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the Government's contribution to the funding of the Minor Planet Centre. [155361]

**Ms Hewitt:** The Government are not contributing to the funding of the US based Minor Planet Centre (MPC).

**Lembit Öpik:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to establish a British centre for near earth objects; and if she will make a statement. [155367]

**Ms Hewitt:** The British National Space Centre has provided funding for the UK Near Earth Objects Information Centre (NEO IC) in Leicester (see www.nearearthobiects.co.uk). There are no current plans to extend the scope of the Centre.

**Lembit Öpik:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on progress in seeking partners to build in the southern hemisphere an advanced new three metre-class survey telescope for surveying substantially smaller objects than those now systematically observed by other telescopes. [155369]

**Ms Hewitt:** There are no plans to build a new 3m class telescope for this activity. This conclusion is reached in the light of the many opportunities that are now available for the use of existing facilities that are or will soon become available.

**Lembit Öpik:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on progress in dedicating the one metre Johannes Kapteyn Telescope on La Palma to follow-up observations of near earth objects. [155371]

**Ms Hewitt:** It has not been possible to fund dedicated use of the Johannes Kapteyn Telescope. However, telescopes on La Palma have been used to observe Near Earth Objects and 20 per cent. of these were studied spectroscopically.

### Regional Selective Assistance

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many businesses in *(a)* London and *(b)* England applied for regional selective assistance in each year since it came into existence. [155514]

**Jacqui Smith** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* The number of value of applications for Regional Selective Assistance made in London and England since 1972 are published in the Industrial Development Act 1982 Annual Reports, copies of which are in the Libraries of the House.

### Sakhalin

**Mr. Peter Ainsworth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what account she will take of the potential impact on endangered grey whales in considering requests for export credit guarantees in connection with oil and gas extraction in the Sakhalin Island area; and if she will make a statement. [154967]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* The Government are aware of the potential impacts that the Sakhalin II project may have on the Western Gray Whales. I have written to Sakhalin Energy making clear the importance that we attach to ensuring that these are properly minimised and that the best scientific advice is being followed. In determining this, ECGD officials will be taking advice from recognised independent whale experts and will take into account the views of interested NGOs.

I expect that details of the whale protection measures agreed with Sakhalin Energy will be published and that compliance with them would be a contractual obligation on the company. Qualified consultants would monitor compliance with these obligations on behalf of ECGD and the other lenders, should support be eventually agreed.

## DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

### Fenestration Self-assessment Scheme

**Mr. Todd:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 5 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 142W, on the Fenestration Self-assessment Scheme, whether the scheme requires its members to install lintels above windows. [156090]

**Phil Hope:** The Fenestration Self-assessment Scheme requires that all work carried out by its members should comply fully with the Building Regulations. Where the installation of lintels is necessary for such compliance then FENSA members should install them.

### Retail Stores (Extensions)

**Matthew Green:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when his Department will complete its research into the extent to which retailers are using internal extensions to expand their stores without planning permission; and if he will place a copy of the results in the Library. [154998]

**Keith Hill:** A survey of a sample of local planning authorities has been commissioned through the Government Offices to assess the extent of the issue and the possible consequences. While advanced, this work is not yet complete in a format which would enable it to be published, but the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister hopes to be in a position to make the findings public in due course.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### Incapacity Benefit

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what percentage of the population of England and Wales was claiming Incapacity Benefit on the latest date for which figures are available; *(a)* how many people in and *(b)* what percentage of the population of each ward in each principal seaside town in England and Wales receive Incapacity Benefit, listed in descending order, with figures for Welsh seaside town clusters disaggregated; and if he will make a statement. [154958]

**Maria Eagle:** There were 2,378,900 people claiming Incapacity Benefit (including Severe Disablement

Allowance) in England and Wales as of 31 August 2003. This accounts for 5.7 per cent. of the population over 16-years-old.

The available information has been placed in the Library.

*Source:*
DWP Information Centre, 5 per cent. sample.

### Jobcentre Plus

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost is of running two systems side by side during the Jobcentre Plus rollout in *(a)* Hampshire and the Isle of Wight and *(b)* the South East region. [151536]

**Mr. Pond:** The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

*Letter from David Anderson to Mr. Hancock, dated 25 February 2004:*

As Jobcentre Plus is an Executive Agency, the Secretary of State has asked me to reply direct to your question concerning the cost implications of running two systems side by side during the rollout of Jobcentre Plus, in the South East. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

The development of Jobcentre Plus is building on the high quality service already provided by social security offices and Jobcentres by delivering a single, integrated service to all people of working age, with a clear focus on work. It is a huge undertaking involving some 1,500 offices across the country. We have to make sure that our customers can continue to receive advice on work and benefits. Therefore we need to stagger the roll-out of the new service over a number of years. Throughout the period of national roll-out social security offices and Jobcentres will be working together to ensure that customers will still benefit from the excellent service we offer.

Our plans for the roll out aim to ensure that the old services are replaced by the new services and that therefore there is no need to operate them side by side in any location. In fact as the roll out progresses we are looking to rationalise our estate and realise savings through a "merger dividend".

This is one of the largest change programmes ever and given its size, we are bringing in changes across the four-year period 2002–06. This means, of course, within the South East region and the other regions/countries, we will have to run new services alongside old style services for this transitional period.

Full details of the financial allocation for the roll out of Jobcentre Plus are available in the Departmental report (CM5921) a copy of which is in the library.

I hope this is helpful.

### Medical Assessments

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many doctors have had approval to carry out assessments on behalf of the Department revoked in each of the last five years, broken down by location. [156058]

**Maria Eagle:** The information requested has been recorded only since 2002, following enhancements to Medical Services' Medical Skills Database and the introduction of a new database in the Chief Medical Adviser's office. The available information is in the table.

*Numbers of doctors who have had approval to carry out assessments on behalf of DWP revoked*

| *Medical Services Unit* | *2002* | *2003* |
|---|---|---|
| Birmingham | 0 | 1 |
| Bootle | 10 | 0 |
| Bristol | 1 | 0 |
| Cardiff | 5 | 1 |
| Edinburgh | 0 | 0 |
| Glasgow | 2 | 19 |
| Leeds | 7 | 4 |
| Manchester | 0 | 0 |
| Newcastle | 0 | 1 |
| Nottingham | 0 | 0 |
| Sutton | 0 | 0 |
| Wembley | 0 | 14 |
| Total | 25 | 40 |

*Source:*
DWP data.

### Pensioner Benefits

**Mr. George Howarth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the proportion of the value of means-tested benefits unclaimed by pensioners. [155468]

**Malcolm Wicks:** Precise information requested is not available. The DWP report, "Income Related Benefits Estimates of Take-Up", contains estimates of the additional amount of income support/minimum income guarantee, housing benefit and council tax benefit payable, if every pensioner took up their entitlement. For financial year 2000–01, the latest year for which information is available, it is estimated between £1.03 billion and £1.8 billion of these benefits were left unclaimed by the eligible GB pensioner population in private households. This compares with £7.70 billion claimed by this population; and represents between 81 per cent. and 88 per cent. of the total of amounts claimed and amounts unclaimed.

The next edition of the report, covering 2001–02 will be published on 26 February; copies will be held in the Library.

*Note:*

Estimates of the amount of income-related benefits unclaimed are presented as ranges in which the true value is judged to lie. The ranges take account of various imperfections in the underlying data sources.

### Statutory Sick Pay

**Norman Lamb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the total cost to his Department of payments to employers in respect of statutory sick pay was in each of the last five years. [154882]

**Maria Eagle:** The Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) scheme is administered by employers as part of the National Insurance scheme. While employers meet most of the costs of SSP, they can, in certain circumstances, reclaim some of their costs from the Department.

The available information is in the table.

*Estimated cost to the Department of payments to employers in respect of Statutory Sick Pay in the last five years*

| *Financial year* | *Expenditure on SSP for DWP (£ million)* |
|---|---|
| 1998–99 | 30 |
| 1999–2000 | 32 |
| 2000–01 | 31 |
| 2001–02 | 33 |
| 2002–03 | 32 |

*Notes:*
1. Information is in real terms, 2003–04 prices and rounded to the nearest £1 million.
2. Data for recoveries on SSP are currently under review and all published figures are therefore subject to revision.
*Source:*
DWP reports and accounts.

## HEALTH

### Allergies

**Mr. Baron:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action he is taking with respect to those suffering from allergies; and if he will make a statement. [155848]

**Dr. Ladyman:** It is the role of primary care trusts in partnership with local stakeholders to decide what services to provide for their populations, including those with allergies. They are best placed to understand local health care needs and commission services to meet them.

The Royal College of Physicians (RCP) published their report, "Allergy—the unmet need: a blueprint for better patient care", on 25 June 2003. We welcome the RCP report and believes it is a useful contribution to the debate on how to improve national health service allergy services.

The Food Standards Agency funds research on food allergy and intolerance, with particular emphasis on severe allergies, how they occur and what causes them. A large programme of research on food intolerance and allergy, costing around £1 million a year is on-going. King's College London is leading a £2.1 million European Community funded prospective study of the incidence and prognosis of allergy, allergic disease and low lung function in adults living in Europe. Also, the University of Manchester is leading a £1.2 million EC-funded investigation of the prevalence, pathogenesis, treatment and prevention of sun allergy across Europe. Sun-provoked skin reactions are one of the commonest forms of allergy.

### Brachytherapy Treatment

**Mrs. Calton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer, 16 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 877W, to the hon. Member for Christchurch (Mr. Chope), on brachytherapy treatment, by what date the Department will have decided whether the treatment referred to is a suitable topic for referral to the National Institute for Clinical Excellence as a technology appraisal. [154938]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** It is not yet possible to say when the Department will be in a position to consider brachytherapy for the treatment of prostate cancer as a potential topic for referral to the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) as a technology appraisal.

More evidence on the effectiveness and cost effectiveness of brachytherapy in the treatment of prostate cancer will be needed for the Department to be able to consider its referral to NICE. It is not yet known when current studies are likely to produce such evidence.

### Carbonated Drinks

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the dangers to young people's health of regularly drinking carbonated soft drinks. [155440]

**Miss Melanie Johnson** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* Carbonated soft drinks are a major source of added sugars in children's and young people's diets. It is recommended that they should be consumed sparingly, as part of a healthy balanced diet, to minimise the effect of dental caries and to achieve calorie intake compatible with maintenance of healthy weight.

The Food Standards Agency and the Department of Health are in discussion with the vending industry and are taking forward projects to consider approaches in schools to achieve this recommendation.

### Child Health Surveillance Programme

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what percentage of *(a)* 8-year-olds, *(b)* 9-year-olds, *(c)* 10-year-olds, *(d)* 11-year-olds, *(e)* 5-year-olds, *(f)* 6-year-olds and *(g)* 7-year-olds were subject to height and weight monitoring in schools last year as part of the Child Health Surveillance programme; [155039]

(2) which primary care trusts undertake weight and height monitoring of primary school age children at least every other year. [155040]

**Dr. Ladyman:** Height and weight measurements in early childhood form a part of the child health surveillance programme. The programme covers pre-school age children. Intervals between checks are determined by the primary health care team in the light of professional judgment. Height and weight monitoring after school entry is undertaken on a selective basis when there is concern about a child's health or growth. Information on the number and timing of these checks is not collected centrally.

### Child Poverty

**Mrs. Roche:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps his Department is taking to achieve the Government's targets of *(a)* ending child poverty by 2020, *(b)* halving it by 2010 and *(c)* reducing it by a quarter by 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [154367]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Pond) on 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1590–91W.

### Chiropody

**Mr. Baron:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) in what ways eligibility criteria for chiropody waiting

lists have changed in the last two years; and how many patients have been removed from waiting lists as a result of changes in eligibility criteria; [155869]

(2) how many patients who were previously on chiropody waiting lists have been removed from these lists as a result of a change in the eligibility criteria for the waiting lists; [155449]

(3) how the eligibility criteria for chiropody waiting lists have changed in the last two years. [155450]

**Dr. Ladyman** *[holding answers 23 and 24 February 2004]:* Primary care trusts, in partnership with strategic health authorities and other local stakeholders, have the responsibility for improving the health of the community, securing the provision of high quality services, and integrating health and social care locally. They have the resources to commission services and to identify the number of professional staff that they need to deliver those services. This process provides the means for addressing local needs within the health community including setting eligibility criteria for chiropody/podiatry services. Information on waiting lists for these services is not collected centrally.

### Coronary Care

**Mr. Moss:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many coronary angioplasties were undertaken by each NHS hospital trust in each of the last three years; and how many of these were *(a)* second and *(b)* third interventions. [154993]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Information on the number of coronary angioplasties that were undertaken by each national health service hospital trust in each of the last three years has been placed in the Library.

The figures are sourced from Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Department of Health. Information on second and third interventions is not available.

**Mr. Moss:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many coronary artery bypass graphs were undertaken by each NHS hospital trust in each of the last three years. [154994]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Information on the number of coronary artery bypass graphs that were undertaken by each national health service hospital trust in each of the last three years has been placed in the Library.

The figures are sourced from Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Department of Health.

### Haemophilia

**Nick Harvey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients with haemophilia there are in *(a)* England and *(b)* the South West; and if he will make a statement. [154578]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Information provided by the United Kingdom Haemophilia Centre Doctors Organisation shows that there are 5,019 haemophilia patients in England and 297 patients in the South West. These figures include patients affected by severe and mild haemophilia.

### Hepatitis C

**Dr. Murrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the rationale was for the decision to disallow compensation from the Hepatitis C ex gratia scheme for the dependants of those who died of the disease prior to 29 August 2003. [155536]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The underlying principle behind the Hepatitis C ex gratia payment scheme is to target available resources to help alleviate the suffering of people living with the virus. The payments are not designed to compensate for bereavement. The scheme's eligibility criteria reflect this, but were considered in the context of other demands on the health care budget.

### Long-term Care

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 20 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1110W, on long-term care, whether the methodology used to arrive at this figure is the same as that used to cost the Government's own policies; and if he will place in the Library a copy of the terms of reference given to the civil servants costing the policy. [155461]

**Dr. Ladyman:** The estimate of £1.5 billion is an updated estimate of the cost of free personal care for England. The methodology used to produce this updated estimate was identical to that used by the Royal Commission, except for two differences. The first difference is that the Royal Commission did not include an explicit allowance for costs of publicly funded care home residents. These costs are now estimated at £100 million and are included in the updated estimate. The second difference is that the updated estimate takes into account changes to the funding arrangements made by the Government since the Royal Commission produced its estimate. Had no account been taken, the updated estimate would have been higher. The main change is the implementation of free nursing care. Ministers gave no instructions or terms of references to civil servants concerning how the calculation of the updated estimate was to be made.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 30 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 559W, on long-term care, which specific benefits are referred to in point seven of the explanatory note; how the savings of under £200 million were calculated; and whether any of the 58,000 privately funded residents of residential care homes mentioned in the explanatory note were in homes with dual registration, and therefore entitled to free nursing care. [155966]

**Dr. Ladyman:** The social security benefits referred to in point seven of the note are attendance allowance and disability living allowance care component. These benefits cease to be paid after four weeks of local authority support. Disability living allowance mobility component does not cease to be paid and is not included.

Estimates of the proportions of older privately funded admissions to care homes receiving these benefits were derived from tables 4.13 and 4.14 of the Personal Social Services Research Unit report, Self-Funded Admissions to Care Homes (available at www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rrep159.asp). These proportions

were applied to the estimate numbers of privately funded care home residents to produce an estimate of the numbers of privately funded residents receiving these benefits. The estimated numbers were multiplied by the benefit rates to produce an estimated annual saving of under £200 million.

The approach assumed estimates of 42,000 privately funded residents in nursing beds in nursing homes or dual-registered homes and 58,000 privately funded residents in residential beds in residential care homes or dual-registered homes. Reference to dual-registered beds was omitted from the note for simplicity. This means that none of the estimated 58,000 were assumed to be entitled to free nursing care. This assumption does not, however, affect the estimated saving on disability benefits since receipt of free nursing care does not trigger cessation of disability benefits.

### Masts

**Mrs. Spelman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidelines, other than International Commission Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection emission levels, are used by *(a)* the Health and Safety Executive and *(b)* OFCOM for the practical implementation of a precautionary approach to mast installations around sensitive sites. [155872]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The International Commission on Non-Ionizing Protection (ICNIRP) guidelines is concerned with exposure to electromagnetic fields. The mobile phone industry has voluntarily agreed, as a precautionary measure, to comply with ICNIRP guidelines. The Government have also agreed that mobile telecommunications equipment should meet the ICNIRP guidelines as expressed in the European Union Council Recommendation on the limitation of exposure of the general public to electromagnetic fields (0Hz-300Ghz) of 12 July 1999. No Government body uses any other more restrictive exposure guidelines.

### Medical Research (Animals)

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 2 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1129W, on medical research (animals), how much the Government contributed to the 2002 MORI poll. [155550]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The Department of Health, the Department of Trade and Industry and the Home Office each contributed £28,502 towards the cost of the research.

### Mental Health

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made on the National Institute for Clinical Excellence guidance on recommended procedures for control and restraint of mental health patients. [155630]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The anticipated publication date for the National Institute for Clinical Excellence's (NICE) clinical guideline on the short-term management of disturbed (violent) behaviour in in-patient psychiatric settings is November 2004. NICE provisionally plans to consult on the first draft of the guidance in April 2004. Full details of the provisional schedule for this guideline can be found on the NICE website at www.nice.org.uk.

### MMR

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children aged between five and 15 years developed *(a)* measles, *(b)* mumps and *(c)* rubella in each of the last 10 years. [152558]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Data on comparable confirmed cases of measles, mumps and rubella are only available from 1995. The number of confirmed cases of measles, mumps and rubella between 1995 and 2003 are shown in the table. The information provided relates to the number of confirmed cases of measles, mumps and rubella in children aged between five and 14 years. Data on cases in children aged between 5 and 14 years is being provided, as this is the standard age grouping used in all surveillance reports.

*Number of cases aged 5–14 years*

| | *Measles* | *Mumps* | *Rubella* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1995 | 5 | 14 | 29 |
| 1996 | 14 | 56 | 31 |
| 1997 | 91 | 100 | 2 |
| 1998 | 12 | 34 | 5 |
| 1999 | 20 | 229 | 5 |
| 2000 | 23 | 472 | 4 |
| 2001 | 15 | 419 | 1 |
| 2002 | 88 | 130 | 5 |
| 2003[1] | 164 | 248 | 0 |

[1] Provisional.

*Sources:*

1996–2002 Health Protection Agency website:
http://www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/measles/data_reg_age.htm
http://www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/mumps/data_reg_age.htm
http://www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/rubella/data_reg_age.htm

### Obesity-related Deaths

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what methodology his Department used to estimate the number of deaths from obesity-related diseases; and if he will make a statement. [155157]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The Department uses estimates presented in the National Audit Office report on obesity: "Tackling Obesity in England"—report by the Comptroller and Auditor General. HC220 Session 2000–01: 15 February 2001.

### Podiatry

**Mr. Baron:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will collect a sample of the discharge rates, whether complete or not, of NHS podiatry services, to enable the Government to estimate how many patients could reasonably be accepted into NHS foot care services. [155985]

**Dr. Ladyman** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* National health service foot care services are provided on the basis of assessed clinical need. Primary care trusts, in partnership with strategic health authorities and other local stakeholders, have the responsibility for improving the health of the community, securing the provision of high quality services, and integrating health and social care locally. They have the resources to

commission services, and to identify the number of professional staff that they need to deliver those services. This process provides the means for addressing local needs within the health community including the provision of chiropody/podiatry services.

We are committed to reducing bureaucracy in the NHS and commissioning such a study would not be cost effective.

### Sexually Transmitted Diseases

**Mrs. Helen Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases was in the areas covered by *(a)* the Greater Peterborough Primary Care Trust and *(b)* the Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Strategic Health Authority in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by (i) HIV, (ii) Chlamydia, (iii) gonorrhoea, (iv) syphilis and (v) genital herpes; how many cases of each disease there were in the (A) under 19, (B) 20 to 25, (C) 25 to 35 and (D) 35 plus age group, broken down by gender; and what the percentage change was in each case in each of the previous five years. [154459]

**Dr. Ladyman:** This information is not collected centrally. However the available information from the Health Protection Agency has been placed in the Library.

The data contained within these tables does not represent the prevalence of disease within this individual strategic health authority.

### Soft Drinks (Schools)

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has made to the United Kingdom soft drinks industry about distribution of soft drinks in schools. [155811]

**Miss Melanie Johnson** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* No direct representations to the United Kingdom soft drinks industry about distribution of soft drinks in schools have been made.

The Department of Health-led strand of the "Food in Schools" programme comprises eight pilot projects, which aim to ensure children have access to healthy food choices and drinks throughout the school day. In particular, the work on water provision aims to increase overall consumption of water by pupils in schools by making it more accessible. The healthier vending machines pilot challenges schools and the vending industry to make healthy options available in school vending machines, which includes the provision of healthier drink products.

The results of all eight pilot projects will be brought together in a 'whole school approach' and made available to schools across England from the beginning of 2005 to assist them in providing a wider range of healthier foods and drinks for pupils.

The Food Standards Agency has undertaken a pilot in schools on healthier drink vending, which will feed into the "Food in Schools" programme.

### SPIRIT Trial

**Mrs. Calton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) by what date the National Cancer Research Network expects to have all 300 patients recruited for the SPIRIT trial; [154935]

(2) what the status is of the SPIRIT trial into a cure for prostate cancer; [154936]

(3) how many centres have been approved to enter patients in the SPIRIT trial; and when they will be receiving patients. [154937]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The SPIRIT trial received multi-centre research ethics committee approval in November 2003. Local research ethics committee approval is currently being applied for at the various centres that plan to participate. The trial is led by the American College of Surgeons Oncology Group (ACOSOG). Any centre that wishes to participate must obtain United States federal-wide assurance, and investigators and research nurses must obtain membership of the ACOSOG. The trial team anticipates that six to eight centres in the United Kingdom will be approved by summer 2004, and that these centres will immediately start entering patients into the trial. The team is confident that 300 UK patients will be recruited before May 2007, which is the US target for completing accrual.

### Tendring Primary Care Trust

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on plans to close general practitioner surgeries in *(a)* Holland-on-Sea and *(b)* Great Clacton in Tendring Primary Care Trust. [155120]

**Dr. Ladyman:** It is this Government's policy, within the framework set out in the NHS Plan and the Shifting the Balance of Power initiative, to devolve funding decisions to the front line. It is now for primary care trusts (PCTs), in partnership with health authorities and other local stakeholders, to determine how best to use their funds to meet national and local priorities for improving health, tackling health inequalities and modernising services, based on the specialised knowledge they have of the local community.

The Colchester and Tendring Local Improvement Finance Trust project board is committed to significantly improve services and facilities in the area. Tendring PCTs plan is to develop one purpose-built health centre that will incorporate four local surgeries on one site in the local areas. Therefore, the surgeries are not being closed but re-sited.

The proposal is to centralise services on the Kennedy Way site with two satellite surgeries; one in Holland-on-Sea and the other in Great Clacton. The distance from the existing practices to the proposed new centre is approximately one mile. The satellite facilities will provide services to those patients who are unable to travel.

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what consultation has been undertaken by Tendring Primary Care Trust regarding the proposed closure of general practitioner surgeries in Holland-on-Sea. [155121]

**Dr. Ladyman:** I am advised that Tendring Primary Care Trust (PCT) extended its original consultation period so that it ran from mid January 2003 to mid March 2003 in order for option appraisals to be undertaken. Public consultation meetings were held, consultation documents were circulated, an appraisal workshop was also held and the PCT corresponded with the public and local councillors.

The PCT held an option appraisal day, which was attended by member of the public, resident associations, the Community Health Council and health professionals. The outcome of the option appraisal day was unanimous support for developing the Kennedy Way site.

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what sites were considered by Tendring Primary Care Trust for its new headquarters; [155122]

(2) what sites were considered by Tendring Primary Care Trust to replace general practitioner surgeries due to be closed in *(a)* Holland-on-Sea and *(b)* Great Clacton. [155123]

**Dr. Ladyman:** Tendring Primary Care Trust, in partnership with Tendring District Council and local estate agents, undertook an exhaustive search for a site best befitting the necessary criteria for a new health centre. The key criteria were:

The site needs to be large enough for the proposed health centre, which means it has to be 1.25 acres.

The site needs to be central within the Holland-on-Sea/Great Clacton area.

The site needs to be available for immediate purchase.

The site needs to be allocated for development within the local plan.

Kennedy Way was chosen as the preferred option.

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the estimated cost is of the new surgery general practitioners centre in Kennedy Way, Clacton-on-Sea; and what proportion of the site will be occupied by primary care trust administration. [155124]

**Dr. Ladyman:** Tendring Primary Care Trust (PCT) is currently consulting staff, local councillors and residents' representatives on the range of services to be provided from the centre.

The PCT's current estimated figure is £7 million for the health centre and PCT headquarters which it is currently estimated to be split as, £5 million for the health centre and £2 million for the PCT headquarters (these figures are subject to change according to the final service model adopted). The premises will then be leased through the Local Improvement Finance Trust over a 20 year period.

In addition to general practice, additional services will be available from the new site. These are shown in the table. However, until the range of services to be offered is agreed and costed, the PCT is at present unable to define what proportion of the accommodation will be given over to PCT administration. However, the PCT estimates that the large majority of accommodation will be for healthcare provision.

*Clacton and Holland-on-Sea*

| *Service cluster* | *Includes:* |
|---|---|
| Central Clinical Services | Security |
| Essential Clinical Services | General Practitioner services |
| | Nurse Practitioner services |
| Nurse Led Services | Chronic disease management |
| | Health promotion (expand family planning and sexual heath, diagnostics–visiting GP) |
| | Special provision for teenagers |
| | Vaccinations and immunisations |
| | Contraception |
| | Child Health |
| | Cervical Cytology |
| Chronic Disease Management | Diabetic services (more multidisciplinary team) |
| | Chiropody |
| | Eye |
| | Dietetics |
| | Podiatry |
| | COPD/Asthma |
| | Chromic management eye Diseases |
| | Optometry (multidisciplinary) |
| | Coronary Heart Disease |
| | Hypertension |
| | Diabetes |
| | Diabetic Retinopathy Screening |
| | Heart Failure Assessment |
| Diagnostics | Warfarin & DVT Monitoring |
| | One stop near patient testing |
| | Visiting echo |
| | Ultrasound |
| | Osteoporosis assessment |
| | Blood tests/phlebotomy |
| | ECG |
| | Future possibility of X-ray and Ultrasound (PACS) |
| Health Promotion | Prevention has close links with rehabilitation |
| | Smoking Cessation |
| | Teenage Advisory Clinic |
| | Information Zone |

*Clacton and Holland-on-Sea*

| *Service cluster* | *Includes:* |
|---|---|
| Rehabilitation Services | Post discharge stroke |
| | Musculo-skeletal assessment |
| | Falls Prevention |
| | Cardiac rehabilitation |
| | Heart Failure rehabilitation |
| | Musculo-skeletal clinic |
| District Nursing Service | Leg ulcer clinics (dermatology, vascular, district nurses) |
| | Community paramedics |
| | District Nurse Base |
| | Leg Ulcer Clinic |
| | Continence Clinic |
| | Equipment Store |
| Health Visiting Service | Health Visitor base |
| Mental Health Services | Substance misuse |
| | Community Psychiatric Services |
| | Child and Family Consultation Service |
| | CMHT |
| | Memory clinic |
| | Counselling |
| Social Services | Vulnerable adults |
| | Child Protection |
| | Social Worker Base |
| | Care Advisor service |
| Voluntary Sector | Shared resources |
| | Advisory Clinics |
| Outpatient Service | Ophthalmology |
| | Explore paediatric outreach |
| | Dermatology |
| | Neurology Outpatients |
| | Dermatology outpatients |
| | Care of the Elderly Outpatients |
| | Urology |
| Community Dental Services | Community Dental Services |
| Audiology | Hearing Tests |
| | Hearing Aid Clinic |
| Podiatry/chiropody | Podiatry/chiropody |
| Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) | Base for PALs service |
| Dispensary/pharmacy | Integration |
| Café | Café |
| Children's Services | Paediatric child health |
| | Occupational Therapy |
| | Physiotherapy |
| | Speech and language |
| | School nursing |
| | Disability nursing |
| | Children's outreach |
| | Children's continence services |
| | Nursery services |
| | Child protection |

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the recommendation of Tendring Community Health Council was in the consultation on *(a)* moving the Primary Care Trust headquarters and *(b)* closing (i) Frinton Road Medical Centre and (ii) the Grove Lodge general practitioner surgery. [155125]

**Dr. Ladyman:** This information is not collected centrally.

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans there are to close further general practitioner surgeries in the Tendring Primary Care Trust area after the proposed closure of Frinton Road Medical Centre and the Grove Lodge general practitioner surgery. [155126]

**Dr. Ladyman:** We have no plans to close general practitioner surgeries in the Tendring Primary Care Trust (PCT) area.

However, we are advised that Tendring PCT states that these practices are not closing but relocating to a new purpose-built facility with a wider range of services being offered under the national health service Local Improvement Finance Trust.

The local NHS has no plans to close practices in Tendring; and 75 per cent. of practices have been expanded with additional doctors and nurses, using personal medical services growth money.

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funds are being provided by Tendring Primary Care Trust to transport residents of Holland-on-Sea to the new Kennedy Way general practitioner surgery in Clacton-on-Sea; and for what period this funding is assured. [155127]

**Dr. Ladyman:** I am advised by Tendring Primary Care Trust that funding for transporting residents is currently under review.

### UK Medicines (Name Changes)

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the timetable is for implementing the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency awareness campaign for nurses about the recent name changes to UK medicines; and if he will make a statement. [154587]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The names of some medicinal substances are changing in the United Kingdom so that British approved names reflect recommended International non-proprietary names, where these currently differ. This action is being taken on the advice of the Medicines Commission and with the support of a wide range of interest groups. It will reduce the risk of confusion on the part of both healthcare professionals and patients arising from the availability on the market of some medicines using two different names.

The name changes were published in the 2003 edition of the British Pharmacopoeia and became effective on 1 December 2003. From this date, licence holders for medicinal products using the old names were given 12 months to apply to the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency to update their licences to use the new names.

We are committed to ensuring that all those who are responsible for prescribing, dispensing and administering medicines receive full information about the name changes and expect shortly to be in a position to issue detailed guidance and advice to healthcare professionals, including nurses.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Saville Inquiry

**Mr. Swire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what the latest estimate is of the cost of the Saville Inquiry; [155314]

(2) which Departments will meet the costs of the Saville Inquiry; and in what proportion. [155315]

**Mr. Spellar:** The latest figure available to the end of December 2003 for the cost of the Inquiry is a total of £129.9 million. £103.7 million (80 per cent. of the total) of this falls to the Northern Ireland Office and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence advises me that his Department to the end of December 2003 has spent £26.2 million (20 per cent. of the total).

The Departments which have incurred directs costs in connection with the Bloody Sunday Inquiry are the Northern Ireland Office and the Ministry of Defence. The small amount of expenditure by a number of other Departments is de minimis.

**Mr. Swire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many lawyers have been employed during the course of the Saville Inquiry; and what the latest estimate of the costs of employing lawyers during the inquiry is. [155316]

**Mr. Spellar:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for East Londonderry (Mr. Campbell) on 12 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 544W and the follow-up letter I wrote on 11 February, the text of which is set out as follows.

*Letter from John Spellar to Mr. Gregory Campbell on 11 February 2004:*

Further to the part reply I gave to your recent written parliamentary question on 12 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 544W, I am now able to provide the detailed information you requested about payments made to each of the legal firms involved in the Bloody Sunday Inquiry. These payments include VAT and other disbursements where appropriate and so do not necessarily represent the amounts received by individuals.

The following table provides the latest details of payments made by the Northern Ireland Office.

£

| | | Period covered | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Payments made* | *From* | *To* | *Note* |
| *Counsel for the Inquiry* | | | | |
| Christopher Clarke | 3,721,971 | February 1998 | January 2004 | |
| Jacob Grierson | 394,879 | July 1998 | December 2000 | Left the case in December 2000 |
| Cathryn McGahey | 1,078,130 | June 2000 | January 2004 | |
| Bilal Rawat | 842,701 | June 2000 | January 2004 | |
| Alan Roxburgh | 1,518,831 | May 1998 | January 2004 | |
| *Solicitors employed for the taking of witness statements* | | | | |
| Eversheds | 12,609,388 | June 1998 | August 2003 | |
| *Senior Counsel representing the families*[1] | | | | |
| Lord Gifford | 618,544 | October 1998 | September 2003 | |
| Arthur Harvey | 767,362 | July 1998 | January 2003 | |
| Michael Lavery | 549,880 | November 2000 | June 2003 | |
| B J MacDonald | 507,683 | September 1998 | December 2002 | Left the case (as a junior) in September 2000 and rejoined the case (as a senior) in July 2001. |
| P T MacDonald | 65,800 | April 1998 | June 1999 | Left the case June 1999 |
| Michael Mansfield | 561,711 | March 1999 | July 2003 | |
| Eilish McDermott | 105,309 | March 2000 | June 2001 | |
| Seamus Treacy | 701,073 | March 1998 | April 2003 | Having started as a junior in March 1998, became a senior counsel in September 2000 |
| Eoin McGonigal | 82,446 | October 2000 | June 2002 | |
| Kevin Finnegan | 235,000 | July 1998 | May 2001 | Left the case in May 2001 |
| *Senior Counsel representing NICRA* | | | | |
| Sir Louis Blom-Cooper | 419,389 | December 2000 | July 2003 | |

£

| | Payments made | Period covered From | To | Note |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Junior Counsel representing the families* | | | | |
| John Coyle | 314,422 | September 1999 | February 2003 | |
| Fiona Doherty | 164,273 | October 2000 | October 2002 | |
| Ciaran Harvey | 472,145 | December 2000 | June 2003 | |
| Richard Harvey | 445,270 | October 2000 | July 2003 | |
| Brian Kennedy | 557,522 | July 1999 | March 2003 | |
| Philip Magee | 83,175 | June 1998 | September 2000 | Left the case in September 2000 |
| Kieran Mallon Bl | 626,791 | March 1999 | May 2003 | |
| Brian McCartney | 723,685 | October 1998 | November 2003 | |
| Karen Quinlivan | 290,193 | March 1999 | July 2003 | |
| Patricia Smyth | 328,719 | October 1998 | June 2002 | Left the case in June 2002. |
| Michael Topolski | 139,940 | November 2000 | June-2001 | Left the case in June 2001 |
| Mary McHugh | 219,877 | February 2002 | April 2003 | |
| *Junior counsel representing NICRA* | | | | |
| Paddy O'Hanlon | 230,151 | November 2000 | October 2002 | |
| *Solicitors representing the families*[2] | | | | |
| Barr and Co | 535,231 | February 1999 | September 2003 | |
| Brendan Kearney and Co | 787,027 | July 1999 | July 2003 | |
| Desmond Doherty and Co | 1,023,977 | November 1998 | November 2003 | Figure does not include fees for September 2003 |
| MacDermott and McGurk | 988,782 | November 1998 | November 2003 | |
| Madden and Finucane | 6,707,182 | January 1998 | October 2003 | |
| McCann and McCann | 573,912 | October 1998 | November 2003 | Figure does not include fees for July 2003 |
| McCartney and Casey | 1,001,358 | November 1998 | November 2003 | |
| *Solicitors representing NICRA* | | | | |
| Francis Keenan | 208,739 | May 2000 | June 2001 | |
| *Legal representatives for other witnesses* | | | | |
| Various solicitors and counsel | 2,539,645 | April 1998 | April 2003 | Figure includes payments made to more than 60 other solicitors and counsel |

[1] In addition the following senior counsel have represented/are representing some of the families but have yet to submit fee claims: Declan Morgan and Reg Weir.
[2] Includes payments made in respect of witness statement-taking work

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence has advised me that the following payments have been made to counsel and solicitors in respect of work for the Bloody Sunday Inquiry by his Department.

£

| | Payments made |
|---|---|
| *Senior Counsel representing HM armed forces* | |
| Edmund Lawson | 694,303 |
| Edwin Glasgow | 3,333,954 |
| Peter Clarke | 884,991 |
| Sydney Kentridge | 52,875 |
| Anna Worrall | 100,457 |
| Gerard Elias | 1,454,476 |
| Allan Green | 1,280,323 |
| Rosamund Horwood Smart | 343,589 |
| David Lloyd Jones | 900,734 |
| Lan Burnett | 218,431 |
| Philip Havers | 7,138 |
| *Junior counsel representing MoD* | |
| William Hoskins | 8,621 |
| *Junior counsel representing HM armed forces* | |
| Michael Hick | 253,895 |
| Gaby Bonham Carter | 186,395 |

£

| | Payments made |
|---|---|
| Kristian Mills | 56,929 |
| Sam Grodzinski | 1,877 |
| Alan May | 299,009 |
| Andrew Hurst | 457,469 |
| David Bradly | 1,066,560 |
| Michael Bools | 768,525 |
| Nicholas Griffin | 1,043,690 |
| Thomas Quinton | 328,121 |
| Huw Davies | 279,496 |
| Nicholas Moss | 779,350 |
| Ian Leist | 779,202 |
| Alexander Milne | 259,934 |
| Stephen Requena | 88,161 |
| Bridget Petherbridge | 25,953 |
| Pamela Morrison | 76,199 |
| *Solicitors representing HM armed forces* | |
| Devonshires | 1,571,840 |
| Kingsley Napley | 1,227,718 |
| Payne Hicks Beach | 2,490,332 |
| Jacqueline Duff | 149,593 |
| Treasury Solicitor | 2,228,402 |

A copy of this letter has been placed in the Library.

### Ministerial Travel

**Bob Russell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he last used a train in connection with his ministerial duties. [155168]

**Mr. Paul Murphy:** Within the UK, the method of transport used in the course of my official duties is determined by security advice from the police. Details are not disclosed for security reasons.

### Obesity

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether there is a Northern Ireland-based strategy to address childhood and adult obesity; and if he will make a statement. [156116]

**Angela Smith:** I refer the hon. Lady to the answer I gave on 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 166W.

# Written Answers to Questions

*Thursday 26 February 2004*

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Chagossians (West Sussex)

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will meet a delegation of West Sussex Social Services councillors and hon. Members to discuss the situation regarding the Chagossians in West Sussex; [156188]

(2) what discussions he has had with West Sussex County Council regarding the settlement of Chagossians in West Sussex; [156189]

(3) for what reasons he has not paid the costs of West Sussex Social Services relating to the settlement of Chagossians in West Sussex; and if he will do so. [156190]

**Mr. Rammell:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 6 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 891W. My officials remain in contact with the Department of Health and the Department for Work and Pensions on this issue. Officers from the Department of Health have already met with West Sussex County Council to discuss the situation and offer constructive advice, and both Departments have stated that they will continue to work with the council to address the matter.

No final decision on the situation of the Chagossians in the UK, including the payment of costs, can be taken until the judicial review proceedings are complete.

### China

**Mr. Best:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Chinese Government about religious freedom in China. [156235]

**Mr. Rammell:** We raised the issue of religious freedom with the Chinese during the last round of our regular biannual UK/China Human Rights Dialogue held in Beijing on 10 to 11 November 2003. I personally discussed human rights issues more generally when I met with Assistant Foreign Minister Zhang Yesui in Beijing on 17 December 2003.

We have repeatedly made clear that harassment of religious groups is unacceptable and not in keeping with the provisions of the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights, which we continue to urge the Chinese to ratify.

**Mr. Best:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Chinese Government about their treatment of Christians. [156236]

**Mr. Rammell:** We are deeply concerned about religious freedom in China, including the treatment of Christians, and monitor the situation closely. We regularly raise this issue with the Chinese at the biannual UK/China Human Rights Dialogue; the most recent round was held in Beijing on 10 to 11 November 2003. I personally discussed human rights issues more generally when I met with Assistant Foreign Minister Zhang Yesui in Beijing on 17 December 2003.

We have repeatedly made clear that the harassment of Christians is unacceptable and not in keeping with the provisions of the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights, which we continue to urge the Chinese to ratify.

### Iraq

**Lynne Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has received diplomatic letters from the Mexican Government asking him to clarify whether GCHQ was involved in placing other members of the United Nations Security Council under surveillance in the run up to the war in Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [156196]

**Mr. Straw:** The British Embassy in Mexico City has received a Note Verbale from the Mexican Government on this issue. It is the well-established and long-standing practice of successive governments not to respond to speculation about alleged operational activities by the UK Security and Intelligence Services.

### Ministerial Speeches

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many speeches he made between 9 June 2003 and 1 February 2004; and where a copy of each speech can be obtained. [156145]

**Mr. Straw:** I made 18 substantive public speeches outside the House of Commons in my capacity as Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in that period. Copies of them and of future such speeches can be found on the FCO website (www.fco.gov.uk).

### Mr Jafar Dhia Jafar

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his answer of 11 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 587W, on Mr. Jafar Dhia Jafar, when he will write to the hon. Member. [149479]

**Mr. Mullin:** I wrote to the hon. Member on 30 January 2004.

### Passport Renewal (Harare)

**Mr. Chope:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the British High Commission in Harare accepts transfer payments in sterling for payment of passport renewal applications. [156675]

**Mr. Mullin:** No. Consular fees in Harare can currently only be paid in cash, or by bankers cheque, in local currency.

**Mr. Chope:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the charge for a new 10-year British passport issued in Harare is in *(a)* sterling and *(b)* Zimbabwean dollars. [156676]

**Mr. Mullin:** The current sterling fee for issuing a standard British passport overseas is £56.50 for an adult and £36.50 for a child. The cost in local currency at the British Embassy in Harare is 430,500 Zimbabwean dollars at present, although this will vary as the exchange rate fluctuates.

### UK Presidencies (G8 and EU)

**Tom Brake:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with ministerial colleagues in the last 12 months on the priorities the Government intend to pursue when the UK assumes the presidencies of the *(a)* G8 and *(b)* EU. [156183]

**Mr. MacShane:** Detailed planning and discussion are going on within, and between, Departments at ministerial and official level. Formal discussions in Cabinet and Cabinet Committees will take place as necessary. The broad framework for work during the next five EU presidencies (including our own) is provided in the Council's Multi-Annual Strategic Programme, which has been placed in the Library of the House.

### UN Security Council (Surveillance)

**Mr. Gerrard:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has received letters from the Governments of *(a)* Chile and *(b)* Mexico regarding surveillance of delegates to the UN Security Council; and if he will make a statement. [156479]

**Mr. Rammell:** The British Embassy in Mexico City received a Note Verbale from the Mexican Government on this issue. We have received no such correspondence from the Chilean Government.

It is the well-established and long-standing practice of successive governments not to respond to speculation about alleged operational activities by the UK Security and Intelligence Services.

## ADVOCATE-GENERAL

### Departmental Costs

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Advocate-General what the total cost of running the office of the Advocate-General was in the latest year for which figures are available. [R] [154170]

**The Advocate-General for Scotland:** The identifiable costs of the office are not limited to the work of the Advocate-General but include litigation and advisory work, including the preparation of Bills, carried out by lawyers from the Office of Solicitor to the Advocate-General on behalf of Government Departments. The figure for 2002–03, in respect of identifiable costs of staff and related administration for my office, was £1,538,154.

## CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### Advisory Panel on Illicit Trade

**Mr. Randall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she expects the Advisory Panel on Illicit Trade to *(a)* report next and *(b)* be wound up. [155802]

**Estelle Morris:** I refer to the Government's response (published on 24 February) to the report (published on 16 December 2003) of the Select Committee for Culture, Media and Sport Cultural Objects: Developments since 2000.

*(a)* It is envisaged that the Illicit Trade Advisory Panel (ITAP) will produce its final report by March 2005. The exact timing of the report will be decided by the Panel at its next meeting.

*(b)* It is the intention of the DCMS to begin to wind up ITAP. We are extremely grateful to the Chairman and members of the Panel for all their work in advising Government. However, it is felt that resources should now be focused on the implementation of the new policy framework. The timing of the last meeting will be decided by ITAP itself.

## PRIME MINISTER

### Ministerial Meetings (Note Taking)

**Mr. Lilley:** To ask the Prime Minister what action he has taken to implement the recommendations of Sir Anthony Hammond about writing notes of ministerial meetings and telephone conversations. [156375]

**The Prime Minister:** Following the publication of Sir Anthony Hammond's report, the then Cabinet Secretary (now Lord Wilson of Dinton GCB) wrote to all Departments enclosing guidance on the management of private office papers. It is for individual Departments to determine their own arrangements taking account of this guidance.

### UK Presidencies (G8/EU)

**Tom Brake:** To ask the Prime Minister what discussions he has had with ministerial colleagues in the last 12 months on the priorities the Government intend to pursue when the UK assumes the presidencies of the *(a)* G8 and *(b)* EU. [156185]

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer my hon. Friend the Minister for Europe gave him today.

## SCOTLAND

### Devolution

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what the cost was to public funds of setting up devolved government in Scotland, excluding the cost of building the new parliament building in Edinburgh. [154396]

**Mrs. McGuire:** It is not possible to determine the costs of setting up devolved government in Scotland. Any costs since 1 July 1999 are a matter for the Scottish Executive. There has been no increase in the Scottish block to meet additional costs of devolution.

### Department Branding

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much his Department and its predecessors spent on branding the Department between 1997–98 and 2003–04, broken down by *(a)* consultancy fees, *(b)* design and orders for new stationery, *(c)* website design and *(d)* other material featuring new logos. [154070]

**Mrs. McGuire:** The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. Since then, there has been no expenditure on consultancy fees relating to branding the department and expenditure on new stationery or material featuring logos was minimal. The office spent £2,988 on branding in 1999–2000, relating mainly to new building signage. The Scotland Office website was set up in 1999 by departmental staff.

In the period 1 May 1997 to 30 June 1999, the Scottish Fisheries Protection Agency, now an agency of the Scottish Executive, spent £57,156 in respect of its agency logo and associated branding. Since 1 July 1999 expenditure on branding within the Scottish Executive or its agencies has been a matter for the Executive.

### Publicity Campaigns

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much *(a)* his Department and *(b)* each agency and non-departmental public body sponsored by his Department spent on (i) advertising and (ii) information campaigns in each year since 2002–03. [149915]

**Mrs. McGuire** *[holding answer 22 January 2004]:* The Scotland Office spent £10,390 on advertising in 2002–03. There has been no expenditure on advertising to date in 2003–04.

The Boundary Commission for Scotland spent £54,613 in 2002–03 on advertising statutory notices. Expenditure to date in 2003–04 is £62,557.

### Recruitment Advertising

**Pete Wishart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what his Department's expenditure on recruitment advertising was in each of the last three years, broken down by publication; and what proportion of such expenditure was *(a)* to advertise vacant posts and *(b)* in the form of other general recruitment advertising. [155527]

**Mrs. McGuire:** There has been no expenditure on recruitment advertising by the Scotland Office.

## MINISTER FOR WOMEN

### Earnings Differentials

19. **Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Minister for Women what the latest statistics are on the differential between male and female earnings for *(a)* men in the upper 10 per cent. of male earnings and women in the upper 10 per cent. of female earnings, *(b)* average male earnings and average female earnings and *(c)* men in the bottom 10 per cent. of male earnings and women in the bottom 10 per cent. of female earnings. [156273]

**Jacqui Smith:** The full-time hourly gender pay gap is 19.8 per cent. at the upper decile of the earnings distribution, and 9.11 per cent. at the bottom decile. The mean average hourly pay gap is 18.0 per cent. compared to a median average pay gap of 12.9 per cent.

### Social Care (Female Employment)

20. **Mr. Burns:** To ask the Minister for Women if she will make a statement on female employment in social care. [156274]

**Jacqui Smith:** Social care has a predominately female workforce. Employers need policies that recruit, develop and retain women in these important roles.

### Domestic Violence

21. **Mr. Willis:** To ask the Minister for Women what steps she has taken to ensure the safety of children whose parents have separated as a result of domestic violence. [156278]

**Ms Hewitt:** Children who grow up in homes where there is domestic violence will always be affected by it. In, 'Every Child Matters', the government's consultation document, we outline proposals that will give:

Improved support to parents through better universal and targeted services for families.

Early intervention and protection, with improved information sharing between agencies, a common needs assessment framework, assignment of a lead professional in cases where a child faces multiple risk factors, and multi-disciplinary teams in and around schools.

Greater accountability and integration of services locally, regionally and nationally, with a Director of Children's Services in every local authority and Local Safeguarding Children Boards.

A workforce reform strategy which will help the recruitment and retention of key professionals.

### Equal Pay

**Mr. Denham:** To ask the Minister for Women what action she proposes to close the pay gap between men and women in the south-east of England. [156277]

**Jacqui Smith:** The pay gap in the south-east is the second largest in Great Britain. This is in part because some men's earnings are particularly high there.

The pay gap problem is, however, a national one, and we are taking forward a number of measures to address it. These include the introduction of the national minimum wage, benefiting around one million women, and provisions in the Employment Act spreading good practice on equal pay.

### Parliamentary Questions

**Mr. Brady:** To ask the Minister for Women how many days on average her Office took in Session 2002–03 to give a substantive answer to a parliamentary question for ordinary written answer; and what the greatest number of days taken to answer such a question was. [155930]

**Ms Hewitt:** The Department's database has not separately identified figures for questions that I have answered as Minister for Women. Therefore, these figures are included in the answer to my hon. Friend's question 155390.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Energy Efficiency Industry

11. **Mr. Simon Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she last met leaders of the construction sector of the energy efficiency industry. [156263]

**Nigel Griffiths:** The Secretary of State attended the Better Buildings Summit on 21 October 2003 and met many people with an interest in energy efficiency issues and construction. In addition, in my role as Construction Minister I regularly meet with a range of organisations with an interest in this area including CIBSE, CPA and BSRIAS. Actions agreed at the Better Buildings Summit are being taken forward by the Sustainable Buildings Task Group. This includes action on energy efficiency.

### Government Energy Targets

12. **Mr. Robathan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the likelihood of reaching the Government's energy targets for 2010. [156264]

**Mr. Timms:** The Government remain confident that their target of 10 per cent. of electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2010 will be met. The target is challenging but we have established a framework of policies and measures for expansion, and industry has responded favourably to these.

### Balance of Trade (UK/EU)

13. **Sir Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the balance of trade with the EU was in the most recent 12 months for which figures are available; and what the balance was *(a)* five and *(b)* 10 years ago. [156265]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** In the year to the third quarter of 2003, the UK's balance of trade in goods and services deficit with the European Union was 2.5 per cent. of GDP. In 1998 and 1993, the deficits were 0.7 and 0.9 per cent. of GDP respectively.

### Manufacturing (Yorkshire and Humber)

14. **Helen Jackson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on regional support for manufacturing in Yorkshire and Humber. [156266]

**Jacqui Smith:** The Government are committed to supporting manufacturing in the UK. The Government's Manufacturing Strategy (published in May 2002) focuses on building a strong and successful manufacturing sector—supporting good quality jobs. Within Yorkshire and the Humber, Yorkshire Forward, the Regional Development Agency for the region has made manufacturing a key priority in the Regional Economic Strategy.

### Industrial Relations

15. **Vera Baird:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she is taking to promote new ways of working in industrial relations. [156269]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** My Department has introduced various initiatives in recent years to promote new ways of working in industrial relations. The Employment Relations Bill, currently before Parliament, includes provisions to implement the information and Consultation Directive and an amendment to provide funding for the modernisation of trade unions.

### Manufacturing

16. **Mr. Luke:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department is taking to promote innovation in UK manufacturing. [156270]

**Ms Hewitt:** The recently published Innovation Report, "Competing in the Global Economy: The Innovation Challenge", sets out an action plan to drive up levels of innovation in UK-based businesses. We are also taking forward a range of actions, as part of the Government's Manufacturing Strategy, to promote innovation in manufacturing to help our companies compete effectively in the global marketplace on the basis of high-skills and high-value products. These actions include the highly successful Manufacturing Advisory Service we have established in every region; the extension of the R&D tax credit; and our work with the RDAs to help manufacturers exploit the UK's strong science, engineering and technology base. We will publish a progress report on the implementation of the Manufacturing Strategy in May 2004.

### Departmental Budget

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what her Department's annual *(a)* staff and *(b)* car budget was for each year since 1997. [153547]

**Ms Hewitt:** Total spending by Department of Trade and Industry from its gross controlled Administration Budget on its staff and car budgets was as follows:

| | *Staff costs (£)* | *Car charges (£)* | *Car charges as a percentage of staff costs* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1997–98 | 227,000 | — | — |
| 1998–99 | 229,000 | 714.5 | 0.31 |
| 1999–2000 | 225,000 | 560.6 | 0.25 |
| 2000–01 | 261,000 | 597.4 | 0.23 |
| 2001–02 | 221,000 | 652.2 | 0.30 |
| 2002–03 | 276,000 | 749 | 0.27 |

The staffs costs figures can be found in the Department of Trade and Industry's Expenditure Plans 1999–2000 to 2001–2002 (Cm 4211) and the 2003 Departmental Report (Cm 5916).

The car charges exclude the ministerial car service. The figure for 1997–98 is not readily available.

## Carbon Dioxide Emissions

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to amend the Government's UK emissions targets for carbon dioxide; and if she will make a statement. [154221]

**Mr. Timms:** The Government plans to move towards a 20 per cent. reduction in CO2 emissions by 2010. There has been no change in this intention.

## Electricity Supply

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the margin of electricity capacity to meet winter peaks was for each year since 1993. [155266]

**Mr. Timms:** Based on data published by the National Grid Company in its annual "Seven Year Statement" and quarterly updates, out-turn figures for the total installed generating capacity, the average cold spell peak demand and the corresponding plant margin in England and Wales since the winter of 1993–94 are shown in the following table.

| *Winter* | *Total installed capacity (GW)* | *Average cold spell peak demand (GW)* | *Plant margin (Percentage)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1993–94 | 60.8 | 48.5 | 25.4 |
| 1994–95 | 59.5 | 48.9 | 21.7 |
| 1995–96 | 57.2 | 49.7 | 15.1 |
| 1996–97 | 61.4 | 50.9 | 20.6 |
| 1997–98 | 62.3 | 51.3 | 21.4 |
| 1998–99 | 63.3 | 51.5 | 22.9 |
| 1999–2000 | 64.7 | 52.4 | 23.4 |
| 2000–01 | 66.6 | 53.2 | 25.3 |
| 2001–02 | 68.0 | 54.1 | 25.6 |
| 2002–03 | 66.8 | 55.5 | 20.3 |
| 2003–04[1] | 68.0 | 55.9 | 21.6 |

[1] Provisional

**Mr. Wiggin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent discussions she has had with electricity generators regarding the supply of electricity. [155387]

**Mr. Timms:** Department of Trade and Industry Ministers hold regular meetings with electricity companies, including generators, to discuss a wide range of issues affecting the electricity industry, including the supply of electricity.

**Mr. Peter Duncan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on plans to invest in infrastructure to reduce instability of power in rural areas. [155471]

**Mr. Timms:** Ofgem's principal objective under the Electricity Act 1989 (as amended) is to protect the interests of consumers and, in performing that duty, it has regard to, among others, individuals in rural areas. Ofgem also has duties to promote efficiency and economy on the part of the distribution network operator (DNO), and the operators themselves have duties under the Act to maintain an efficient and economical system. Ofgem are required to balance these duties and so improvement in rural stability as a consequence of network investment is balanced against the additional costs involved.

I understand that Ofgem are currently in the process of reviewing the distribution price controls with new controls due to be introduced in April 2005. As part of this review, Ofgem will set the limit on the amount of revenue each distribution company can earn per year. As part of the review, Ofgem is assessing the efficient levels of operating and capital costs required for DNOs to meet their statutory obligations as well as to meet pre-determined targets, for example with respect to the number and duration of interruptions.

While Ofgem considers DNO forecasts of costs in assessing the required levels of revenue, it does not endorse or reject investment proposals on an individual basis. Instead, Ofgem provides a package of overall revenue allowances and network performance targets, relating in part to the number of customer interruptions and the duration of interruptions. Dependent upon performance against these targets, DNOs are either financially rewarded or penalised.

Ofgem are currently undertaking customer research to assess customers' willingness to pay for any improvements in standards, the findings of which are due to be published in May 2004. The research aims to gain a better understanding of the relative importance that customers place on quality of service issues and the customer's willingness to pay for any improvements.

I understand that this research will guide Ofgem's decisions on the level of price control revenues and will be taken into account by Ofgem when setting network performance targets, including the amount of revenue exposed for over or under-performance.

**Mr. Peter Duncan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what regulations are in place to ensure a reliable electricity supply to consumers. [155482]

**Mr. Timms:** Legal responsibility for energy security is shared by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and Ofgem. My right hon. Friend is responsible for setting the overall regulatory framework for the supply of electricity. A key part of that framework is set out in section 3 A of the Electricity Act 1989 as amended by the Utilities Act 2000 and includes the objectives "to protect the interests of consumers". To this end the Secretary of State has made a statutory instrument (The Electricity Safety, Quality and Continuity Regulations 2002) requiring electricity distribution companies to prevent interruption of supply as far as is reasonably practical. These regulations are enforced by DTI Engineering Inspectors.

Electricity for domestic consumers is provided through their contracts with electricity supply companies which must meet standard licence conditions including the need "to secure that all reasonable demands in Great Britain for electricity are met".

The infrastructure and the flow of electricity between generators and consumers is the responsibility of National Grid and electricity distribution companies. They are both regulated by Ofgem and also have licence conditions and objectives. For example, National Grid has a licence condition to operate the electricity system in an economic, efficient and coordinated manner. The

Secretary of State lays down the Standard Licence Conditions. Enforcement of the licence conditions is for Ofgem.

**Mr. Peter Duncan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the estimated number of customer minutes lost of electricity was in *(a)* Dumfries and Galloway, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* the UK in 2003. [155470]

**Mr. Timms:** The average customer minutes lost of electricity during 2002–03 for the three areas are:

(a) Dumfries and Galloway: 147

(b) Scotland: 79

(c) UK: 110

The average minutes lost per connected customer in the respective regions reflects the reliability of supplies averaged out between those living in rural and urban settings.

### Intellectual Property Rights

**Janet Anderson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the Government's policy is on Article 10 of the draft EU Enforcement Directive. [155941]

**Ms Hewitt:** We support the compromise text for the draft EU Enforcement Directive sent by the Council to the European Parliament on 16 February.

In this text Article 10 (provisional measures) provides for a right holder to apply for an interlocutory injunction:

"against an intermediary whose services are being used by a third party to infringe an intellectual property right".

There is also a specific reference to provisions already available under the Copyright Directive 2001/29/EC.

We believe this text preserves the balance achieved in the earlier Copyright Directive and between the interests of right holders and intermediaries such as internet service providers.

**Janet Anderson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the protection of intellectual property rights afforded by the draft EU Enforcement Directive to UK businesses. [155942]

**Ms Hewitt:** We have been assessing the EU Enforcement Directive as it has developed in discussions in the Council Working Party on Intellectual Property and the Permanent Representatives Committee taking account of the various views expressed by interests in response to the Patent Office consultation and informal discussions.

We intend to present a report on the compromise text for the EU Enforcement Directive to the Parliament's Scrutiny Committees.

**Janet Anderson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what reasons underlie the Government's decision to seek amendments to Articles 10 and 15 of the draft EU Enforcement Directive. [155943]

**Ms Hewitt:** We support the compromise text for the draft EU Enforcement Directive sent by the Council to the European Parliament on 16 February.

We believe this text preserves the balance achieved in the earlier Copyright Directive 2001/29/EC and between the interests of right holders and intermediaries.

**Janet Anderson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations the Government are making to other EU member states to ensure that the draft EU Enforcement Directive offers the best possible degree of protection to UK businesses. [155944]

**Ms Hewitt:** The compromise text sent by the Council to the European Parliament on 16 February was the result of intensive discussions with the Council Working Party on Intellectual Property and the Permanent Representatives Committee together with informal discussions with other member states and the interests in general.

As stated in the Council's letter, the compromise proposal received broad support in the Permanent Representatives Committee, and I believe that if this text is adopted, it will significantly assist UK businesses with the enforcement of their intellectual property rights across the European Community.

### EU Regional Policy

**Ann Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Government proposals for EU regional policy after 2006 *(a)* falls within existing EU treaty obligations and *(b)* has been accepted by the Commission. [155224]

**Jacqui Smith:** The Government considers that its proposals for EU regional policy after 2006 do fall within existing Treaty obligations. Our proposals aim at reducing disparities between regions, with a focus on the needs of the poorest Member States.

The Commission's proposals for the future development of EU regional policy is set out in its Third Cohesion Report, which was published on 18 February. This report will provide an important contribution to the ongoing debate. We shall want to assess the policy and budgetary implications of the proposals in the report carefully against the Government's objectives for reform.

### Minimum Wage (Workington)

**Tony Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people are receiving the minimum wage in the Workington constituency. [156267]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** It is not possible to provide estimates specifically for Workington. However, based on the Office for National Statistics' Low Pay data released in 2003, the DTI estimates that around 140,000 people in the North West stood to benefit from the introduction of the national minimum wage in April 1999.

The DTI estimates that between 130,000 and 160,000 people in the North West benefited from the increase in minimum wage rates in October 2003.

### Music Piracy

**Chris Bryant:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to tackle music piracy. [156259]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** Commercial scale piracy is clearly having a serious impact on the music and film industry, which makes an important contribution to the British economy.

The White Paper, "Competing in the Global Economy: The Innovation Challenge Innovation Report", published by the Department in December 2003 (copies have been placed in the Libraries of the House), gave the Patent Office a mandate to agree a new national strategy for intellectual property crime. Development of that strategy is now in hand.

### Near Earth Objects

**Lembit Öpik:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the Government's contribution to the European Space Agency's planned near earth object mission study. [155360]

**Ms Hewitt:** The UK was involved in, and contributed under European Space Agency (ESA) General Studies funding towards, the ESA's Near Earth Object (NEO) mission studies including the "Remote Sensing of NEOs from Space" study and the "Simone" study which looked at options for an inter-planetary intercept mission.

**Lembit Öpik:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on steps the Government have taken to promote multi-disciplinary studies of the consequences of impacts from near earth objects on the earth. [155362]

**Ms Hewitt:** The Government supports the findings of the OECD Global Science Forum (GSF) Workshop held in Frascati in January 2003. These include a recommendation for multidisciplinary activity by the International Council for Science (ICSU). That activity has since been approved and is underway. The UK will be involved in the execution of the ICSU activity.

**Lembit Öpik:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on steps the Government have taken to establish studies to look into the practical possibilities of mitigating the results of impact and deflecting incoming objects. [155363]

**Ms Hewitt:** Through the current OECD Global Science Forum activity on Near Earth Objects (NEO), the Government are involved in studies to look into the practical aspects of assessing the risk of impacts as well as the related mitigation planning. The UK has actively encouraged the European Space Agency to carry out studies on NEOs and is involved in missions such as the Rosetta mission to the comet Churyumov-Gerasimenko. This will provide significant experience adding to the already substantial knowledge base that will help in the preparation of any deflection mission that may be required.

**Lembit Öpik:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the hazard from near earth objects. [155366]

**Ms Hewitt:** Near Earth Objects (NEO) remain a continuing risk and one which the Government takes seriously. The NEO Information Centre based in Leicester will continue to provide up to date information on the risks to Government and the public.

**Lembit Öpik:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on arrangements that have been made for observational data obtained for other purposes by wide-field facilities to be searched for near earth objects on a nightly basis. [155370]

**Ms Hewitt:** The two main new wide-field survey facilities (ESO VISTA in Chile and the WFCAM instrument facility in Hawaii) are currently under construction and plans for their observing programmes are under discussion between PPARC (Particle Physic and Astronomy Research Council) and its partners. In order to undertake routine examination in near real time of the data stream from these facilities, a dedicated software suite would be required.

There are no resources available to provide such a capability. Nevertheless, observing programme managers will exchange information on targets of opportunity, such as Near Earth Objects, on a best efforts basis.

**Lembit Öpik:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on negotiations to establish an arrangement for small amounts of time to be provided under appropriate financial terms for spectroscopic follow-up of near earth objects; and what financial support she has provided. [155372]

**Ms Hewitt:** I refer to the reply to PQ No. 155371. The Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council (PPARC) has provided some £2,000 pa to the follow-up and spectroscopic analysis activity.

### Parliamentary Questions

**Mr. Brady:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many days on average her Department took in Session 2002–03 to give a substantive answer to a parliamentary question for ordinary written answer; and what the greatest number of days taken to answer such a question was. [155928]

**Ms Hewitt:** According to the Department's PQ database, the Department answered 2,867 Ordinary Written Questions in the session 2002–03. Of these, 2,293 (80 per cent.) were answered within five sitting days. 172 (6 per cent.) took longer than 10 days to receive a reply.

### Post Office

**Mr. Swire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* urban and *(b)* rural post offices have closed in East Devon since 1997. [155298]

**Mr. Timms:** Decisions on post office closures are an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. and I have asked the Chief Executive to reply direct to the hon. Member.

**Mr. Colman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many consultations on post office branch closures have been carried out in the 12 months to 31 January; and how many such consultations have resulted in a branch remaining open. [155883]

**Mr. Timms:** Decisions on post office closure proposals following public consultation are an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. and I have asked the Chief Executive to reply direct to my hon. Friend.

**Mr. Denham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the closure programme for post offices in urban areas. [156268]

**Mr. Timms:** Post Office Ltd. reports on the urban reinvention programme on a quarterly basis. As at the end of December 2003:

694 offices had closed under the programme;

46 proposals had been withdrawn or delayed for reworking during the advance notification process agreed with Postwatch;

a further 66 proposals had been withdrawn or amended as a result of public consultation.

Post Office Ltd. had approved 388 applications for investment grants to modernise remaining post offices.

On 5 February, I announced a number of changes, agreed between Post Office Ltd. and Postwatch, to the public consultation arrangements to ensure confidence in them and, by maximising the quality of judgment and transparency, to produce a fair result for customers and the company.

### Post Office Card Accounts

**Tony Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the progress of arrangements for opening post office card accounts. [156011]

**Mr. Timms:** The post office card account is proving popular with customers. So far, over 2 million people have chosen the card account.

### State Aid Applications

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many state aid applications were received in each of the last five years, broken down by region; how many were allowed in each case; and how many are awaiting decisions. [147859]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** The following table sets out the best available information on the number of UK notifications made to, and approved by, the European Commission over the past five years excluding agriculture, fishery and transport cases. It would not be possible to break the figures down to regions within England except at disproportionate cost. Where a notification is not clearly regionally specific it is recorded as UK-wide. In addition there were 10, 58 and 61 cases in the years 2001, 2002 and 2003 respectively deemed approved under the Block Exemption Regulations and Multisectoral Framework 2002.

| | *1999* | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* | *2003* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Notified | 20 | 26 | 25 | 40 | 35 |
| Pending | — | 2 | 1 | 2 | 24 |
| Withdrawn or negative | 1 | — | — | 1 | — |
| Approved | 19 | 24 | 24 | 37 | 11 |
| *of which:* | | | | | |
| UK | 10 | 11 | 11 | 32 | 9 |
| England | 4 | 9 | 4 | 2 | — |
| Scotland | — | 2 | 3 | 1 | — |
| Wales | 3 | — | — | 1 | 1 |
| Northern Ireland | 2 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 1 |

### Taxis/Private Hire Vehicles

**Mr. Chaytor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to initiate further consultation on the Office of Fair Trading report on "The Regulation of Licensed Taxi and PHV Services in the UK"; when she intends to make her final response to the report; and if she will make a statement. [153334]

**Mr. Sutcliffe** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* Both Department of Trade and Industry and the Department for Transport have received responses relating to the OFT report. These will be taken into account when the Government respond. When the OFT published their report on 11 November we agreed to respond within 120 days.

### Wind Farms

**Mr. Peter Duncan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to facilitate the *(a)* decommissioning, *(b)* upkeep and *(c)* removal of (i) turbines and (ii) transmission facilities from wind farms; and if she will make a statement. [155478]

**Mr. Timms:** The decommissioning, upkeep and removal of turbines and transmission facilities from wind farms and the restoration of the land are matters for the developer and the relevant planning authorities with appropriate arrangements for these activities being agreed at the planning stage.

**Mr. Peter Duncan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on Government financial support to firms looking to establish wind farms. [155479]

**Mr. Timms:** The Government's main instrument for supporting the establishment of wind farms is the Renewables Obligation. The Obligation is a market based support mechanism that requires licensed electricity suppliers to provide a specified proportion of their electricity from renewable sources. This provides an assured market for renewable electricity and that it attracts a premium.

To date, the Government have committed £117 million in grant support to early offshore wind farm development. No direct grant support is provided for onshore wind farm development except for some small household or community installations under the Clear Skies scheme.

**Mr. Peter Duncan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with the Scottish Executive on planning policies for wind farms. [155480]

**Mr. Timms:** Planning policy in Scotland is a matter devolved to the Scottish Executive and therefore no such discussions have taken place.

### Working Time Directive

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the number of working hours that would be lost per year by *(a)* all employees, *(b)* male employees and *(c)* female employees if legislation were passed to prevent them from working longer than an average 48 hours per week. [153917]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** Employers are likely to respond in a variety of ways if legislation were passed to prevent employees from working longer than 48 hours on average. This makes any estimate of the total number of hours worked per year that could be lost difficult.

However, what can be estimated is the total number of hours per year that employees usually work over an average of 48 hours per week. For all employees it is estimated at around 990 million hours per year above 48 hours were worked as of spring 2003. This is equivalent to around $2\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. of total hours usually worked by all employees. For male employees it is around 820 million hours per year and for female employees around 170 million hours per year.

### Wylfa Magnox Reactor

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information she has received on progress made by BNFL to resolve problems with the superheater penetration welds in the Wylfa Magnox reactor. [144507]

**Mr. Timms:** I understand from the company that the issue dates back to 2000 and is now resolved with the plant fully operational.

Wylfa power station was shut down in mid April 2000 when a routine inspection of 64 welds in the boiler system revealed flaws in a number of welds. The welds hold 'superheater headers' (64 pipes that carry steam, which is not radioactive, from the station's boilers to its turbines to make electricity) in position. The integrity of the pipes themselves was never in question. A major project to fit restraints to steam pipes at Wylfa was completed at the start of July 2001.

## CABINET OFFICE

### Special Advisers

**Dr. Cable:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office pursuant to his answer of 26 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 73W, on special advisers, what the cost of the Knowledge Network was in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [156249]

**Mr. Alexander:** In the financial year 2002–03 the Knowledge Network cost £1.5 million in current expenditure and £1.7 million capital. (These figures do not include capital charges or Cabinet Office overheads such as accommodation).

The costs represent the provision of ongoing infrastructure support and the development of web solutions and new systems to facilitate cross-government working.

### Strategy Unit Fisheries Report

**Mr. Carmichael:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office pursuant to his answer of 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1135–36W, on the Strategy Unit Fisheries report, what the reasons are for the delay in the publication of this report. [156579]

**Mr. Alexander:** We aim to publish the Strategy Unit report on 25 March 2004, a year from its announcement. Copies will be placed in the House Libraries.

The report has been the subject of a detailed consultation with the key stakeholders in the fishing industry.

## DEFENCE

### Iraq

**Mr. Soley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to receive the report he has commissioned on the availability of body armour during the conflict in Iraq. [154983]

**Mr. Hoon:** The Department has carried out a comprehensive analysis of Operation TELIC and presented its findings in reports published in June and December last year. The availability of Enhanced Combat Body Armour (ECBA) was discussed in these reports. However, in the light of lessons identified during Operation TELIC, policy on the issuing of ECBA to troops on operations is now under review.

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what advice is given to troops in Iraq about the dangers of depleted uranium. [156560]

**Mr. Caplin:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent, North (Ms Walley) on 5 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 26W.

### Nuclear Weapons (Decommissioning)

**Linda Perham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he is taking to achieve multilateral decommissioning of nuclear weapons. [156076]

**Mr. Hoon:** As a signatory to the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) the United Kingdom is committed to Article VI in which each State Party to the treaty

> "undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament . . ."

The UK anticipates that multilateral nuclear weapons decommissioning would take place within that context. Negotiations to implement Article VI have not yet commenced and are not scheduled. The way forward agreed by NPT States Parties at the 2000 NPT review conference is set out in the final document produced by that conference. The UK has made considerable progress on measures contained in the final document and will play a full role in the third session of the NPT Preparatory Committee in April this year.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Asylum Seekers

**Mr. Lansley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum-seekers have been detained pending removal at the Oakington Immigration Reception Centre during 2003. [145365]

**Beverley Hughes:** Information on the number of people detained pending removal from the United Kingdom and on the total number of detainees held under the Immigration Act during 2003 is not available and could be obtained only by examination of individual case-files at disproportionate cost.

The latest available information on people held in the Immigration Removal Estate show that at 27 September 2003 260 people were housed at the Oakington Immigration Reception Centre.

**Mr. George Howarth:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum applications the UK has received for each of the last five years; and what the comparable figures are for each country in the European Union. [155508]

**Beverley Hughes:** The table shows the number of asylum applications received in each European Union country in each of the last five years.

*Applications[1] received for asylum in Europe, including dependants, by year of application, 1998 to 2003*

| | *1998* | *1999* | *2000* | *2001[2]* | *2002[3]* | *2003[3]* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Austria | 13,800 | 20,100 | 18,300 | 30,100 | 39,400 | 32,400 |
| Belgium[4] | 25,000 | 40,800 | 48,700 | 28,000 | 21,400 | 19,300 |
| France[4] | 25,500 | 35,100 | 44,200 | 53,900 | 58,100 | 69,300 |
| Germany | 98,600 | 95,100 | 78,600 | 88,300 | 71,100 | 50,400 |
| Greece[5] | 3,000 | 1,500 | 3,000 | 5,500 | 5,700 | 8,200 |
| Italy[6] | 9,500 | 33,400 | 18,000 | 9,600 | 7,300 | n/a |
| Luxembourg[5] | 1,700 | 2,900 | 600 | 700 | 1,000 | 1,600 |
| Netherlands | 45,200 | 39,300 | 43,900 | 32,600 | 18,700 | 13,400 |
| Portugal[5] | 400 | 300 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 100 |
| Spain | 6,600 | 8,400 | 7,200 | 9,200 | 6,200 | 5,700 |
| Denmark[7] | 5,700 | 6,500 | 10,100 | 12,500 | 5,900 | 4,600 |
| Finland[7] | 1,300 | 3,100 | 3,200 | 1,700 | 3,400 | 3,100 |
| Ireland | 4,600 | 7,700. | 10,900 | 10,300 | 11,600 | 7,900 |
| Sweden[7] | 12,800 | 11,200 | 16,300 | 23,500 | 33,000 | 31,400 |
| United Kingdom[8] | 58,500 | 91,200 | 98,900 | 91,600 | 103,100 | 61,100 |
| Total EU | 312,300 | 396,700 | 401,900 | 397,600 | 386,100 | 308,400 |

[1] Figures rounded to the nearest 100.
[2] Provisional figures.
[3] Revised figures.
[4] Figures based on IGC data but adjusted to include an estimated number of dependants.
[5] Figures based on UNHCR data, including dependants.
[6] UNHCR data.
[7] Signed up to the Schengen agreement but not operating its provisions.
[8] Figures have been adjusted to include an estimated number of dependants between 1998 and 2001. 2002 and 2003 figures based on actual data.

Annual data on asylum applications to EU member states are published in quarterly web pages and in the Home Office annual statistical bulletin Asylum Statistics United Kingdom, copies of which are available from the Library of the House and from the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

**Mr. George Howarth:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his forecasts are for asylum applications for each of the next five years; and what the comparable figures are for each EU member state. [155509]

**Beverley Hughes:** We have already reduced the monthly intake of asylum applications by half since October 2002. Current policy initiatives, such as juxtaposed controls in France and the deployment of detection technology at continental ports, are designed to prevent those who seek to circumvent our controls at specific ports of entry from doing so. The Government are confident that this and further measures will continue to reduce misuse of the asylum system and the numbers of unfounded asylum claims. The measures we introduced in the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 and the subsequent robust measures to ensure the integrity of our borders are testament to that.

Population and migration projections are published by the Government Actuary's Department, available from the Library of the House.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what *(a)* financial and *(b)* other support services are available to an asylum seeker aged between 16 and 18-years-old who is in the UK without family. [155641]

**Beverley Hughes:** Services for unaccompanied asylum seeking children aged between 16 and 18-years-old are the responsibility of local authority social services departments. Their needs are assessed and support services provided accordingly in ways that are the equivalent of any other child in need. In all but a very few cases the local authority will make all necessary financial provision for them. In the few cases, for example, where leave to remain has been granted and their individual social services pathway plan permits, they may access benefits as part of an overall range of provision.

**Mr. Heathcoat-Amory:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many unaccompanied children he estimates arrived in the United Kingdom in each of the last five years from outside the EU. [155797]

**Beverley Hughes:** I regret that reliable information on the entry routes of unaccompanied children to the UK is not available. The available information which relates to the number of asylum applications made by unaccompanied asylum seeking children in the last five years is given in the table.

*Asylum applications from unaccompanied children aged 17 or under*[1]

| | Number of principal applicants | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Year* | *Total* | *Port* | *In country* |
| 1998[2] | 3,035 | 1,085 | 1,955 |
| 1999[2] | 3,350 | 1,500 | 1,850 |
| 2000[2] | 2,735 | 1,395 | 1,340 |
| 2001[2] | 3,470 | 1,645 | 1,820 |
| 2002[3] | 6,200 | 1,240 | 4,955 |
| 2003[3,4] | 2,800 | 555 | 2,245 |

[1] Figures rounded to nearest five. Unaccompanied at point of arrival, aged (or if no proof) determined to be 17 or under and not known to be joining a relative or guardian in the UK. Figures exclude disputed age cases.

[2] May exclude some cases lodged at Local Enforcement Offices.

[3] Not comparable with manual counts data prior to 2002.

[4] Provisional figures.

Information on the number of asylum applications from unaccompanied children is published in quarterly web pages and in the annual statistical bulletin Asylum Statistics United Kingdom. Copies of these publications and others relating to general immigration to the UK are available from the Library of the House and from the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

## Cannabis

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the schedule of advertising was for the 2004 cannabis advertising campaign; and what the full cost of the campaign was, broken down by media outlet. [153984]

**Caroline Flint** *[holding answer 9 February 2004]:* The schedule and costs for advertising are as follows:

Radio advertising started on the 22 January for four weeks, on 48 national and regional commercial radio stations in England. Total costs including production, media and research: £387,000.

Press advertising consisted of two insertions in five national press titles (Sun, Mirror, News of the World, Guardian and Telegraph) and one insertion in each of the 108 regional titles. These insertions were on or near the reclassification dated 29 January. Total costs including production, media and research: £305,000.

Other costs including briefings for police, teachers and other professionals; 2.5 million leaflets to be distributed through youth clubs, schools and community groups; postcards appearing in 660 pubs and bars in England and Wales and a contingency fund for reprints: £300,000.

**Mr. Peter Duncan** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much *(a)* has been spent in the last 12 months and *(b)* will be spent in the next 12 months on public information advertising relating to cannabis. [155475]

**Caroline Flint:** The costs for public information activities relating to cannabis are as follows:

Radio advertising for four weeks. On 48 national and regional commercial radio stations in England. Total costs including production, media and research: £387,000.

Press advertising consisted of two insertions in five national press titles (Sun, Mirror, News of the World, Guardian and Telegraph) and one insertion in each of 108 regional titles. These insertions were on or near the reclassification dated 29 January.

Total costs including production, media and research: £305,000.

Other costs including briefings for police, teachers and other professionals; 2.5 million leaflets to be distributed through youth clubs, schools and community groups; postcards appearing in 660 pubs and bars in England and Wales and a contingency fund for reprints: £300,000.

No decision has been made to date as to how much will be spent over the next 12 months.

## Correspondence

**Mr. Kaufman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he intends to reply to the letter to him dated 6 January 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. Raymond McGinty. [154062]

**Mr. Blunkett:** I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 25 February 2004.

## Immigration and Nationality Directorate

**Mr. Love:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will make a statement on recent staff turnover at the Immigration and Nationality Directorate, with particular reference to caseworkers dealing with asylum applications; [153700]

(2) what measures his Department is taking to minimise disruption to asylum applications resulting from turnover of Immigration and Nationality Directorate caseworkers. [153702]

**Beverley Hughes:** Staffing levels in the Immigration and Nationality Directorate are continually monitored so that staff turnover can be anticipated and planned for to minimise disruption.

The Asylum Casework Directorate utilises business planning forecast models to anticipate and plan for staff turnover. Staff turnover has, as a result, been carefully managed to minimise disruption to the processing of asylum applications. About 80 per cent. of new applications are currently decided within two months (against a target of 75 per cent.).

### Prisons

**Mr. Mark Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the Prison Service review of the open prison estate; and if he will place a copy in the Library. [155065]

**Paul Goggins:** In his statement on 6 January, in response to concern about prisoners absconding from open prisons, my right hon. Friend, the Home Secretary said that he had asked the new chief executive of the National Offender Management Service to "report on the operation of open prisons". This was a request for advice from officials not for a formal report or review. I am at present considering the advice but it would be inappropriate to publish it and I have no plans to do so.

### Venezuelan Nationals

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of the Venezuelan nationals admitted to the United Kingdom during 2002 returned to their country of origin within the period of their visa requirements. [155404]

**Beverley Hughes:** No data are available on the numbers of persons who return to their country of nationality before their leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom expires. We do not routinely manually count passengers into and out of the United Kingdom.

We are keeping the option for embarkation controls under review while exploring the extent to which new technology could provide us with more efficient ways of checking those leaving the country.

### Visa Requirements

**Mr. Tynan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 27 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 269W, on visa requirements, whether anti-trade union activity is regarded as not being conducive to the public good. [155561]

**Beverley Hughes:** Each case is considered on its individual merits. A person engaged in anti-trade union activity may be refused entry if their presence in the UK was not considered to be conducive to the wider public good.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

### Fairtrade Products

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Chairman of the Catering Committee if he will recommend to the Refreshment Department that it stocks Fairtrade fruit and chocolate bars in all catering outlets on the Parliamentary Estate. [155813]

**Mr. Dennis Turner:** The Refreshment Department was one of the first organisations to support the Fairtrade movement and has done so for many years. We already stock chocolate made by The Day Chocolate Company throughout our cafeterias, and purchase Fairtrade bananas whenever they are available from our suppliers. All fresh coffee served by the Department is made from beans approved by the Fairtrade organisation, and we stock fairly traded "Clipper" teas and "Geobars" (a cereal snack bar).

The Refreshment Department will be actively supporting the Fairtrade Fortnight, which is being held from Monday 1 March to Sunday 14 March, by promoting our Fairtrade Mark products under their banner "A taste for life". We will also be selling other fairly traded goods, including dried fruits, cookies, pasta, oranges and grapes, which are not always available to the catering market. We believe that these will prove popular with our customers and we hope by this means to encourage our suppliers to stock these products.

## INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Nicaragua

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the national level workshop in Nicaragua supported by his Department in 2003. [155244]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** The Nicaraguan workshop took place on 3 March 2003. It brought together, for the first time in Nicaragua, Government officials, the private sector, labour organisations, representatives of international certification programmes and retailers. Its aim was to identify possible ways to strengthen the implementation and monitoring of corporate codes of conduct in Nicaragua and thereby improve both the conditions of workers in export industries and the ability of these industries to be competitive internationally.

The workshop made a number of recommendations for action to be taken by the Government, private sector and civil society in Nicaragua: the need to clarify the roles of those involved in monitoring corporate codes of conduct, to improve cooperation between national government officials and international certification programmes, to rationalise monitoring to avoid duplication and conflicting recommendations to factories, and to increase the knowledge of workers of corporate codes of conduct and national labour legislation.

One impact of the workshop was that the women workers association (the Maria Elena Cuadra Movement of Women Workers and Unemployed) integrated the recommendations into its training, advisory and policy work to improve the conditions of workers in the garment industry of the tax free zones.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### Agricultural Market Price Support

**Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the instruments of agricultural market price support; and how each is *(a)* defined and *(b)* calculated. [151647]

**Alun Michael:** The Common Agricultural Policy includes several instruments whose objective is to support market prices for agricultural products. These are: (i) intervention storage, where public intervention

agencies guarantee to buy products at a set price; (ii) export refunds, which bridge the gap between EU internal market and world market prices, (iii) import tariffs which are a fixed or variable levy on each unit of imported product, and (iv) aid for private storage.

The OECD produces annual estimates of the transfers to agricultural producers which result from market price support in the EU. The estimates are calculated as the difference between the EU domestic price and the equivalent world price multiplied by the level of EU production. The OECD estimates EU market price support for the major commodities in 2002 at around Euro 61 billion.

### Avian Influenza

**Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answer of 5 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1012W, on avian influenza, what varieties of poultry have been imported from *(a)* Thailand, *(b)* Pakistan, *(c)* Indonesia, *(d)* Vietnam and *(e)* other countries in South East Asia in each of the last 24 months for which records are available. [155974]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Information on imports of poultry meat by species is not available.

### Common Agricultural Policy

**Geraldine Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will make a statement on Common Agricultural Policy reform. [155186]

**Alun Michael:** The EU agreed on 26 June 2003 to a radical shift in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). In future, the bulk of subsidies will no longer be linked to production, freeing farmers to produce the safe, high quality food which people want and bringing environmental improvements.

On 12 February my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, announced how she proposed to implement key features of that groundbreaking reform in England. We will decouple fully in 2005 and move over an eight year transition period towards a flat rate Single Farm Payment to farmers. England will be split into two regions—land in the severely disadvantaged areas (SDAs) of the less favoured areas (LFAs) and all other eligible land. Different rates will apply in these regions. This represents a decisive irreversible and forward-looking shift consistent with the direction that we have already set in the Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy (SFFS) and in the June 2003 CAP reform negotiations.

### Departmental Reports

**Mr. Steen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the reports her Department has published in each of the last five years; and what the cost has been to public funds of producing each one. [155406]

**Alun Michael:** A list of publications produced by Defra is on the departmental website Defra, UK—Publications home page, and this includes many of the reports that Defra produces. To collate the information requested and to establish the individual production costs would be disproportionate.

### Kew Gardens

**Adam Price:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much Government funding has been provided for the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew in each year since 1996 at current prices. [153871]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Government grant in aid (including capital) to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew for each of the years since 1996 was:

| | *£000* |
|---|---|
| 1996–97 | 18,936 |
| 1997–98 | 20,951 |
| 1998–99 | 17,551 |
| 1999–2000 | 17,219 |
| 2000–01 | 16,935 |
| 2001–02 | 19,729 |
| 2002–03 | 16,629 |

### Milk

**Albert Owen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of the increase in price noted in her Department's milk price survey raw milk producers will receive; and what steps she has taken to ensure that raw milk producers receive a fair share of this increase. [154890]

**Alun Michael:** The milk price survey run by the Department records the price paid by the purchasers of raw milk to raw milk producers. Therefore, by definition, all of the increase in price recorded by this survey is received by raw milk producers.

The Office for National Statistics also produce data on the retail price of milk. Transmission of changes between retail and farmgate prices is more complex. This issue was looked at in depth by London Economics for KPMG its report on "Prices and Profitability in the GB Dairy Chain", which was commissioned by the Milk Development Council. London Economics examined the UK milk market for the period from January 1995 to December 2001. On the basis of a rigorous statistical analysis, it concluded that adjustments to retail prices for liquid milk were fully passed back to the farmgate price, although there was a lag of five months before the retail price change was fully reflected in the farmgate price. There were no differences in the impact of retail price increases and decreases on farmgate prices, both were fully transmitted. In contrast a 1 pence increase in the farmgate price resulted in only a 0.6 pence increase in the retail price of liquid milk whereas a 1 pence decrease in farmgate price reduced the retail price by 0.7 pence.

London Economic also looked at the market in cheddar cheese. They found some evidence of a widening gap over the seven year period to 2002 between the retail price and farm gate price on a milk equivalent basis.

### Net Mesh Sizes

**Mr. Paterson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research she has conducted on the relationship between net mesh sizes required in commercial trawls and minimum landing sizes. [150939]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** For the main commercial species research has established the general relationship between cod-end mesh size and the average size of fish that can escape through those meshes, on which the minimum landings size is based.

### Parliamentary Questions

**Mr. Brady:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many days on average her Department took in session 2002–03 to give a substantive answer to a parliamentary question for ordinary written answer; and what the greatest number of days taken to answer such a question was. [155923]

**Alun Michael:** Records for session 2002–03 were not maintained in such a way to enable the Department to extract the information requested without incurring disproportionate costs but this sort of information will be available in the future following the creation of a new database.

Defra endeavours to reply to all parliamentary questions within parliamentary deadlines wherever possible. None of the 5,444 questions tabled to the Department during the 2002–03 session were left unanswered at Prorogation.

### Turf Farming

**Mr. Pickthall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the Government's policy towards *(a)* turf farming and *(b)* the restoration of land used when turf farming has ceased in a particular area. [154815]

**Alun Michael:** The Government encourage diversification of agricultural businesses but recognises that this must be done in a sustainable manner. Turf farming involves the cutting and inevitable removal of some topsoil. The use of modern machinery, which removes only a very thin layer of root matter and soil, is encouraged.

There is no specific policy directly addressing this issue but the guidance provided in the Codes of Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Soil should be adhered to. The formation of fertile, rich topsoil with high organic matter content is a very slow natural process. Removal of topsoil reduces the productivity of the land by reducing the water and nutrients available to plants and making soil more likely to suffer structural damage. Shallow compact soils are also less able to absorb rainfall and the risk of water erosion and associated diffuse pollution may be increased. Therefore the loss of topsoil should be kept to a minimum in any turf farming operation.

Due consideration needs to be given on the likely risk of compacting the soil and leaving it in a bare condition that could encourage erosion and runoff of water and associated soil materials to water courses, roads etc. To minimise this risk, land formally subject to turf farming should be re-vegetated as soon as practicable. The soil should not be mined of available water and nutrients such that it cannot support the previous agricultural land use once restoration activities are complete.

It should be noted that removing large amounts of surface soil could be regarded as a development as defined by section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990). As such the business will need planning permission. If businesses do not receive planning permission it is an offence under the Agriculture Land (Removal of Surface Soil) Act 1953 to remove for sale, more than five cubic yards of surface soil from agricultural land in any three-month period unless the removal is reasonably necessary for cutting turf or peat. Advice is available from the local planning authority (usually district council or unitary authority) about commercial turf cutting from agricultural land when planning permission is required. The Local Planning Authorities are required to consult with Defra before granting permission for a planning application which is not in accordance with the development plan and would involve (1) the loss of 20 ha or more of grades 1, 2 or 3a agricultural land or (2) a loss which is less than 20 ha but is likely to lead to further losses amounting cumulatively to 20 ha or more.

### Victorian Theme Park (Isle of Wight)

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on her reasons for grant aiding the proposed development of a Victorian Theme Park at Holliers Farm, Branstone, Newchurch, Isle of Wight; and what account she took of the proximity of the Isle of Wight Observatory. [155666]

**Alun Michael:** If the question refers to the Rural Enterprise Scheme 16/020/8002, submitted by Mr. Paul Smith of Jayland Ltd. on 23 December 2002, for the development of Jubilee Park, I can confirm that the application was formally withdrawn on 4 July due to the absence of planning consent. The application was never formally presented to the Defra Regional Appraisal Panel to consider approval for grant aid.

Impacts on the Isle of Wight Observatory would be a matter for consideration by the Local Planning Authority, I understand the authority has received correspondence from the Observatory in respect of potential light pollution.

## LEADER OF THE HOUSE

### Ministerial Meetings

**Adam Price:** To ask the Leader of the House how many meetings he has had in his capacity as Leader of the House in the past eight months. [153624]

**Mr. Hain:** I undertake a wide range of meetings with interested parties. These include meetings with Mr. Speaker, Members of the House, House officials and Cabinet colleagues.

### Opposition Days

**Mr. Hurst:** To ask the Leader of the House (1) for how long *(a)* the Opposition front-bench speakers, *(b)* the Government front-bench speakers and *(c)* other front-bench speakers spoke in Opposition Day debates in each year since 1974; [157062]

(2) how many back-bench members were called to speak, excluding interventions, in Opposition Day debates in each year since 1974; [157063]

(3) how much parliamentary time was allowed for Opposition Day debates in each year since 1974; [157064]

(4) how much parliamentary time was taken by back-bench speeches, excluding interventions, in Opposition Day debates in each year since 1974; [157065]

(5) how many interventions to their speeches were granted by *(a)* Government Ministers and *(b)* Opposition front-bench speakers in Opposition Day debates in each year since 1974. [157066]

**Mr. Hain:** This information is a matter of public record, but could be collated only at disproportionate cost.

## TREASURY

### Alcoholic Drinks (Duty)

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the loss of duty payable to the Government consequent on the purchase of *(a)* beer, *(b)* wine and *(c)* spirits in France by United Kingdom residents in the last year for which figures are available. [155233]

**John Healey:** The most recent estimates of the loss of duty and VAT payable to the Government consequent on purchases of beer, wine and spirits made in all EU member states and on ferries by UK cross-border shoppers during 2001–02 are contained in "Measuring and Tackling Indirect Tax Fraud" (December 2003), a copy of which is available in the Library of the House.

### Business Skills

**Ms Walley:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his Department's policy is on developing business skills in young people; and if he will make a statement. [155586]

**John Healey:** The Government are implementing a range of policies to develop business skills in young people, including the recommendations of the Davies Review of Enterprise and the Economy in Education. Enterprise Learning Pathfinders began in this academic year and, from September 2005, all pupils will experience at least five days of enterprise education before they leave school. The Government also provide funding for Enterprise Advisers for disadvantaged schools and in Enterprise Areas, supports organisations such as Young Enterprise and Enterprise Insight, and is setting up a National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship.

### Customs and Excise

**Mr. Steen:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will change the policy of Her Majesty's Customs and Excise that genuine mistakes made in good faith are not reasonable excuses for surcharge purposes. [156047]

**John Healey:** The VAT system aims to encourage payment of the right tax at the right time. As well as safeguarding revenues, this provides equity for all taxpaying businesses. A business may be penalised if it does not pay the right tax at the right time: the misdeclaration penalty penalises significant or repeated errors in the amount of tax paid and the default surcharge penalises late payment.

The VAT penalty system has safeguards to ensure that businesses are not treated over-harshly. For the smallest businesses, several warnings are issued before a late payment penalty is issued—so that a business would not be penalised until its fifth default. Both misdeclaration penalties and default penalties can be withdrawn if there is a reasonable excuse for an error or delay. In this context, reasonable excuses can include compassionate circumstances or unforeseen events. However, this would not include mistakes of the type to which the hon. Gentleman refers since the penalties are, in part, designed to encourage accuracy.

### Earnings Statistics

**Annabelle Ewing:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of *(a)* male, *(b)* female and *(c)* all full-time workers in (i) Scotland, (ii) each of the unitary local authority areas in Scotland and (iii) Great Britain had hourly gross earnings (A) including and (B) excluding overtime of below (1) £7.58, (2) £5.68 and (3) £4.20. [156219]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Ms Annabelle Ewing, dated 26 February 2004:*

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question on the proportion of *(a)* male, *(b)* female and *(c)* all full-time workers in (i) Scotland, (ii) each of the unitary local authority areas in Scotland and (iii) Great Britain had hourly gross earnings (A) including and (B) excluding overtime of below (1) £7.58, (2) £5.68 and (3) £4.20. (156219)

I attach two tables showing the proportion of male and female workers whose average gross hourly pay in 2003 falls below the stated thresholds in Great Britain, Scotland and in Scottish local authorities. Estimates for pay including and excluding overtime are shown separately.

Average earnings are estimated from the 2003 New Earnings Survey (NES) and are provided for full-time employees on adult rates of pay whose pay was unaffected by absence during the pay period. This is the standard definition used for NES tables. The NES does not collect data on the self-employed and people who do unpaid work.

The New Earnings Survey publication criteria ensures that all estimates are undisclosive and of reliable quality, and suppresses estimates that do not meet these criteria. A number of estimates have been removed from the table for this reason. The information is based on the 2003 NES, the latest survey for which data are available.

*Percentage of full-time employees whose average gross hourly pay (including overtime) in 2003 fell below three stated thresholds*

| | Male employees' pay thresholds | | | Female employees' pay thresholds | | | All employees' pay thresholds | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Area* | *£7.58* | *£5.68* | *£4.20* | *£7.58* | *£5.68* | *£4.20* | *£7.58* | *£5.68* | *£4.20* |
| Great Britain | 26.4 | 8.5 | 1.2 | 36.8 | 14.7 | 1.9 | 30.3 | 10.9 | 1.4 |
| Scotland | 29.8 | 10.3 | 1.2 | 39.2 | 15.3 | 1.5 | 33.8 | 12.5 | 1.3 |
| *Local Authorities* | | | | | | | | | |
| Aberdeen City | 23.8 | 10.0 | — | 32.7 | 11.2 | — | 27.3 | 10.4 | — |
| Aberdeenshire | 35.4 | 9.8 | — | 46.8 | 26.1 | — | 40.0 | 16.4 | — |
| Angus | 38.4 | 11.6 | — | 44.2 | 18.2 | — | 41.1 | 14.7 | — |
| Argyll and Bute | 39.7 | — | — | 41.7 | — | — | 40.5 | 11.6 | — |
| Scottish Borders, The | 43.0 | 15.1 | — | 57.3 | 25.6 | — | 50.0 | 20.2 | — |
| Clackmannanshire | — | — | — | 50.0 | — | — | 35.7 | 17.9 | — |
| Dumfries and Galloway | 49.2 | 15.6 | — | 52.1 | 26.0 | — | 50.5 | 20.2 | — |
| Dundee City | 26.3 | 10.3 | — | 37.4 | 16.3 | — | 31.1 | 12.9 | — |
| East Ayrshire | 31.0 | 17.2 | — | 38.9 | 18.1 | — | 34.6 | 17.6 | — |
| East Dunbartonshire | 25.0 | — | — | 29.5 | — | — | 27.3 | — | — |
| East Lothian | 36.5 | — | — | — | — | — | 32.0 | — | — |
| East Renfrewshire | 36.1 | — | — | 41.7 | — | — | 38.9 | 13.9 | — |
| Edinburgh, City of | 26.3 | 11.0 | 1.4 | 31.7 | 10.1 | — | 28.5 | 10.6 | 1.2 |
| Falkirk | 32.6 | 13.9 | — | 38.5 | 11.9 | — | 35.2 | 13.0 | — |
| Fife | 29.7 | 8.5 | — | 46.5 | 12.5 | — | 36.7 | 10.2 | — |
| Glasgow City | 27.4 | 9.8 | 1.1 | 34.9 | 12.1 | — | 30.8 | 10.8 | 1.1 |
| Highland | 33.6 | 11.8 | — | 45.8 | 18.7 | — | 38.7 | 14.7 | — |
| Inverclyde | 37.8 | 14.9 | — | 36.8 | 22.8 | — | 37.4 | 18.3 | — |
| Midlothian | 30.5 | — | — | 35.9 | — | — | 32.7 | 14.3 | — |
| Moray | 44.7 | — | — | 58.6 | 31.0 | — | 50.3 | 16.8 | — |
| North Ayrshire | 23.7 | — | — | 37.5 | 18.1 | — | 29.6 | 11.8 | — |
| North Lanarkshire | 33.2 | 10.2 | — | 38.6 | 10.9 | — | 35.2 | 10.5 | — |
| Orkney Islands | — | — | — | — | — | — | 37.5 | 25.0 | — |
| Perth and Kinross | 30.8 | 11.5 | — | 48.0 | 25.5 | — | 38.4 | 17.7 | — |
| Renfrewshire | 30.8 | 10.6 | — | 39.8 | 17.1 | — | 34.3 | 13.1 | — |
| South Ayrshire | 23.5 | — | — | 37.5 | 12.5 | — | 29.6 | 8.9 | — |
| South Lanarkshire | 24.2 | 8.3 | — | 44.9 | 19.0 | — | 33.2 | 13.0 | 2.1 |
| Stirling | 29.7 | — | — | 37.3 | 23.5 | — | 32.8 | 16.8 | — |
| West Dunbartonshire | 29.7 | — | — | 48.4 | 19.4 | — | 38.9 | 15.1 | — |
| West Lothian | 30.3 | 9.0 | — | 46.3 | 12.6 | — | 36.7 | 10.4 | — |
| Western Isles | — | — | — | — | — | — | 37.5 | — | — |

*Percentage of full-time employees whose average gross hourly pay (excluding overtime) in 2003 fell below three stated thresholds*

| | Male employees' pay thresholds | | | Female employees' pay thresholds | | | All employees' pay thresholds | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Area* | *£7.58* | *£5.68* | *£4.20* | *£7.58* | *£5.68* | *£4.20* | *£7.58* | *£5.68* | *£4.20* |
| Great Britain | 27.9 | 9.5 | 1.3 | 37.4 | 15.1 | 1.9 | 31.5 | 11.6 | 1.5 |
| *Scotland* | 31.6 | 11.6 | 1.3 | 39.9 | 16.0 | 1.6 | 35.1 | 13.5 | 1.4 |
| *Local Authorities* | | | | | | | | | |
| Aberdeen City | 25.1 | 11.0 | — | 32.3 | 11.2 | — | 27.9 | 11.0 | — |
| Aberdeenshire | 39.0 | 13.4 | — | 46.8 | 27.9 | — | 42.2 | 19.3 | — |
| Angus | 38.4 | 15.1 | — | 45.5 | 19.5 | — | 41.7 | 17.2 | — |
| Argyll and Bute | 42.5 | — | — | 41.7 | — | — | 42.1 | 14.9 | — |
| Scottish Borders, The | 45.3 | 18.6 | — | 57.3 | 26.8 | — | 51.2 | 22.6 | — |
| Clackmannanshire | — | — | — | 50.0 | 38.5 | — | 35.7 | 19.6 | — |
| Dumfries and Galloway | 50.0 | 18.0 | — | 52.1 | 28.1 | — | 50.9 | 22.5 | — |
| Dundee City | 29.4 | 10.8 | — | 37.4 | 15.6 | — | 32.8 | 12.9 | — |
| East Ayrshire | 34.5 | 19.5 | — | 40.3 | 19.4 | — | 37.1 | 19.5 | — |
| East Dunbartonshire | 29.5 | — | — | 29.5 | — | — | 29.5 | — | — |
| East Lothian | 39.7 | — | — | — | — | — | 34.0 | 11.0 | — |
| East Renfrewshire | 33.3 | — | — | 41.7 | — | — | 37.5 | 13.9 | — |
| Edinburgh, City of | 27.7 | 11.6 | 1.7 | 32.4 | 10.1 | — | 29.7 | 11.0 | 1.4 |
| Falkirk | 33.3 | 16.7 | — | 39.4 | 11.9 | — | 36.0 | 14.6 | — |
| Fife | 32.5 | 8.5 | — | 48.0 | 12.9 | — | 39.0 | 10.3 | — |
| Glasgow City | 28.5 | 10.5 | 1.1 | 35.8 | 12.8 | — | 31.8 | 11.5 | 1.1 |
| Highland | 35.0 | 12.3 | — | 47.1 | 19.4 | — | 40.0 | 15.2 | — |
| Inverclyde | 36.5 | 20.3 | — | 38.6 | 22.8 | — | 37.4 | 21.4 | — |
| Midlothian | 30.5 | 13.6 | — | 35.9 | — | — | 32.7 | 16.3 | — |
| Moray | 48.2 | 11.8 | — | 58.6 | 32.8 | — | 52.4 | 20.3 | — |
| North Ayrshire | 25.8 | — | — | 42.3 | 21.1 | — | 32.7 | 14.3 | — |
| North Lanarkshire | 35.2 | 10.8 | — | 39.1 | 10.9 | — | 36.6 | 10.8 | — |
| Orkney Islands | — | — | — | — | — | — | 37.5 | 25.0 | — |
| Perth and Kinross | 32.3 | 14.6 | — | 49.0 | 24.5 | — | 39.7 | 19.0 | — |
| Renfrewshire | 32.8 | 11.1 | — | 39.0 | 18.7 | — | 35.2 | 14.0 | — |
| Shetland Islands | — | — | — | — | — | — | 30.3 | — | — |
| South Ayrshire | 23.5 | — | — | 37.5 | 14.8 | — | 29.6 | 9.9 | — |
| South Lanarkshire | 26.8 | 9.1 | — | 44.9 | 19.5 | — | 34.7 | 13.6 | — |
| Stirling | 36.1 | 16.7 | — | 39.2 | 23.5 | — | 37.4 | 19.5 | — |
| West Dunbartonshire | 29.7 | — | — | 50.0 | 21.0 | — | 39.7 | 15.9 | — |
| West Lothian | 35.4 | 9.7 | — | 46.3 | 14.7 | — | 39.7 | 11.7 | — |
| Western Isles | — | — | — | — | — | — | 41.0 | — | — |

### Equitable Life

**Mr. Sarwar:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the matters he referred to the Serious Fraud Office in respect of Lord Penrose's report on Equitable Life. [156233]

**Ruth Kelly:** It would not be appropriate to refer to the content of Lord Penrose's report on Equitable Life in advance of publication.

### Individual Savings Accounts

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will amend the regulatory requirements on transfer of mini cash ISAs between account providers to speed up transfer time; and if he will make a statement. [156402]

**Ruth Kelly:** The ISA regulations state that a transfer of an ISA between account providers must take place within the time stipulated by the investor. However, providers are given a reasonable business period (not exceeding 30 days) to allow for the practical implications of making the transfer.

### Inland Revenue

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people are employed by the Inland Revenue in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley. [156131]

**Dawn Primarolo:** Within the North West Government Office Region (excluding Merseyside) the Inland Revenue employed 8,534 people at 1 April 2003. Of these 76 were employed in Chorley.

### Management Consultants

**Mr. Flight:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost to his Department of using management consultants has been in each of the last five years. [148025]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost; HM Treasury does not hold data specifically on the costs of management consultants. Data on the total costs to HM Treasury for external consultants was given in my answer of 31 March 2003, *Official Report*, column 562W.

### Stress Audits

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many stress audits were carried out in his Department in each of the last five years; what the cost of each audit was; what assessment of the effects of the audits has been made; and if he will make a statement. [156590]

**Ruth Kelly:** A stress audit was carried out in 2000 at a cost of £20,000. The audit drew attention to several problems and a staff group was set up to assess its recommendations and to take forward an action plan. To measure progress against the 2000 stress audit, a follow up well being survey was carried out in 2003 at a cost of £15,000. Generally the results of the survey were positive: levels of stress had decreased since the 2000 stress audit. However there remained scope for improvement and a new staff group has been set up to focus on what more should be done.

## CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

### Access to Legal Advice

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the same levels of legal advice and support are available to people throughout England. [155034]

**Mr. Lammy:** Our aim in providing legal advice and support is to provide common levels of provision across the country, taking into account local needs. This is done through the Legal Services Commission, which is responsible to the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs for maintaining and developing the Community Legal Service (CLS). The key aim of the CLS is to provide greater and more easily accessible civil legal advice services to people within England and Wales. Regional Legal Services Committees and CLS Partnerships are responsible for co-ordinating the delivery of local legal and advice services in their area and, through an analysis of priority legal needs at a local level, can ensure that resources are targeted more effectively to those most in need.

In addition, the Commission has put in place a number of initiatives to improve access to advice that go beyond the traditional model of legal aid provided by solicitors from their offices, including the 'Just Ask!' website and telephone advice services. A national telephone advice service will be available from summer 2004 following a successful pilot.

### Magistrates Courts (Closure)

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will list each magistrates court that has closed in the last two years, broken down by *(a)* parliamentary constituency and *(b)* date of closure. [155954]

**Mr. Leslie:** The responsibility for the number and location of magistrates courts in England and Wales falls to individual Magistrates' Courts Committees (MCCs) to determine, in consultation with their local paying authority. A paying authority that is aggrieved by a determination of an MCC has the right to appeal under section 56(3) of the Justice of the Peace Act 1997 to the Secretary of State for Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA) within one month of receipt of the written notice of determination.

However, MCCs are not required by statute to inform the Department of proposed courthouse closures that are not subject to an appeal. The following table shows the closures of magistrates courts in England and Wales in 2002 and 2003 compiled from the information that is available to my Department:

| *Court* | *Parliamentary constituency* | *Date of closure* |
|---|---|---|
| Bridgenorth | Ludlow | 31 January 2002 |
| Leominster | Leominster | 31 January 2002 |
| Fakenham | North Suffolk | 1 May 2002 |
| Tunbridge Wells | Tunbridge Wells | 2 June 2002 |
| Beaconsfield | Beaconsfield | 1 July 2002 |
| Buckingham | Buckingham | 1 July 2002 |
| Evesham | Mid Worcestershire | 30 November 2002 |
| Thame | Henley | 31 January 2003 |
| Droitwich | Mid Worcestershire | 21 March 2003 |

| Court | Parliamentary constituency | Date of closure |
|---|---|---|
| Machynlleth | Meirionnydd Nant Conwy | 31 March 2003 |
| Chester le Street | North Durham | 31 March 2003 |
| Rugeley | Cannock Chase | 31 May 2003 |
| Lampeter | Ceredigion | 9 June 2003 |
| Tenby | Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire | 30 June 2003 |
| Camberley | Surrey Heath | 30 June 2003 |
| Trowbridge | Westbury | 30 September 2003 |
| Whitchurch | North Shropshire | 03 October 2003 |
| Long Sutton | South Holland and The Deepings | 31 October 2003 |
| Caistor | Gainsborough | 31 December 2003 |
| Horncastle | Louth and Horncastle County | 31 December 2003 |

### Probate

**Mr. Todd:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what representations he has received concerning delays in confirming probate on settlements relating to the estates of deceased mineworkers; and if he will make a statement. [155594]

**Mr. Lammy:** None, although I am informed that the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has received representations on this issue. Officials at the DTI are working with solicitors on an indemnity form to ensure grants of probate will not be required on low-value offers. However, all the parties involved are aware of their legal obligations to guarantee that compensation is granted to the right individual.

### Small Claims Track

**Vera Baird:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what guidance is given to district judges about how to manage cases in the small claims track in which one party is represented and the other not. [155381]

**Mr. Leslie:** Judicial training is the responsibility of the Judicial Studies Board (JSB), an independent body chaired by Lord Justice Keene. The JSB provides written guidance to district judges on the conduct of small claims cases in its Civil Bench Book and on the particular needs of litigants in person in its Equal Treatment Bench Book. Both publications are publicly available via the JSB's website. They are supplemented by a video on the needs of litigants in person. The video is used as a an aid to syndicate discussion on the Civil Continuation Seminar. All district judges attend a Civil Continuation Seminar at three-yearly intervals.

**Vera Baird:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what guidance is given to the management of the small claims track about the availability of free legal advice to litigants in the court building. [155385]

**Mr. Leslie:** In 2001 all civil and family courts in England and Wales gained a Quality Mark under the Community Legal Service (CLS) scheme. This confirms that those courts are committed to improving public access to quality information and legal services, by promoting the services of the CLS.

This involves as a minimum, active signposting and referring people to the CLS directory, but many courts go much further by including reference to the CLS helpline and the 'Just Ask!' Website in leaflets, posters and court correspondence. The allocation questionnaire (a form prescribed by rule) that seeks case management information from the parties currently does not specifically refer to the CLS. In addition a small claims leaflet is sent with the hearing notice, but again there is no reference to free legal advice or where it can be obtained.

The Court Service is working in partnership with the Legal Services Commission and work is already under way to improve public awareness as to where they can obtain free legal advice. That work includes a full review of computer-produced documentation and forms and two pilot schemes. One pilot is providing from court premises up to 30 minutes FREEFONE access to solicitors and advice agencies and the other is establishing an improved and more pro-active level of information service under the CLS scheme.

### Supreme Court

**Mr. Alan Duncan:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what arrangements have been made to find a suitable building for the proposed Supreme Court. [156330]

**Mr. Leslie:** An extensive property search was commissioned to identify suitable locations for the new Supreme Court in central London. Following that, a number of options are being considered, both commercial sites and those already on the Government estate. An evaluation of those sites is currently being conducted to identify the preferred building solution.

**Mr. Alan Duncan:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether it is the Government's policy to construct a new building for the proposed Supreme Court. [156331]

**Mr. Leslie:** A number of options are being considered. Whatever solution is ultimately chosen, the new building for the Supreme Court will need to provide a secure working environment for judiciary and staff and contain appropriate hearing rooms and ancillary accommodation and facilities. It will also have to provide value for money.

**Mr. Alan Duncan:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs who has been engaged by the Government to find a suitable location for the proposed Supreme Court. [156332]

**Mr. Leslie:** My Department has reviewed its own estate and consulted the Office of Government Commerce about availability on the London Civil Estate. Additionally, we have approached all Government Departments direct. In order to establish availability in the commercial market, we have engaged the services of property agents Knight Frank to carry out a thorough search of central London locations suitable for the new UK Supreme Court.

**Mr. Alan Duncan:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much has been spent so far on outside consultants charged with the task of finding a suitable location for the proposed Supreme Court. [156333]

**Mr. Leslie:** My Department has committed fees of approximately £19,000 on the search for potential sites for the new Supreme Court. A further £83,000 has been

committed on the analysis and evaluation of the options and completion of the necessary Treasury 'Green Book' style economic appraisals.

As a result of commercial negotiations, this is slightly lower than the figure given by my right hon. and noble Friend, Lord Falconer, in the other place on the 29 January.

**Mr. Alan Duncan:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will publish the specifications set by the Government for a suitable building for the proposed Supreme Court. [156334]

**Mr. Leslie:** The property search is being undertaken on the basis of a requirement for a new or existing building in central London. The space requirement was calculated on the basis of providing at least three hearing rooms requiring 500 $m^2$, 14 judicial chambers and ancillary accommodation totalling 1300 $m^2$, staff accommodation and facilities totalling 800 $m^2$, 400 $m^2$ of public area and facilities and 550 $m^2$ for library and records storage.

## EDUCATION AND SKILLS

### Access Courses

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what projects his Department is piloting to increase the number of part-time students from the poorest communities taking up and completing access courses. [156305]

**Alan Johnson:** My Department is piloting no such projects. However, I have asked the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), which regulates the national recognition of Access Courses, to make proposals which modernise the criteria for access courses, so that they are sufficiently flexible and attractive to meet the needs of today's adult learners. My Department is expecting these proposals in the spring.

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations his Department has received on the impact of the benefits system on the take up of part-time access courses. [156307]

**Alan Johnson:** Neither my Department nor that of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions have received any specific representations.

### Adult and Community Learning

**Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many people were enrolled on adult and community learning programmes in each year since 1995; [147441]

(2) how many people in England and Wales are enrolled on adult and community learning programmes. [147442]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** The numbers of learners in (i) adult and community learning and adult education courses run through local education authorities; (ii) LearnDirect; and (iii) adult basic skills, are set out as follows.

The number of enrolments on adult education courses run through local education authorities (LEAs) in England at 1 November each year is published annually in the Statistical First Release, "Adult Education Enrolments in England". Data on adult and community learning in Wales were collected and published by the National Assembly for Wales. The following table shows the number of enrolments in England and Wales as at 1 November in each year from 1995 to 2002, the latest year for which figures are available. These figures include enrolments on both courses that do and do not lead to a recognised qualification.

*Adult education enrolments[1] in England and Wales: 1995 to 2002*

*Thousand*

| *November* | *England* | *Wales* |
|---|---|---|
| 1995 | 1,153 | 28 |
| 1996 | 1,232 | 39 |
| 1997 | 1,062 | 52 |
| 1998 | 1,115 | 62 |
| 1999 | 1,054 | 67 |
| 2000 | 1,041 | 64 |
| 2001 | 1,052 | [2]59 |
| 2002 | 1,042 | [2]56 |

[1] Enrolments are not the same as learners. Individuals on a number of courses are counted more than once.
[2] Due to changes in data collection, figures from 2001 onwards are not directly comparable with those prior to 2001. Furthermore, data from 2001 relate to the number of enrolments in the first week of December as opposed to November.
*Sources:*
Statistical First Release: "Adult Education Enrolments in England—November 2002"
Statistical First Release: "Adult Education in Wales: Local Authority Provision 2000"
Statistical Bulletin: "Adult Continuing Education in Wales 2001/02 and 2002/03"

The figures in the following table show the numbers of learners on LearnDirect provision in England and Wales in each year since 2000/01, the earliest year for which figures are available.

*Learners (in thousands) on LearnDirect provision in England and Wales 2000/01 to 2002/03*

| *Academic year* | *England* | *Wales* |
|---|---|---|
| 2000/01 | 137 | 4 |
| 2001/02 | 347 | 11 |
| 2002/03 | 485 | n/a |

*Sources:*
LearnDirect
National Council-ELWa

The final table shows the number of enrolments on adult basic skills courses in England and Wales.

*Enrolments (in thousands) on adult basic skills in England and Wales—2000/01 to 2002/03*

| *Academic year* | *England* | *Wales* |
|---|---|---|
| 2000/01 | 724 | 25 |
| 2001/02 | 1,136 | 25 |
| 2002/03 | 1,230 | n/a |

*Notes:*
1. England enrolment data includes Learning and Skills Council funded learning opportunities; estimates from the Offenders' Learning and Skills Unit; and the Department for Work and Pensions.
2. Wales enrolment data from 'National Council-ELWa'.

## Building Schools for the Future Fund

**Mr. Chris Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills for what reasons the London Borough of Islington was unsuccessful in its recent bid for support from the Building Schools for the Future Fund. [156594]

**Mr. Miliband:** All applications for funding in the first wave of Building Schools for the Future (BSF) were appraised against the criteria we set out in our invitation to all authorities to apply for prioritisation. These criteria were need, as shown by low school standards and relative social deprivation indicated by high levels of take-up for free schools meals, the strength of the authority's educational vision and its capacity to deliver a large procurement project to support that vision. All proposals were rigorously appraised against these criteria and there was stringent moderation to ensure fairness. We prioritised projects which best met these criteria. Unfortunately, total demand was several times the total of over £2 billion we have available for BSF in 2005–06. All unsuccessful wave 1 authorities are automatically eligible, without further application, for prioritisation in subsequent waves of BSF, along with all authorities which expressed interest in later inclusion. Prioritisation of wave 2 and beyond will be on need as shown by low school standards and take-up of free school meals. We aim to announce prioritisation of authorities in further waves of BSF funding later this year.

## Departmental Minutes

**Mr. Lilley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether it is his Department's policy to make notes of *(a)* meetings and *(b)* telephone conversations involving Ministers; and under what circumstances no notes would be taken. [149529]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg** *[holding answer 20 January 2004]:* The Department follows the central "Guidance on the Management of Private Office Papers", which makes clear that good record management procedures are necessary not least to ensure accountability and provide an audit trail. Among the records covered by the guidance are Ministers' meetings and telephone conversations.

## Funds/Grants

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list the *(a)* standards funds and *(b)* special grants in operation; and if he will make a statement. [156591]

**Mr. Miliband:** The following table shows the Standards Fund grants and special grants allocated by the Department of Education and Skills in 2003–04. The figures include Government grant and local authority contributions where required.

*Standards Fund Grants 2003–04*

| | *Allocations (£ million)* |
|---|---|
| Leadership Incentive Grant | 174.9 |
| Targeted Improvement Grant | 38.3 |
| Special Educational Needs | 79.0 |
| Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco Education and Prevention | 12.4 |
| Study Support (National) | 54.5 |
| Study Support (Excellence in Cities) | 18.8 |
| Study Support: Quality Development Programme | 0.6 |
| Investigation and Referral Support Co-ordinators | 1.2 |
| Vulnerable Children | 80.1 |
| National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies | 211.9 |
| Primary Behaviour Pilot | 4.3 |
| Key Stage 3 Strategy | 218.9 |
| Ethnic Minority Achievement | 155.0 |
| Raising Achievement of African Caribbean Pupils Project | 0.5 |
| National Primary Strategy English as an Additional Language Pilot Project | 0.4 |
| Gypsy-Traveller Achievement Project | 0.2 |
| Education Health Partnerships | 5.7 |
| Music Services | 54.5 |
| Playing for Success | 4.7 |
| Early Excellence Centres | 16.4 |
| School Achievement Awards | 59.1 |
| New Excellence Clusters | 29.3 |
| Behaviour Improvement Programme | 65.9 |
| Aimhigher (pre-16) | 25.4 |
| Summer Schools for Gifted and Talented Children | 3.8 |
| Gifted and Talented Children: Sports Grant | 0.3 |
| Specialist Schools | 195.2 |
| Beacon Schools | 40.6 |
| City Learning Centres | 26.0 |
| Diversity Pathfinders | 0.7 |
| Extended Schools | 7.7 |
| Federations | 3.3 |
| Leading Edge Schools | 5.6 |
| 14–19 Pathfinders | 9.0 |
| Enterprise Learning Pathfinders | 4.7 |
| Key Stage 2 Language Pathfinders | 3.0 |
| Golden Hello Payments | 7.1 |
| Training Schools | 4.7 |
| Advanced Skills Teachers | 57.4 |
| School Support Staff | 268.0 |
| School Support Staff: Training and Development | 35.5 |
| LEA Support for School Workforce Remodelling | 15.0 |
| Teacher Sabbaticals | 9.9 |
| Early Professional Development Pilot Scheme | 8.8 |
| Transforming School Workforce Pathfinder | 1.0 |
| Fast Track Pay for Teachers | 0.9 |
| Fresh Start and New Partnerships | 19.9 |
| Information Communication Technology in Schools: Infrastructure | 284.2 |
| Information Communications Technology In Schools: Broadband Connectivity | 71.0 |
| Devolved Formula Capital | 561.9 |
| Seed Challenge Capital | 60.0 |
| Staff Workspaces | 25.0 |
| Capital Funding for Nursery Education in Disadvantaged Areas | 20.0 |
| Capital Projects | 49.2 |
| e-Learning Credits | 99.9 |
| Interactive Whiteboards (London) | 15.0 |
| Laptops for Teachers | 59.9 |
| Electronic Registration Systems in Secondary Schools | 1.5 |
| *Other grants paid through the Standards Fund payment system* | |
| School Standards Grant | 800.1 |
| Additional Budget Support Grant | 28.2 |
| London Budget Support Grant | 11.3 |
| Performance Pay Funding | 202.5 |
| Teachers Threshold Grant | 549.9 |
| Capital Flexibility Funding for Voluntary Aided Schools | 7.7 |
| *Special Grants 2003–2004* | |
| Excellence in Cities and Excellence Clusters | 219.1 |
| Excellent and 3* Education Authorities[1] | 27.4 |
| Condition Funding | 445.3 |
| Total | 5,579.5 |

[1] Grant for local authorities rated Excellent and 3* Education under the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment 2002

### Further and Higher Education

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the rate of participation in *(a)* higher and *(b)* further education was in each ward in each of the principal seaside towns in England and Wales in the latest month for which figures are available, listed in descending order, with figures for Welsh seaside towns disaggregated; and if he will make a statement on measures the Government are taking to increase participation in each case. [154961]

**Alan Johnson** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* The information covering England is not held centrally; figures for Wales are the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Data on the percentage of students participating in education or training are not calculated for areas smaller than LEAs, as reliable estimates cannot be made.

The available data for FE show participation rates by LEA for 16 and 17 year olds, and are published in an annual National Statistics Bulletin, 'Participation in Education and Training by 16 and 17 Year Olds in Each Local Area in England'. This latest bulletin is published solely on the DfES website: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsqatewav/DB/SBU/b000369/index.shtml

Table three gives participation rates for 16 year olds in full-time education by Local Education Authority, 1998 to 2000, the latest year for which figures are available. Copies of the Bulletin have been placed in the Libraries.

The available data for HE show the proportion of 18 year olds from each LEA who were accepted for entry to full-time undergraduate courses, and are shown in the table.

The Aimhigher programme seeks to improve the attainment of young people in disadvantaged areas, and to raise their aspirations towards higher education. In 2004, Aimhigher will merge with "Partnerships for Progression", a programme funded jointly by the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the Learning and Skills Council. This will create a new, national outreach programme which will operate most intensively in deprived areas. The new programme will cover all seaside towns in England.

### Learning and Skills Council

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what buildings are owned by the Learning and Skills Council; what the estimated value is of each; and if he will make a statement. [156592]

**Alan Johnson:** This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, will write to the hon. Member with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

### Modern Apprenticeships

**Rob Marris:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many businesses provided places for modern apprenticeships for the first time in *(a)* 2001–02 and *(b)* 2002–03 to support trainees receiving training through (i) further education colleges and (ii) private training organisations. [150005]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. I have therefore asked Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, to write to my hon. Friend with the information requested and to place a copy of his reply in the Library.

### Ofsted

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the cost of Ofsted was in each year from 1997–98 to 2005–06 (estimate); how many staff were employed in each year; and if he will make a statement. [156611]

**Mr. Miliband:** This is a matter for Ofsted. HM Chief Inspector, David Bell, will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of his letter in the Library.

### Parliamentary Questions

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when he will answer the question, reference no. 143066, tabled by the hon. Member for East Worthing and Shoreham on 4 December 2003. [151034]

**Alan Johnson:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I have given today, and I apologise for the delay in replying. The data he requested on students completing three year courses in 2003 have only recently become available.

### Portsmouth City Council

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what factors underlay the decision of his Department to require Portsmouth City Council to consolidate the one-off additional budget supplementary grant for 2003–04 into the 2004–05 settlement. [157282]

**Mr. Miliband:** In 2003–04, the Department made available an additional budget support grant of £28 million to ensure all authorities received at least a minimum increase of 3.2 per cent. per pupil, after taking account of the effect of the Standards Fund and teachers' pension changes.

Portsmouth's share of this was £891,000. This grant has been added to the 2003–04 baseline and Portsmouth's 5 per cent. per pupil Schools Formula Spending Share increase is on top of this enlarged baseline. Therefore, the SFSS for 2004–05 incorporates the £891,000 and the Government expect authorities to passport the full increase in SFSS into the Schools Budget. Portsmouth's Revenue Support Grant for 2004–05 also incorporates this funding as the increase in Revenue Support Grant of 4.2 per cent. was also on top of a baseline that included the £891,000 grant.

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance he has given to *(a)* Portsmouth City Council and *(b)* other local education authorities on funding his 4 per cent. pledge to schools in 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [157283]

**Mr. Miliband:** The Department has provided detailed guidance to local education authorities concerning the funding changes for 2004–05 through the teachernet website and through direct letters. The Department ensured that every authority received an increase in Schools Formula Spending Share per pupil of at least 5 per cent., compared to the 4 per cent. minimum guarantee for schools. The Department continues to be in dialogue with the handful of authorities that are having difficulty in implementing the guarantee.

### Removing Barriers To Achievement

**Mr. Willis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what sources of funding will be made available to fund Removing Barriers to Achievement; and if he will make a statement. [156067]

**Mr. Miliband:** "Removing Barriers to Achievement" sets out our long-term plans for working in partnership with local authorities, early years settings, schools and the health and voluntary sectors to improve provision for children with special educational needs.

The Strategy contains a programme of sustained action and review over a number of years. The Government have invested significant sums in education with a real terms increase of over 25 per cent. since 1997. Total estimated gross expenditure on pupils with SEN for 2003–04, including estimated spending on centrally funded SEN activities is almost £3.5 billion—as reported by local education authorities in February 2004 as part of their Section 52 Budget Statements. The SEN Strategy focuses on getting the best value for money and using those substantial resources as efficiently and effectively as possible. At national level, improving provision for children with special educational needs will be integral to our existing and developing national strategies and programmes. Similarly, the work set out in the Strategy which is designed to build our evidence base, develop and test out different approaches and spread best practice will also be funded from within existing resources.

Decisions on resources for all areas of public spending from 2006–07 onwards will be taken later in the year as part of the Government's Spending Review.

### School (Corporate Advertising)

**Mr. Willis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if he will estimate the revenue generated for schools in England through corporate advertising in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement; [156135]

(2) how many schools in England are receiving revenue from corporate advertising; and if he will make a statement; [156136]

(3) if he will list the companies advertising in schools in England; and if he will make a statement. [156137]

**Mr. Miliband:** The Department does not collect this information.

### School Buildings

**Mr. Chaytor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list, for each local authority with one or more schools designated under section 104 and section 100 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, how many schools so designated are proposed for *(a)* new building, *(b)* major refurbishment or remodelling of existing building, *(c)* minor repairs and refurbishment to existing buildings and *(d)* no capital works in the local education authority's response to the Building Schools for the Future initiative. [155620]

**Mr. Miliband** *[holding answer 25 February 2004]*: Local education authorities (LEAs) submitted proposals and expressions of interest for Building Schools for the Future (BSF) outlining what sort of work they envisaged for their schools and included 118 selective schools. The following table gives the breakdown requested. Given the long planning period of 10 to 15 years from 2005–06, these figures should be treated with some caution.

*Table listing for each local authority with one or more schools designated under section 104 and section 100 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, how many schools so designated are proposed for (a) new building, (b) major refurbishment or remodelling of existing building, (c) minor repairs and refurbishment to existing buildings and (d) no capital works in the local education authority's response to the building schools for the future initiative*

| LEA | Number of selective schools | Type A[1] | Type B[2] | Type C[3] | Type D[4] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Birmingham | 8 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| Bournemouth | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Bromley | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Buckinghamshire | 13 | 10 | 13 | 13 | 13 |
| Calderdale | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Devon | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Enfield | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Essex | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| Kent | 32 | 32 | 22 | 0 | 11 |
| Kingston upon Thames | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Kirklees | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Liverpool | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Medway | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 4 |
| North Yorkshire | 3 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Plymouth | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Poole | 2 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Reading | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Redbridge | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Southend-on-Sea | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Stoke-on-Trent | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Sutton | 5 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 4 |
| Telford and Wrekin | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Torbay | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Trafford | 7 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 0 |
| Walsall | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Warwickshire | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3 |
| Wiltshire | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Wolverhampton | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |

[1] New build
[2] Refurbishment and remodelling of existing buildings
[3] Minor refurbishment with limited repairs to existing buildings
[4] No work proposed

For each school LEAs were requested to indicate what percentage of work fell into each of the types above. For example a school may have 25 per cent. type A, 25 per cent. type B, 25 per cent. type C and 25 per cent. type D. The table shows the number of selective schools included in each LEA and the numbers of those where some work is included in each type of work. Some LEAs chose not to give school details in their expressions of interest and, therefore, no information is available for these.

### Specialist Schools

**Mr. Chaytor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list each *(a)* specialist school and *(b)* non-specialist school designated under section 104 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, together with the number of pupils they have selected in each of the last six years. [155623]

**Mr. Miliband** *[holding answer 25 February 2004]:* Section 104 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 relates to designation of schools as grammar schools. Of the 164 maintained grammar schools in England, 98 are also specialist schools. The list below shows which grammar schools are specialist and which are not.

Grammar schools select the whole of their intake. Information is not held centrally on the actual numbers admitted by each of these schools.

**Mr. Willis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many specialist schools are receiving sponsorship from corporate and charitable sponsors. [156138]

**Mr. Charles Clarke:** All specialist schools are required to raise a proportion of the £50,000 unconditional sponsorship from corporate or charitable sponsors. Therefore, the 463 schools which became operational as specialist schools in September 2003, and the 240 which will be operational from September 2004, all receive funding from these sources.

**Mr. Willis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list the corporate sponsors sponsoring specialist schools. [156139]

**Mr. Miliband:** All specialist schools are required to raise a proportion of the £50,000 unconditional sponsorship from corporate or charitable sponsors. It would be disproportionately costly to provide information on all corporate sponsors currently sponsoring individual specialist schools. In addition, some sponsors prefer to remain anonymous. However, the Specialist Schools Trust, who are charged with raising sponsorship for specialist schools, will be able to provide a list of some of the main corporate sponsors of specialist schools. I will write to you with this information once permission has been obtained from the relevant sponsors.

### Strategic Area Reviews

**Helen Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made by learning and skills councils in carrying out strategic area reviews; and if he will make a statement. [156633]

**Alan Johnson:** Last April all local Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs) started strategic area reviews of post-16 LSC-funded provision. These reviews assess the extent to which the current pattern of post-16 learning in each local area meets the needs of learners, employers and the community and are a key driver for change.

Each local LSC has developed project plans, put in place local review arrangements and agreed a timetable for the review process. The majority of local LSCs are now completing the information gathering and analysis stage of the review and some are now starting to consider possible strategic options. There will be full consultation with local stakeholders throughout the reviews.

By Spring 2005 most local LSCs will have completed the reviews and published resulting outcomes.

### Teacher Training Agency

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the cost of the Teacher Training Agency was in the last financial year; and if he will make a statement. [156589]

**Mr. Miliband:** In 2002–03, the annual administrative cost of the Teacher Training Agency was £9.369 million.

### Teachers (Fast Track Recruitment)

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate he has made of the cost of the Fast Track teacher recruiting programme for each year from 2001–02 to 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [156696]

**Mr. Miliband:** The Fast Track teaching programme is a long-term investment in developing effective leadership in schools; it is not primarily a recruitment programme. So far this year, applications are 19 per cent. higher than they were in the same period last year. The number of Fast Track teachers and trainees currently on the programme is more than double last year's number.

The cost of Fast Track for the years 2001–05 is shown in the table. Future budgets are subject to the current Spending Review.

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 2000–01 | 4.60 |
| 2001–02 | 8.27 |
| 2002–03 | 8.07 |
| 2003–04 | [1]13.3 |
| 2004–05 | [2]18.5 |

[1] Estimated end of year forecast.
[2] Estimate, dependent on recruitment levels.

### Universities

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students started three year courses at UK universities in 1997–98 and 1999–2000; and how many students graduated from those universities with degrees in 2000–01 and 2002–03. [143066]

**Alan Johnson:** The available figures are given in the tables. Students starting courses lasting three years in 1997/98 would normally graduate in 1999/2000.

*Full time first degree entrants on courses expected to last three years at UK HE institutions*

| *Year of entry* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1996/97 | 190,395 |
| 1997/98 | 201,948 |
| 1998/99 | 197,073 |
| 1999/2000 | 196,355 |
| 2000/01 | 214,348 |

*Source:*
Higher Education Statistics Agency

*Full time first degree graduating from courses expected to last three years at UK HE institutions*

| *Year of graduation* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1998/99 | 150,728 |
| 1999/2000 | 152,414 |
| 2000/01 | 150,890 |
| 2001/02 | 153,047 |
| 2002/03 | 159,047 |

*Source:*
Higher Education Statistics Agency

### Universities UK Spending Review

**Mr. Willis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the Universities UK Spending Review 2004; and if he will make a statement. [156070]

**Alan Johnson:** 'Achieving our vision', the Universities UK 2004 spending review submission for England and Northern Ireland, provides details of their assessment of the financial needs of the higher education sector over the next few years. Decisions on resources for all areas of public spending from 2006/07 onwards will be taken later in the year as part of the Government's Spending Review.

## TRANSPORT

### Bus Services

**Mr. Truswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the bus industry has achieved the target of 99.5 per cent. reliability agreed between his Department and the Confederation of Passenger Transport; and if he will make a statement. [156169]

**Mr. McNulty:** Reliability is defined as the percentage of scheduled bus mileage actually run, excluding lost mileage outside operators' control. The baseline for the reliability target is 98.2 per cent. in England in the year to March 2001. Reliability rose to 98.5 per cent. in the year to March 2003. However, it was estimated to have fallen back to 98.2 per cent. (seasonally adjusted) in the period July-September 2003, the most recent quarter for which data are available. We are considering the reasons for this with the Confederation of Passenger Transport.

**Mr. Truswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many applications he has received from local authorities to implement bus quality contracts; how many statutory bus quality partnerships have been registered; and which local authorities have introduced them. [156172]

**Mr. McNulty:** We have to date received no applications for bus quality contracts schemes, though I recently announced the Government's intention to consult on the proposal to reduce the 21-month minimum period that must elapse between the making of a quality contracts scheme and its coming into force. No statutory bus quality partnerships have yet been registered, although informal partnerships are placed in over 130 areas across the country. Plans by West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority and Birmingham City Council for the introduction of the first statutory quality partnership, on the Route 67 bus corridor in Birmingham, are very well advanced.

**Mr. Truswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people are employed by the Vehicles Inspectorate to undertake bus quality checks; and how many person hours were devoted to bus quality checks in the last year for which figures are available. [156173]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA), formerly the Vehicle Inspectorate, employs 15 Bus Compliance Officers, two of whom are funded directly by the Welsh Assembly. The Bus Compliance Officers carry out monitoring of local bus services outside London, which involves checking that vehicles comply with their registered timetables and routes. The Officers also investigate complaints about possible instances of non-compliance. In 2002–03 18,725 man hours were devoted to these activities.

VOSA also employs some 300 Vehicle Examiners who carry out roadworthiness checks on passenger service vehicles (buses, coaches and mini buses licensed to carry more than eight passengers) as part of their duties. During 2002–03 £24,786 vehicles were examined in spot and fleet roadworthiness checks. Approximately 32,500 man hours were devoted to this work. This figure cannot be broken down to identify the proportion of time spent solely on bus checks.

**Mr. Truswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport who the five worst bus operators in terms of punctuality and reliability were in each of the areas covered by the Traffic Commissioners in the last year for which figures are available; which operators have been fined by the Traffic Commissioners for poor performance; and what fines have been paid. [156175]

**Mr. McNulty:** Information is not available in the form requested.

In 2002–03, across all traffic areas, traffic commissioners held 41 disciplinary public inquiries relating to local bus services, and in 22 cases financial penalties were imposed (although some were subsequently subject to appeal to the Transport Tribunal), the majority relating to punctuality or reliability. It is not possible to rank them in order of severity, given the wide variation in scale of operation and other factors.

Since February 2003 fines totalling £122,533 have been paid by bus operators following disciplinary action by traffic commissioners.

Further details, including breakdown by traffic area are available in tables 17.1 and 17.2 of the "Traffic Commissioners' Annual Reports for 2002–03". Copies of which are in the Libraries of the House.

**Nick Harvey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many *(a)* villages and *(b)* towns have been served by bus services in (i) Devon and (ii) the South West in each year since 1993; and if he will make a statement; [156063]

(2) how many *(a)* daily and *(b)* weekly bus routes to (i) villages and (ii) towns have operated in *(A)* Devon; and *(B)* the South West in each year since 1993; and if he will make a statement; [156064]

(3) how many rural bus routes served *(a)* Devon and *(b)* the South West in each year since 1993; and if he will make a statement; [156065]

(4) how many *(a)* daily and *(b)* weekly rural bus services there were in each year since 1993 in (i) Devon and (ii) the South West; and if he will make a statement. [156066]

**Mr. McNulty:** The information requested is not available and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

### Dibden Bay Container Port

**Dr. Julian Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he has made a decision on whether the Dibden Bay container port will be built; [156363]

(2) on what date he received the inspector's report resulting from the public inquiry into the Dibden Bay container port application; and when it will be published; [156364]

(3) whether it is his policy to approve the building of one container port in advance of receiving the report of the public inquiry into proposals to build another container port simultaneously elsewhere; [156365]

(4) whether it is his intention to *(a)* make and *(b)* publish his decisions on the proposals for container ports at (i) Dibden Bay and (ii) Shell Haven (London Gateway) at the same time; [156366]

(5) if he will make it his policy not to publish his decision on the Dibden Bay container port proposal prior to the publication of the report of the public inquiry into the creation of a New Forest national park. [156367]

**Mr. Jamieson:** It is the Government's policy to consider each proposal on its merits, having regard to relevant development considerations. The inspector's report of the public inquiry into the Dibden Bay container port application was received in my Department at the end of September 2003 and will be published when a decision is made and announced.

The publication of the report of the public inquiry into the creation of a New Forest National Park is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

### Passenger Numbers

**Mr. Truswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the most recent Passenger in Excess of Capacity figures are for the *(a)* morning and *(b)* evening peaks in (i) West Yorkshire, (ii) Greater Manchester, (iii) the West Midlands, (iv) South Yorkshire, (v) Merseyside, (vi) Strathclyde and (vii) London and the South East. [156170]

**Mr. McNulty:** Passengers In Excess of Capacity (PIXC) is a mechanism applied exclusively in London and the South East and on Edinburgh commuter services across the Forth Bridge. The results of the 2003 counts have not yet been produced. The Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) published the results of the 2002 counts in their "On Track" publication in June 2003, a copy of which is in the Library of the House. Passenger Transport Executives may apply similar regimes in their areas, but they do not use the same criteria and are not comparable with the SRA PIXC figures.

### Railways

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what work *(a)* the Strategic Rail Authority and *(b)* Network Rail has been engaged in the Eddisbury constituency in the last 18 months, broken down by location; what the costs are of such works, broken down by project; what surveys were commissioned prior to such works being carried out into the extent of damage caused by badgers at or near in-use railway lines; what consultations were undertaken in each relevant local community prior to works being commissioned and carried out on alternative methods of removing badgers from current setts; and what the timescale is for (i) post-audit and (ii) value for money exercises to be carried out on these projects. [155278]

**Mr. McNulty:** This is an operational matter for Network Rail. I have passed this to Network Rail who will respond directly to the hon. Member.

**Mr. Truswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to ensure a competitive market for existing railway rolling stock once existing contracts inherited from British Rail have expired. [156174]

**Mr. McNulty:** The Strategic Rail Authority is charged with securing value for money in rolling stock procurement. As part of that responsibility, it is considering how best to deal with the large number of rolling stock leases which fall due for renewal shortly. Whether more general changes are needed to the present arrangements in this area is among the issues that are being considered as part of the rail review announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on 19 January.

**Mr. Truswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the most recent reliability levels of rail services are for *(a)* Great Britain and *(b)* each region; and what policies he is implementing to ensure the achievement of the 99.5 per cent. reliability target. [156168]

**Mr. McNulty:** The Government requires Train Operating Companies (TOCs) to set themselves reliability targets in their Passengers' Charters. Reliability performance is a measure of trains run/cancelled and does not include punctuality. TOCs publish details of their reliability performance at train stations every four weeks. If reliability falls below the trigger point set out in the Passengers' Charter, season ticket holders can claim a discount on renewal of their ticket. Within this framework, operational plans for avoiding cancellations are a matter for TOCs.

The Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) measures train performance by the Public Performance Measure (PPM) which combines reliability and punctuality. It is published by train operator in the SRA's quarterly National Rail Trends (NRT). The latest publication covers performance to the year ending 30 September 2003 and is placed in the Library of the House.

### Recruitment Advertising

**Pete Wishart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his Department's expenditure on recruitment advertising was in each of the last three years, broken down by publication; and what

proportion of such expenditure was *(a)* to advertise vacant posts and *(b)* in the form of other general recruitment advertising. [155528]

**Mr. McNulty:** The Department for Transport has only been in existence since May 2002.

The Department uses the most appropriate publication for recruitment advertising, be it national, regional, trade magazine or website, depending on the nature of the vacancy. To provide a breakdown between publications would be at disproportionate cost.

Below are details of the costs incurred by DfT (Central) for recruitment advertising for vacant posts.

2002–03: £241,868.87

2003–04 to date: £461,262.81

This does not include the Departments Agencies as they have responsibility for their own recruitment below Senior Civil Service. Nor does it include NDPBs. These costs could only be obtained at disproportionate costs.

The Department for Transport has not participated in a general recruitment since May 2002.

## SOLICITOR-GENERAL

### Copyright/Trade Marks (Offences)

**Dr. Cable:** To ask the Solicitor-General how many Crown prosecutions have been made for counterfeiting and copyright theft *(a)* since the introduction of the Copyright etc. and Trade Marks (Offences and Enforcement) Act 2002 and *(b)* in each of the last seven years; and how many prosecutions resulted in convictions. [154955]

**The Solicitor-General:** The CPS does not hold central records on the numbers of particular offences prosecuted or resulting in conviction. Information at this level of detail could be obtained only by examining individual case files, some of which may be held in CPS offices and some in central archives and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. Some files will have been destroyed in accordance with Public Records Act practice.

Offences under this legislation are also prosecuted by other agencies such as Trading Standards, the Federation Against Software Theft (FAST), and the Federation Against Copyright Theft (FACT).

### Guantanamo Bay Detainees

**Mr. Streeter:** To ask the Solicitor-General what consideration was given during the Attorney-General's recent discussions with US officials to proceedings for treason being brought by the Crown Prosecution Service against the British detainees in Guantanamo Bay. [155014]

**The Solicitor-General:** The Attorney-General has explained to the US Administration the options for the possible prosecution for treason of the British detainees in Guantanamo Bay. As I set out in my reply to the hon. Member dated 5 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 74W, decisions to prosecute are made independently by the police and the Crown Prosecution Service in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors. The Attorney-General may be consulted on prosecution decisions. A prosecution will be brought if there is sufficient evidence for a realistic prospect of conviction and it is in the public interest to prosecute. If a decision to prosecute is made all relevant charges will be considered in deciding what charge an individual should face.

**Mr. Streeter:** To ask the Solicitor-General what representations the Attorney-General received from the United States Administration on the treatment that United Kingdom citizens detained in Guantanamo Bay would receive on repatriation to the UK. [155015]

**The Solicitor-General:** The Attorney-General has had no discussions with the US Administration about the treatment that the British nationals detained in Guantanamo Bay would receive on repatriation to the UK, but there have been discussions on this issue involving other UK Government officials. The Government does not intend to provide details of confidential exchanges between the British and US Governments.

**Mr. Streeter:** To ask the Solicitor-General what progress has been made in obtaining the repatriation of the British detainees in Guantanamo Bay; and if she will make a statement. [155016]

**The Solicitor-General:** I refer the hon. Member to the statement by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on 19 February, in which he explained that five of the UK detainees would be returning to the UK in the next few weeks and that the Government continues to discuss with the US the situation of the remaining four. The Government's position remains that the detainees should either be tried in accordance with international standards or they should be returned to the UK.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### Access to Work

**Mr. Edward Davey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many complaints the agency Access to Work has received over delays in processing applications in the latest three years for which data are available; [155598]

(2) what targets the agency Access for Work has for the processing of applications for grants for equipment needed by disabled people in their places of work; and what has been its measured performance against this target in the last three years for which data are available; [155599]

(3) what the performance targets are for the agency Access to Work; and what its measured performance has been against these targets in the last three years for which data are available. [155600]

**Maria Eagle:** Access to Work is a programme run by Jobcentre Plus, which helps disabled people to get or keep jobs by contributing towards the extra employment costs that arise because of their disability. It provides practical assistance to help disabled people compete on a more equal basis with their non-disabled colleagues by removing obstacles linked to disability.

For the last three years, throughout the UK, Access to Work teams have received approximately 60 written complaints specifically about delays in processing applications. Over the same period, there were over 40,000 new applications for help through the programme.

Access to Work is measured against two key performance standards: first, decisions on eligibility for help should be made within 10 days of an application; second, provision of first help to applicant should be within 60 days of an application.

For the year April 2001 to March 2002, 98 per cent. of decisions on help and 87 per cent. of first help to applicants were within standards; for the year 2002–03 97 per cent. of decisions on help and 85 per cent. of first help to applicants were within standards. This is in the context of continuing increases in both numbers helped and programme spend.

For year to date, April 2003 to December 2003, 99 per cent. of decisions on help and 85 per cent. of first help to applicants are within standards.

### Child Support Agency

**Hugh Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will investigate the Child Support Agency's treatment of Mrs. Christine Last of Leeds, Kent, case number YW436272D; and if he will make a statement. [156481]

**Mr. Pond:** The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

*Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. Hugh Robertson, dated 26 February 2004:*

In reply to your recent Parliamentary question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will investigate the Child Support Agency's treatment of Mrs Christine Last of Leeds, Kent, case number YW436272D; and if he will make a statement.

As individual cases are confidential I will write separately to you about Mrs Last's case.

### Economic Inactivity

**Mr. George Osborne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the effects of economic inactivity on the children of economically inactive parents. [152940]

**Mr. Pond:** There are a number of DWP reports in this area that highlight a range of outcomes, mainly negative, for children whose parent or parents are not in employment. The reports are as follows and are available in the Library.

Millar, J. and Ridge, T. (2001) Families, poverty, work and care. A review of the literature on lone parents and low-income couple families with children. DWP research report 153.

Ermisch J., Francesconi M. and Pevalin D., (2001), 'Outcomes for children of poverty', DWP research report no. 158.

Vegeris S. and McKay S., (2002), 'Low/moderate families in Britain: Changes in Living Standards 1999–2000', DWP research report 165.

External research has also substantiated the findings of DWP commissioned research.

**Mr. George Osborne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the relationship between economic inactivity and social exclusion. [152941]

**Mr. Pond:** The Government recognize that inactivity and social exclusion are closely related. An analysis of the extent and causes of inactivity and policies to address these is set out in the report "Full Employment in Every Region", produced jointly by the DWP and the Treasury and published in December 2003. The Government have made tackling poverty and social exclusion a key priority since 1997 and their strategy and progress is outlined in the DWP report "Opportunity for All; Fifth Annual Report 2003". Both reports are available in the Library.

Two other studies which show that becoming economically active and moving into work is associated with increased social inclusion, improved living standards, and self esteem are also available in the Library. These are Marsh and Rowlingson (2001), Low/Moderate-income families in Britain: Changes in 1999–2000. DWP Research Report 165 and Marsh and Perry (2003), Family Change 1999 to 2001. DWP Research Report 180.

### Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit

**David Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the status of Dupuytren's contracture is under the assessment criteria for industrial injuries disablement benefit. [155639]

**Mr. Browne:** Dupuytren's contracture is not a prescribed disease under the Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit scheme.

The Industrial Injuries Advisory Council (IIAC) has recently commenced a review of work-related upper limb disorders which it expects to complete by the middle of 2005.

## DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

### Brighton and Hove Local Plan

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) whether the report of the planning inspector into the Brighton and Hove Local Plan will constitute a material consideration in respect of his determination of the called-in application proposing a football stadium at Falmer; [156368]

(2) what weight he intends to attach to representations he receives between the closing of the public inquiry into the proposal for a football stadium at Falmer and his decision on the report of the inspector handling that inquiry. [156369]

**Keith Hill:** The Inspector's report into the applications made by Brighton and Hove Albion Football Club are currently with my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister for decision. For reasons of procedural propriety the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is unable to discuss the details of the case.

The decisions will be made on the basis of all the relevant available evidence. Representations received after the close of the public inquiry will be taken into account as far as they are relevant. In general terms the weight to be given to a material consideration will be considered as part of the decision process. It will be clear from the decision letter when issued what matters have been taken into account and the weight that has been attached to any particular matter.

### Business Rate Relief

**Brian Cotter:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the impact that his Department's proposals for business rate relief will have on businesses with a rateable value of more than £8,000. [156713]

**Phil Hope:** In the White Paper "Strong Local Leadership—Quality Public Services", December 2001, it stated that if relief were granted to all properties with a rateable value of under £8,000, then the funding of such relief would require an addition of 2.5 per cent. to the bills of other properties. However, as also stated in the White Paper, the relief will only be available where a property with a rateable value of under £8,000 is the only rateable property occupied by the business concerned. This will ensure that relief goes to small businesses, rather than small properties which may be owned in large number by a large business. This rule also means that the addition of 2.5 per cent. to the bills of other ratepayers may be too high an estimate. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is therefore undertaking research to determine the number of businesses that will be eligible for the relief and the addition required to the bills of other ratepayers to fund the relief. The results of this research will be available by July 2004.

### Council Tax (Capping)

**Mr. Chope:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he intends to exercise his capping powers in respect of the council tax increases announced by *(a)* Dorset Police Authority, *(b)* Dorset Fire Authority, *(c)* Christchurch borough council and *(d)* East Dorset district council. [156677]

**Phil Hope:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will take a view on whether to exercise its capping powers once the budget information from all authorities has been considered.

### Houses in Multiple Occupation

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many houses in multiple occupation there are in each ward in each principal seaside town in England, listed in descending order; and if he will make a statement on action he is taking to require landlords to improve housing standards in houses in multiple occupation. [154957]

**Keith Hill:** Information about the number of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) by ward in seaside towns is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The Housing Bill, introduced on 8 December 2003 is aimed at raising the standards of management and physical conditions in HMOs by requiring rented properties that represent the greatest risks to their occupants to be licensed by the local authority. Licensing will ensure that suitable managers suitably manage such properties. By identifying where they are and who their landlords are, the physical conditions in such properties can be more easily targeted under Part 1 of the Bill. Local authorities will be required to license larger HMOs of three storeys or more that are occupied by five persons. They will also have discretionary powers to license categories of smaller HMOs where there are particular problems that need to be addressed and when, following a local consultation, it is decided that alternative measures would not be entirely effective.

### Planning Application (Vale of White Horse)

**Dr. Evan Harris:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the reasons were for the delay between the Government Office for the South-East informing the Vale of White Horse district council that its decision to permit the development in the case of the planning application (SUN/2963/11 or GOSE/103/3/VALE/29) for residential development on the Foxcombe Road site of the old Warnborough College on Boars Hill, near Oxford, was in breach of direction from the Secretary of State and his direction that the planning permission be referred to him. [156051]

**Keith Hill:** The 'decision' of the Vale of White Horse district council to 'grant' planning permission in December 1999, despite an Article 14 holding direction being in place, related to a previous application (SUN/2963/9), which was called in February 2000 but was subsequently withdrawn after the court action concerning the validity of the 'permission' was resolved in October 2000. Application SUN/2963/11 was referred to the Government Office of the South East on 13 December 2000 and called in on 19 February 2001.

**Dr. Evan Harris:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he has taken to amend his procedures following his submission to judgments in the High Court in April 2002 and September 2003 in the case of the planning application (SUN/2963/11 or GOSE/103/3/VALE/29) for residential development on the Foxcombe Road site of the old Warnborough College on Boars Hill, near Oxford. [156052]

**Keith Hill:** This particular case is unusual in its protracted nature. It is not considered necessary to amend the procedures and it is considered unlikely that this case would set a precedent for others. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will of course keep this under review.

## HEALTH

### Agenda for Change

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what flexibilities exist within Agenda for Change to provide high cost of living supplements to wage payments. [156281]

**Mr. Hutton:** Under the proposed new pay system, Agenda for Change, current arrangements for London allowances will be replaced by a new harmonised system of high cost area supplements. Any changes to the value or geographic coverage of these supplements will usually be agreed at national level. National health service employing organisations will also have the flexibility to pay recruitment and retention premiums, subject to consultation with neighbouring employers and strategic health authorities.

### Care Workers

**Mr. Burns:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on his policy towards the employment in the UK of care workers from *(a)* non-EU European countries, *(b)* Asia and *(c)* Africa. [153914]

**Mr. Hutton** *[holding answer 11 February 2004]:* It is the responsibility of individual employers to ensure that their recruitment policies and procedures comply with current legislation whether recruiting within England or abroad.

Following research and advice obtained from a broad range of industry bodies, in consultation with Work Permits (UK)'s healthcare sector panel, the role of care assistant (or other occupational roles involving duties and responsibilities at a similar level) has been identified as not satisfying the skills criteria of the work permit arrangements. Consequently, even though employers may be experiencing difficulty in recruiting for posts of this level, as the job itself does not satisfy the criteria of the arrangements, applications would necessarily be refused.

### Children Green Paper

**Mrs. Shephard:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what role is envisaged for school nurses arising from proposals for improved child protection in the Children Green Paper. [153898]

**Mr. Hutton** *[holding answer 9 February 2004]:* It is expected that school nurses will continue to contribute to child protection, working with others to identify, monitor and support vulnerable school aged children and young people. As a result of the Green Paper, school nurses will be expected to work more closely with education and social care, contributing to common assessments and working in integrated children's teams, through initiatives such as extended schools. There will be a greater focus on early intervention and prevention and school nurses will need to ensure that children and young people are involved in decision making.

The chief nursing officer is currently undertaking a review of the nursing/ midwifery and health visiting contribution to children at risk, which will include school nursing.

### Consultant Contract

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate his Department has made of the cost to public funds of the consultant contract. [154145]

**Mr. Hutton:** The estimated costs of the new consultant contract, as agreed between the Department, the British Medical Association and NHS Confederation, are around £135 million in 2003–04, rising to around £250 million in 2005–06.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his Department's timetable is for implementation of the new consultant contract. [154439]

**Mr. Hutton:** Following the agreement reached last year with the British Medical Association and the NHS Confederation, national health service trusts and other employing organisations were asked to use the new NHS consultants' contract for all new appointments advertised after 31 October 2003 and to give all existing consultants the opportunity to indicate by 31 October 2003 whether they wished to give a commitment to the new contract. For existing consultants, the timetable assumed that, once a commitment had been given, trusts and consultants should seek to agree new job plans typically within three months, but the timetable recognised that trusts might need slightly longer than this to complete the process for all their consultants. We expect that the great majority of consultants who have given a commitment to the new contract will have agreed job plans by 31 March 2004. Where, exceptionally, there are any consultants whose job plans have taken longer to complete than other consultants, NHS trusts and other employing organisations have been asked to agree arrangements with their strategic health authority to complete the process as early as possible in the new financial year.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received on delays in the implementation of the new consultant contract. [154440]

**Mr. Hutton:** We are aware that the British Medical Association and some individuals have expressed concerns about the time needed for trusts to complete the process of agreeing new job plans with their consultants. The timetable agreed with the British Medical Association explicitly recognised that trusts may need longer than three months to agree job plans. We have nonetheless asked trusts to ensure that they complete the great majority of new job plans by 31 March, while continuing to ensure that job planning delivers the intended benefits of the new consultants' contract for national health service patient care.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funding has been allocated for implementation of the new consultant contract; and whether that funding has been spent. [154441]

**Mr. Hutton:** For 2003–04, additional funding worth 0.3 per cent. of allocations (around £135 million) has been allocated to primary care trusts to meet the estimated costs of the new consultant contract, with a further 0.1 per cent. in 2004–05 and a further 0.1 per cent. in 2005–06. Information on the expenditure so far committed to meet the costs of the new contract is not available centrally.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received on the funding of the new consultant contract; and if he will make a statement. [154442]

**Mr. Hutton:** A number of national health service organisations have sought further information from the Department about the basis for the funding allocated to primary care trusts for 2003–04 onwards to meet the estimated costs of the new contract. The Department and the NHS Modernisation Agency have provided further guidance to the NHS on this subject. The allocations are based on cost assumptions agreed with the British Medical Association and the other parties to the negotiations on the new contract.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the maximum number of programmed activities that a consultant should undertake per week is under the consultant contract. [154443]

**Mr. Hutton:** The new consultants' contract is based on a standard weekly commitment of 10 programmed activities for full-time consultants. The inclusion of additional programmed activities in consultants' job plans is ultimately a matter for agreement locally between national health service employing organisations and consultants, subject to ensuring that such agreements do not contravene the requirements of the Working Time Directive. The Department, the British Medical Association and NHS Confederation have agreed, however, that it should be one of the principal objectives of the contract to prioritise the use of consultants' time more effectively and better manage consultant workload.

### Consultant Job Plans

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects all consultants to have a job plan. [154148]

**Mr. Hutton:** We expect that the great majority of consultants who have given a commitment to the new national health service consultants' contract will have agreed job plans by 31 March 2004. Where, exceptionally, NHS trusts and other employing organisations consider that it will take longer to complete the job planning process for all consultants, they have been asked to agree arrangements with their strategic health authority to complete the process as early as possible in the new financial year.

### Correspondence

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he intends to reply to the hon. Member for Southend West's letter of 13 November 2003. [156355]

**Dr. Ladyman:** A reply was sent to the hon. Member on Thursday, 11 December 2003.

### Dental Treatment

**Mr. Steen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will ring fence the expenditure of primary care trusts for dental treatment. [155436]

**Ms Rosie Winterton** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* The resources for general dental services (CDS) which are currently held centrally will be devolved to primary care trusts (PCTs) from 1 April 2005. PCTs will be notified of these devolved dentistry budgets for 2005-06 during Autumn 2004. The dentistry budgets will be issued alongside PCTs' general allocations. The allocations will include funds currently spent on emergency dental services.

We have guaranteed that dentists working in the GDS will have an automatic right to a contract under the new arrangements and that their gross earnings will be protected over the transition period of three years. During this period, PCTs' newly devolved dentistry allocations will represent a minimum level of spend on national health service dentistry which PCTs must maintain.

### Dentists

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 14 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 799–804W, to the hon. Member for Sutton and Cheam (Mr. Burstow), if he will make a statement on the impact of the change in dentist numbers in Hampshire between 2002 and 2003 on access to *(a)* dentists and *(b)* dentists who accept NHS patients. [151979]

**Ms Rosie Winterton** *[holding answer 30 January 2004]*: I refer the hon. Member to my pursuant response on Wednesday 28 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 398W.

### Family Health Services Appeal Authority

**Mr. James Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when he will appoint an appeal panel under the Family Health Services Appeal Authority to consider the case of Dr. Barney Williams of the Marshfield Road Surgery, Chippenham; [156650]

(2) how hon. Members can make representations to an appeal panel set up under the Family Health Services Appeal Authority. [156679]

**Mr. Hutton:** The Family Health Services Appeal Authority (FHSAA) is an independent tribunal. Its procedures are set out in the FHSAA (Procedure) Rules 2001 (SI 2001/3750) and the FHSAA (Primary Care Act) Regulations 2001 (SI 2001/3743). The hon. Member may wish to write to The President, Family Health Services Appeal Authority, 30 Victoria Avenue, Harrogate HG1 5PR.

### Female Doctors

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 4 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 967W, on medical students, what assessment he has made of the numbers of female doctors working *(a)* in general practice and *(b)* in

hospitals wishing to (i) work part-time and (ii) take career breaks; and what impact this is having on the NHS. [155683]

**Mr. Hutton:** The number of female doctors working in hospitals and in general practice who are part time is shown in the table. Information on the number of doctors who take career breaks is not available.

The proportion of staff who are working part time and the impact of this on participation in the workforce is factored into the Department's and the National Health Service's workforce planning processes.

*Hospital, Public Health Medicine and Community Health Services (HCHS) Staff and General Medical Practitioners Female doctors working part-time*

*England, as at 30 September 2002* *Numbers (headcount)*

| | *All staff* | *of which: Female* | *of which: Part-time* |
|---|---|---|---|
| All doctors[1] | 104,460 | 38,755 | 11,647 |
| *of which:* | | | |
| HCHS Staff[1] | 72,168 | 26,159 | 5,566 |
| *of which:* | | | |
| Medical Staff[1] | 68,514 | 24,478 | 4,714 |
| *of which:* | | | |
| Consultant | 26,408 | 6,406 | 1,892 |
| Associate Specialist/Staff Grade | 6,790 | 2,438 | 988 |
| Registrar Group | 13,450 | 5,208 | 841 |
| Senior House Officer | 16,685 | 7,493 | 288 |
| House Officer | 3,953 | 2,042 | 18 |
| Other CHS | 1,228 | 891 | 687 |
| General Medical Practitioners[2] | 32,292 | 12,596 | 6,081 |
| *of which:* | | | |
| Unrestricted Principals and Equivalents (UPEs)[3] | 28,031 | 9,626 | 4,356 |
| Restricted Principals | 86 | 41 | 11 |
| Assistants | 455 | 284 | 231 |
| GP Registrars | 1,980 | 1,199 | 165 |
| Salaried Doctors (Para 52 SPA) | 87 | 54 | 28 |
| PMS Other | 543 | 305 | 203 |
| GP Retainers | 1,110 | 1,087 | 1,087 |

*Notes:*

[1] Excludes Hospital Medical Hospital Practitioners and Hospital Medical Clinical Assistants most of whom are GPs working part time in hospitals.

[2] All Practitioners include UPEs, Restricted Principals, Assistants, GP Registrars, Salaried Doctors (Para 52 SFA), PMS Other and GP Retainers.

[3] UPEs include QMS Unrestricted Principals, PMS Contracted GPs and PMS Salaried GPs.

*Source:*

Department of Health Medical and Dental Workforce Census.
Department of Health General and Personal Medical Services Statistics.

### Mental Health

**Mr. Denham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health: (1) what assessment he has made of the implementation of Standard 6 of the National Service Framework for Mental Health; [154823]

(2) what indication he has given of the priority that the Government expects the NHS and social services departments to give to the achievement of Government targets for carers of people with mental health problems. [154827]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The national service framework (NSF) for mental health provides rationale and evidence base for a national standard for mental health services relating to carers of people with mental health problems.

In accordance with this NSF standard, all individuals who provide regular and substantial care for a person on the care programme approach should have an assessment of their caring, physical and mental health needs repeated on at least an annual basis. People who provide regular and substantial care for a person on the care programme approach are also entitled to have their own written care plan, which is given to them and implemented in discussion with them.

The Department published "Developing Services for Carers and Families of People with Mental Illness" in November 2002, the recommendations of which are being taken forward by the National Institute for Mental Health in England.

The importance of support for carers was further emphasised in the NHS Plan (2000) and in the priorities and planning framework 2003–06 issued to local services.

Progress on the development of robust local delivery plans for all the targets set out in the NHS Plan is assessed by the Department in partnership with strategic health authorities. In addition, progress is reported by an annual self-assessment exercise undertaken by mental health trusts.

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of staff in NHS mental health services are from an ethnic minority. [155605]

**Mr. Hutton:** The information requested has been placed in the Library.

### GPs

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* headcount and *(b)* whole-time equivalent general practitioners there were in each year since 1997, broken down by (i) strategic health authority and (ii) primary care trust. [156005]

**Mr. Hutton:** The earliest date for which information is available on a primary care trust level (PCT) is 2001.

Information on the number of general practitioners (excluding GP retainers) in England and in each strategic health authority area since September 1997 and in each PCT since 2001, by headcount and whole time equivalent has been placed in the Library.

### Group B Streptococcus

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when testing using enriched culture media will be available in the NHS for diagnosing group B streptococcus colonisation in pregnant women. [156556]

**Dr. Ladyman:** The recently published National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) clinical guideline on antenatal care recommends that pregnant women should not be offered routine antenatal screening for group B streptococcus (GBS) because evidence of its clinical effectiveness and cost-effectiveness remains uncertain.

The United Kingdom National Screening Committee (NSC) is currently reviewing the prevention of GBS infection in new-born babies. As part of this review, the NSC organised a workshop in November 2003. The workshop discussed both the current tests available and potential tests for diagnosing GBS colonisation in pregnant women which are the subject of research now under way. This includes the enriched culture medium test. Further work on the use of different tests will be undertaken.

### Hospital Construction

**Mr. Collins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the new hospitals to be built in *(a)* Bassetlaw, *(b)* Birmingham, Northfield, *(c)* Birmingham, Perry Barr, *(d)* Blaydon, *(e)* Blyth Valley, *(f)* Bootle, *(g)* Bradford West, *(h)* Braintree, *(i)* Burton, *(j)* Coventry North West, *(k)* Coventry South, *(l)* Dover, *(m)* Ealing North, *(n)* Eltham, *(o)* Feltham and Heston, *(p)* Forest of Dean, *(q)* Gateshead East and Washington West, *(r)* Hammersmith and Fulham, *(s)* Hendon, *(t)* Hornsey and Wood Green, *(u)* Ilford North, *(v)* Kettering, *(w)* Knowsley South, *(x)* Lancaster and Wyre, *(y)* Leeds North East, *(z)* Leeds West, (aa) Leicester East, (bb) Lewisham, Deptford, (cc) Liverpool, Riverside, (dd) Loughborough, (ee) Manchester, Withington, (ff) Milton Keynes North East, (gg) Northampton South, (hh) North West Leicestershire, (ii) Reading East, (jj) Reading West, (kk) Rugby and Kenilworth, (ll) Sheffield, Attercliffe, (mm) Sheffield, Hillsborough, (nn) Sittingbourne and Sheppey, (oo) Stevenage, (pp) Stockton North, (qq) Stoke-on-Trent, (rr) Stourbridge, (ss) Thurrock, (tt) Tyne Bridge, (uu) Wallasey, (vv) Wansbeck, (ww) Waveney, (xx) West Lancashire, (yy) Wirral West, (zz) Wolverhampton North East and (aaa) Wolverhampton South East; and when the decision was taken to build them. [153778]

**Mr. Hutton:** Planned new hospital schemes to be built, with the date of the initial business case approval, are shown in the table.

| *Constituency* | *Hospital scheme in constituency* | *Date of initial business case approval* |
|---|---|---|
| (a) Bassetlaw | None | |
| (b) Birmingham, Northfield | None | |
| (c) Birmingham, Perry Bar | None | |
| (d) Blaydon | None | |
| (e) Blyth Valley | None | |
| (f) Bootle | None | |
| (g) Bradford West | Bradford Hospitals—£191 million | February 2001 |
| (h) Braintree | None | |
| (i) Burton | None | |
| (j) Coventry North West | None | |
| (k) Coventry South | None | |
| (l) Dover | East Kent Hospitals—£200 million | February 2001 |
| (m) Ealing North | None | |
| (n) Eltham | None | |
| (o) Felthan and Heston | None | |
| (p) Forest of Dean | None | |
| (q) Gateshead East and Washington West | None | |
| (r) Hammersmith and Fulham | None | |
| (s) Hendon | None | |
| (t) Hornsey and Wood Green | None | |
| (u) Ilford North | None | |
| (v) Kettering | None | |
| (w) Knowsley South | St. Helens and Knowlsey Hospitals—£229 million | February 2001 |
| (x) Lancaster and Wye | None | |
| (y) Leeds North East | None | |
| (z) Leeds West | None | |
| (aa) Leicester East | University Hospitals of Leicester—£403 million | February 2001 |
| (bb) Lewisham, Deptford | Lewisham Hospital—£51 million | February 2001 |
| (cc) Liverpool, Riverside | None | |
| (dd) Loughborough | None | |
| (ee) Manchester, Withington | None | |
| (ft) Milton Keynes North East | None | |
| (gg) Northampton South | Northampton PCT—£28.9 million | April 1999 |
| (hh) North West Leicestershire | None | |
| (ii) Reading East | None | |
| (jj) Reading West | None | |
| (kk) Rugby and Kenilworth | None | |
| (ll) Sheffield, Attercliffe | None | |
| (mm) Sheffield, Hillsborough | None | |
| (nn) Sittingbourne and Sheppey | None | |
| (oo) Stevenage | None | |
| (pp) Stockton North | None | |
| (qq) Stoke-on-Trent | North Staffordshire Hospital—£269 million | February 2001 |
| (rr) Stourbridge | None | |
| (ss) Thurrock | None | |
| (tt) Tyne Bridge | None | |
| (uu) Wallasey | None | |

| Constituency | Hospital scheme in constituency | Date of initial business case approval |
|---|---|---|
| (vv) Wansbeck, | Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland MH—£25 million | February 2001 |
| (ww) Waveney, | None | |
| (xx) West Lancashire, | None | |
| (yy) Wirral West, | None | |
| (zz) Wolverhampton North East | Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals—£31 2 million | February 2001 |
| (aaa) Wolverhampton South East | None | |

### Hospital Waiting Lists

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people who have received a referral from their general practitioner are waiting to be accepted onto a hospital waiting list after *(a)* one month, *(b)* two months, *(c)* three months and *(d)* six months, broken down by NHS trust. [155153]

**Mr. Hutton:** The information requested is not available.

National health service trusts should place patients on their waiting list upon receipt of referral from a general practitioner. There should therefore be no significant delay between a GP making a referral and the trust placing the patient on the waiting list.

By 31 December 2005, all patients will be able to book their appointment at the point of referral. GPs will be able to book an appointment direct from their surgery while the patient waits, or, if preferred, the patient can telephone a call centre to book their hospital appointment when they get home.

Out-patient waiting time data are available in the Library.

### Hospitals (Star Ratings)

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the performance indicators for the 2003–04 star ratings exercise for hospitals. [155871]

**Mr. Hutton:** The indicators to be used in the 2003–04 National Health Service performance ratings were published by the Commission for Health Improvement (CHI) on 18 December 2003. Full details can be found on the CHI website at: www.chi.nhs.uk. The results of the 2003–04 assessment will be published by the Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection.

### National Health Statistics

**Mr. Baron:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 18 December 2003, *Official Report*, columns 1128–30W, on national health statistics, whether decisions have now been made on NHS statistical collections which will be discontinued. [155030]

**Mr. Hutton** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* The Department's review of national health service statistical collections is continuing, and final decisions on discontinuing returns have not yet been made.

**Mr. Baron:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 18 December 2003, *Official Report*, columns 1128–30W, on national health statistics, if he will publish, for each set of statistics which the Department has not collected since 1999, the figures for each of the five years prior to collection being discontinued. [155031]

**Mr. Hutton** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* The information on each set of statistics is as follows.

Professional advice and support programmes: Community Maternity Services (KC54): statistics were published in the series "Community Maternity Services: summary information for England" for each year 1995–96 to 1999–2000. The most recent is available at www.publications.doh.gov.uk/public/kc549900.htm

Clinical psychology (KT24): statistics were published in the series "Clinical Psychology: summary information for England" for each year 1999–2000 to 2002–03. The three most recent publications are available at:

www.publications.doh.gov.uk/public/kt240001/index.htm

www.publications.doh.gov.uk/publLic/kt240102/index.htm

www.publications.doh.gov.uk/public/kt240203/index.htm

Summary of patient activity (KP70): statistics were published in the series "Ordinary and day case admissions" for each year 1994–95 to 1997–98. Figures on ordinary and day case admission are available from the Hospital Episode Statistics system for 1998–99 onwards at: www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsandStatistics/Statistics/HospitalEpisodeStatistics

*General ophthalmic services (GOS) losses and recoveries. GP fundholding budget and expenditure (PC1–01 to 04).*

These two returns were used for internal management purposes at the Department of Health and the information was not published. Figures could be provided now only at disproportionate cost.

Monitoring of delayed discharges (CC MON). This return was collected by the NHS Eastern Regional Office (which no longer exists) as an internal management tool; the information was not published.

Availability of dentistry: Quarterly Monitoring Report (A6). Statistics were produced for the period 1997 to 2002 quarter 1, but were not routinely published. Figures are given in the table.

*General Dental Services: Number and whole time equivalent of salaried dentists at the last day of each quarter until 2002 quarter one, England*

| | Number | Whole time equivalent |
|---|---|---|
| *1997* | | |
| Q1 | 179 | 98.5 |
| Q2 | 182 | 98.8 |
| Q3 | 189 | 104.1 |
| Q4 | 187 | 103.7 |
| *1998* | | |
| Q1 | 192 | 105.1 |
| Q2 | 190 | 107.3 |
| Q3 | 186 | 104.9 |
| Q4 | 178 | 94.6 |
| *1999* | | |
| Q1 | 179 | 94.4 |
| Q2 | 137 | 81.2 |
| Q3 | 137 | 78.8 |
| Q4 | 125 | 77.1 |
| *2000* | | |
| Q1 | 122 | 68.2 |
| Q2 | 118 | 67.2 |
| Q3 | 132 | 69.4 |
| Q4 | 115 | 63.9 |
| *2001* | | |
| Q1 | 111 | 52.4 |
| Q2 | 101 | 52.4 |
| Q3 | 85 | 33.9 |
| Q4 | 77 | 31.1 |
| *2002* | | |
| Q1 | 63 | 24.0 |

All publications are available in the Library.

### NHS (Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations

**Brian Cotter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when his Department will respond to the consultation on proposals to reform and modernise the NHS (Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 1992. [156714]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** We are considering carefully the report, received in January 2004, of the expert advisory group set up to advise how best to implement our proposals to reform the NHS (Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 1992. The group considered views received on the Department's consultation document issued in August 2003. We will make further announcements as soon as possible.

### NHS Budgets

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much of the centrally funded initiatives and services and special allocations budget for 2003–04 *(a)* has not been spent and *(b)* has been transferred into another budget. [151686]

**Mr. Hutton:** The Centrally Funded Initiatives and Services and Special Allocations (CFISSA) programme is fully committed in 2003–04. Approximately £37 million remains to be formally allocated to primary care trusts. In addition, further scheduled payments still need to be made in the period to 31 March 2004 in fulfilment of existing contracts and service level agreements.

The table shows the transfers to and from the CFISSA programme in 2003–04.

*Transfer record for the CFISSA Programme—2003–04*

| | £ millions |
|---|---|
| *Overall CFISSA Programme announced in HSC 2002/012 (18 December 2002)* | *8,645* |
| Less amount included in PCT initial resource limits | -207 |
| Less amount included in PCT allocations for cost of living addition | -109 |
| Other net changes to overall programme before February 2003 | 29 |
| Starting point for 2003–04 | 8,358 |
| In year changes to the programme | |
| Net effect of in-year transfers to/from other Government Departments | 338 |
| Net transfers from FHS non-discretionary funds | 1,656 |
| Net transfers to/from Central Health and Miscellaneous Services programme | -30 |
| Net transfers to/from Personal Social Services, Centrally Financed Services programme | 40 |
| Transfer from Capital | 318 |
| Net transfers to/from Admin | -6 |
| Additional expenditure funded by higher levels of receipts | 10 |
| Reductions in PCT allocations to fund additional central expenditure | 33 |
| Pensions Indexation (additional funds from Treasury) | 1,664 |
| Cost of Capital and Discount Rate changes (additional funds from Treasury) | 305 |
| Inter-Year Flexibility as applied to the CFISSA programme | 344 |
| Overall effect of in-year changes | 4,672 |
| *Revised level of CFISSA programme* | 13,030 |

### NHS Closures

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the *(a)* hospitals, *(b)* doctors' surgeries and *(c)* other NHS clinics which have been closed since 1997. [154401]

**Mr. Hutton:** Information on hospital closures ceased to be collected in 1991 following the introduction of the national health service internal market and trusts. Hospital reprovision will often lead to fewer hospital buildings (for example, because of consolidation on a single site), but the resulting modernised, fit-for-purpose new facilities will offer better patient care and better quality services.

Information on the closure of doctors' surgeries is not held centrally. Primary care trusts (and their health authority predecessors) will be aware of individual

closures. Modernisation of primary care facilities will often lead to fewer, larger premises (for example, one-stop centres providing a wider range of services to patients).

### NHS Foundation Trusts

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on his proposed review of the first wave of NHS foundation trusts; when the review will *(a)* begin and *(b)* end; what its terms of reference will be; what resources will be allocated to the review; whether the (i) terms of reference and (ii) report produced will be made public; whether parliamentary time will be set aside to debate the review and its outcome; and whether the review will include a consultation process. [156283]

**Mr. Hutton:** Details of the review of national health service foundation trusts will be announced before the first NHS foundation trusts are authorised by the Independent Regulator of NHS foundation trusts.

### NHS Trust Star Ratings

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) pursuant to his statement of 7 January 2003, *Official Report*, column 279, which trusts received an increased star rating as a result of the recalculations; [149942]

(2) what assessment he has made of the effect of the removal of the *(a)* information management and technology and *(b)* catering criteria from the 2002 star ratings on the scoring methodology; [151720]

(3) which individual NHS trust ratings the Secretary of State queried during consideration of the 2002 star ratings; and what the reasons were in each case; [149943]

(4) on which 3-star NHS trusts at risk of losing a star Ministers raised queries during consideration of the 2002 star ratings; [149944]

(5) how many recalculations of the 2002 NHS trust star ratings took place *(a)* before and *(b)* after 15 to 16 July 2002; and what the reasons were for each recalculation; [149945]

(6) which criteria in the 2002 NHS trust star ratings were changed when they were recalculated on 15 to 16 July 2002; [149946]

(7) for what reasons no trust lost a star rating following the recalculation of the 2002 star rating on 15 to 16 July 2002. [151722]

**Mr. Hutton:** The first calculation of provisional 2002 national health service trust performance ratings to be based on a full data set took place on 9 July 2002. Calculations were then checked and, where necessary, refined on a regular basis through to the publication on 24 July 2002, in order to correct any data errors and ensure the results represented an accurate reflection of NHS performance.

The specific change to the criteria used to calculate provisional performance ratings between 15 and 16 July 2002 was the removal of two performance indicators, covering access to catering facilities and information management and technology, which had been proposed as part of the rating system. The indicators were removed following a significant number of concerns raised by NHS trusts over the quality of their construction and the data that would have to be used.

The star ratings system uses the relative position of trusts against a wide range of performance indicators to help distinguish between three, two and one star ratings. So, in principle, a trust's position could be improved or worsened by changes to the indicator scores of other trusts. No trust's provisional rating dropped on 15 to 16 July because other indicator data did not change significantly at that time. However, by the time the ratings were published on 24 July 2002, the removal of these two indicators had contributed to a lower rating for some trusts, aided by the relative position of other trusts having improved as data on other indicators changed. If these indicators had remained part of the 2002 performance ratings, 11 acute NHS trusts would have received a different rating at the time of publication: seven trusts would have had a lower rating; four trusts would have had a higher rating.

Overall, as a consequence of the removal of the two indicators and a number of other data corrections and refinements, there were 23 acute and specialist NHS trusts that had an increased performance rating between the 12 July 2002 calculation of provisional ratings and their final rating for that year. The 23 trusts which increased from their provisional rating were:

Barts and the London NHS Trust
Basildon and Thurrock NHS Trust
Birmingham Women's Health Care NHS Trust
Brighton Health Care NHS Trust
Burnley Health Care NHS Trust
Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Trust
Cardiothoracic Centre—Liverpool NHS Trust
Essex Rivers Healthcare NHS Trust
Gloucestershire Royal NHS Trust
Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust
Kettering General Hospital NHS Trust
Kingston Hospital NHS Trust
Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust
Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Trust, London
North Staffordshire Hospital NHS Trust
Rotherham General Hospitals NHS Trust
Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS Trust
Royal Liverpool Children's NHS Trust
Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases NHS Trust, Bath
South Durham Health Care NHS Trust
University College London Hospitals NHS Trust
Walton Centre for Neurology and Neurosurgery NHS Trust
Wirral Hospital NHS Trust.

The then Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Member for Darlington (Mr. Milburn), raised queries about the provisional rating of nine acute NHS trusts, in the run-up to publication, to satisfy himself that ratings to be awarded were based on robust evidence and represented an accurate reflection of NHS performance. The nine acute trusts whose provisional rating the then Secretary of State queried are listed. Those marked with an asterisk are trusts which had been three-star in the 2001 performance ratings.

Barts and the London NHS Trust
Basildon and Thurrock University Hospitals NHS Trust*
Norfolk and Norwich Health Care NHS Trust*
Northampton General Hospital NHS Trust*
Northumbria Health Care NHS Trust*
South Durham Healthcare NHS Trust*
The Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust*
University College London Hospitals NHS Trust
West Suffolk Hospitals NHS Trust*.

### Organ Donation

**Ms Atherton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of registrations were made via each procedure available for individuals to register themselves on the organ donor register in the last year for which figures are available. [156191]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The information requested is shown in the table.

*Registrations onto the national health service organ donor register, 2003 by source of registration—proportions*

| *Source* | *Percentage* |
|---|---|
| Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency | 37 |
| Family Health Services Authorities | 28 |
| Organ Donor Leaflet | 3 |
| Passport Office | 1 |
| Boots Advantage Card | 14 |
| On-line | 1 |
| Other | 16 |

*Note:*
Analysis on 15 January 2004

**Ms Atherton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cadaveric organ donations there were in each of the past three years. [156192]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The number of cadaveric organ donors in each of the past three years—2001–03—is shown in the table.

| | *Donors* |
|---|---|
| 2001 | 778 |
| 2002 | 770 |
| 2003 | 710 |

*Source:*
UK Transplant

**Ms Atherton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many non-heartbeating organ donations there were in each of the past three years; and in how many cases the deceased was on the donor register. [156193]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The number of non-heart-beating (NHB) organ donors over the last three years and the number of those who were on the organ donor register (ODR) is shown in the table.

| | *NHB donors* | *Number on ODR* | *Percentage on ODR* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2001 | 39 | 10 | 25.8 |
| 2002 | 53 | 12 | 22.6 |
| 2003 | 66 | 17 | 25.8 |
| Total | 158 | 39 | 24.7 |

*Source:*
UK Transplant

**Mr. Carmichael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people are on the organ donor register; and how many people joined the register in each of the last five years. [156622]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** There are currently 11.11 million people registered on the national health service organ donor register.

The number of registrations added to the register over the last five years—1999 to 2003—are shown in the table.

| | *Number added (million)* |
|---|---|
| 1999 | 1.51 |
| 2000 | 1.23 |
| 2001 | 0.74 |
| 2002 | 1.08 |
| 2003 | 0.87 |

### Parliamentary Questions

**Mr. Brady:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many days on average his Department took in Session 2002–03 to give a substantive answer to a parliamentary question for ordinary written answer; and what the greatest number of days taken to answer such a question was. [155922]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The average time take to answer an ordinary written parliamentary question in the 2002–03 session was 12 working days. The greatest number of days taken to answer such a question was 127 working days.

The Department strives to answer hon. and right hon. Members' questions in a timely and helpful fashion and is currently seeking to improve performance.

### PFI Projects

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many PFI projects in progress have *(a)* delayed timetables and *(b)* cost overruns; and if he will list the time delays and cost implications in each case. [155460]

**Mr. Hutton:** Indicative timetables and budgets are set for all schemes as part of their project management arrangements. During procurement, timetables are revised as necessary to reflect changed circumstances. Planned costs may also change but the scheme must remain affordable to the local health economy, and demonstrate value for money.

Firm completion dates (that is, when the hospital is open) are set only once contracts are signed for private finance initiative (PFI) schemes. To date, all major PFI schemes have been opened on or ahead of their planned completion target date.

Once contracts are signed, the risk of cost overruns is borne by the consortium.

### Primary Care

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many complaints have been received about *(a)* general practitioner co-operatives undertaking out

of hours service provision and *(b)* private companies providing out of hours primary care on behalf of the NHS; and if he will make a statement. [154438]

**Mr. Hutton:** Information on the number of complaints made against either general practitioner co-operatives or private companies providing out of hours care, is not held centrally. Primary care trusts (PCTs) are responsible for ensuring that out of hours services provided meet nationally set quality standards, which include compliance with the national health service complaints procedure.

Under the new general medical services (GMS) contract, everyone who provides services out of hours, including individuals contracted by the PCT, as well as organisations, will need to meet the national quality standards. These standards are currently under review by an expert group to make them an integral part of GMS and personal medical services (PMS) contracting. Strategic health authorities have responsibility for performance managing PCTs in their delivery of out of hours services.

### Commission for Health Improvement

**Sandra Gidley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the costs have been of the Commission for Health Improvement in each year since its creation. [154468]

**Mr. Hutton:** The costs published in Commission for Health Improvement's annual accounts are shown in the table.

| | *Cost (£ million)* |
|---|---|
| 1999–2000 | 1.461 |
| 2000–01 | 11.272 |
| 2001–02 | 22.586 |
| 2002–03 | 28.5 |

### Red and Yellow Cards

**Paul Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* 'red' and *(b)* 'yellow cards' have been issued by hospitals in England in each of the past three years. [153292]

**Mr. Hutton:** This information is not recorded centrally. The issuing of 'red cards' and 'yellow cards' is the responsibility of the individual health bodies.

### Restructuring/Change Programme

**Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the expected impact is of the departmental change programme on the provision of benefit and welfare services to the public; [153680]

(2) what the specific objectives are of the departmental change programme; and how the Department has consulted *(a)* staff, *(b)* other Government Departments and agencies and *(c)* external agencies and partners about this matter; [153682]

(3) what analysis has been carried out to demonstrate that the restructuring programme for the Department will provide *(a)* better value for money and *(b)* better accountability; [153683]

(4) what health programmes and services will be affected by the reorganisation and staff cuts within the Department. [153684]

**Mr. Hutton:** The Department will be responsible for setting overall direction for the health and social care system, enabling choice in service provision, setting standards, securing resources, making the big investment decisions and holding the whole system to account through independent regulation and inspection. This will mean that the capacity needed for the whole system to operate effectively is available. Patients, service users and providers of care will all know what is expected anywhere in the country. Where standards are not being met, the Government will intervene where necessary.

The change programme will focus the Department on a more strategic role, devolving responsibility to the front line. It will change the way the Department does its business so that it can provide more effective leadership and a better service to Ministers and the public. This will result in a reduction in the size of the core Department by 1,400—from over 3,600 posts to 2,200—by October 2004.

Staff have been consulted through major events and workshops in London and Leeds to help design the Department, monthly written and face-to-face briefings and monthly workshops on human resource questions. Government Departments, agencies and other partners have been consulted through special events in June and October 2004 to help design the changes, a series of one-to-one meetings on particular issues and progress updates from the Permanent Secretary, Sir Nigel Crisp, in June and October 2004.

The restructuring will provide a slimmer, more focused centre—reducing burden and duplication in the system. New policy development processes will ensure we make the best use of resources by focusing on priorities and involving service users in policy development. New working methods will improve our accountability to Parliament and the public. The change programme will be evaluated to check its delivery.

The change programme supports the drive for better public services. It ensures that the 'centre of gravity' moves closer to the frontline. More freedom for frontline staff will lead to better services for patients and users.

### Rural Health Care

**Dr. Murrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on shortages of general practitioners in rural areas. [154908]

**Mr. Hutton:** The Office for National Statistics (ONS) routinely publishes data classifying health authorities (HAs) into categories, including urban and rural. In the future, this will be by primary care trust. The latest published data refer to 2001. In that year, in England, the rural HAs had 59.7 unrestricted principals and equivalent (UPEs) per 100,000 registered patients, while the national average was 54.3 UPEs per 100,000 registered patients. There is, therefore, no evidence of under-doctoring in rural areas overall, although there will be some areas with recruitment difficulties.

The Government are committed to expanding the general practitioner workforce and have implemented a range of measures to increase the supply of GPs.

The Flexible Careers Scheme

The GP Returner Scheme

The Golden Hello Scheme

The NHS Delayed Retirement Scheme

International recruitment

Extension of the improving working lives initiative to primary care

Increasing training places, including new premises to train and employ more GPs.

### Saxon Square Health Centre (Christchurch)

**Mr. Chope:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) pursuant to the answer of 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1209W, on Saxon Square Health Centre (Christchurch), what estimate he has made of the current value of his Department's interest in the accommodation; [155493]

(2) pursuant to the answer of 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1209W, on Saxon Square Health Centre (Christchurch), if he will make a statement on the work which is ongoing to secure an assignee or subtenant; [155494]

(3) pursuant to the answer of 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1209W, on Saxon Square Health Centre (Christchurch), what has been the cost since 1999 of efforts to dispose of the accommodation; and how much has been spent in the last year; [155495]

(4) pursuant to the answer of 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1209W, on Saxon Square Health Centre (Christchurch), whether the NHS will enter discussions with the head leaseholder to surrender the leasehold interest. [155496]

**Mr. Hutton** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* Since 1999, the total costs attributable to the disposal of this accommodation are in the order of £8,500 and approximately £3,000 has been spent in the last year.

Discussions are currently taking place with a national health service trust with a view to them taking responsibility for this leasehold interest.

The current estimated value for the health centre is commercially confidential.

Further negotiations will be held with the head leaseholder if and when it is in the best interests of the NHS.

### Working Time Directive

**Mr. Norman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether compliance with the European Working Time Directive for doctors in training will become a Commission for Health Improvement performance indicator. [153699]

**Mr. Hutton:** From April 2004, the Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection will take over responsibility for developing indicators and national health service performance ratings. The latest performance indicators, published by the Commission for Health Improvement for use in the 2003–04 performance ratings, includes an indicator for qualified junior doctors' working hours. The indicator relates to post registration house officers, senior house officers and specialist registrars only.

# Written Answers to Questions

*Friday 27 February 2004*

## WALES

### Parliamentary Questions

**Mr. Brady:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many days on average his Department took in Session 2002–03 to give a substantive answer to a parliamentary Question for ordinary written answer; and what the greatest number of days taken to answer such a question was. [155927]

**Mr. Hain:** In the Session 2002–03, the Wales Office took 10 sitting days, on average, to provide a substantive reply to parliamentary ordinary written questions.

The greatest number of days taken to answer an ordinary written question was 58 sitting days. In this instance providing a substantive answer required considerable research with colleagues in the National Assembly for Wales and the department for Trade and Industry.

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many Parliamentary Questions have been tabled to his Department since 1 January 2003, broken down by *(a)* ordinary written and *(b)* named day; what percentage in respect of *(a)* were answered within 10 working days; and what percentage in respect of *(b)* were answered by the specified date. [157745]

**Mr. Hain:** Since 1 January 2003:

(a) 336 (ordinary written questions) 67.5 per cent. answered within 10 sitting days.

(b) 38 (Named Days) 60.5 per cent. were answered on the specified date.

## TRANSPORT

### Flight Delays (Terrorism)

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the cost to UK businesses of flight delays between London and Washington due to terrorism alerts in recent months. [156072]

**Mr. McNulty:** None. Aviation security is kept under review at all times and measures are adjusted from time to time. Delays and occasional cancellations may sometimes be necessary but the first priority is always the safety of the travelling public.

### 10-year Plan

**Mr. Truswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made *(a)* in London and *(b)* outside London in achieving the Ten-year Plan targets for growth of more than 12 per cent.by 2010 compared with 2000 in the use of (i) bus services and (ii) light rail. [156176]

**Mr. McNulty:** The Department has a PSA target of 12 per cent. growth in patronage on local public transport (bus and light rail) in England by 2010–11 compared with 2000–01. We are on track for achieving this national target, with bus and light rail patronage growing by 4 per cent. in the first two years of the period, to 2002–03. Progress is shown in the following table:

*Local bus and light rail passenger journeys by area and mode:*

| | *2000–01* | *2001–02* | | *2002–03* | | *2000–01 to 2002–03* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Millions* | *Millions* | *Percentage change* | *Millions* | *Percentage change* | *Percentage change* |
| England | 3,880 | 3,930 | 1.3 | 4,037 | 2.7 | 4.0 |
| (i) bus | 3,756 | 3,798 | 1.1 | 3,897 | 2.6 | 3.8 |
| (ii) light rail | 124 | 132 | 6.5 | 141 | 6.8 | 13.7 |
| London | 1,412 | 1,494 | 5.8 | 1,606 | 7.5 | 13.7 |
| (i) bus | 1,359 | 1,434 | 5.5 | 1,542 | 7.5 | 13.5 |
| (ii) light rail | 53 | 60 | 13.2 | 64 | 6.7 | 20.8 |
| Outside London | 2,468 | 2,436 | -1.3 | 2,432 | -0.1 | -1.5 |
| (i) bus | 2,397 | 2,364 | -1.4 | 2,355 | -0.4 | -1.8 |
| (ii) light rail | 71 | 72 | 1.4 | 77 | 7.0 | 8.5 |

### Bad Weather Disruption

**Mr. Randall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment his Department has made of the cost of bad weather disruption to transport in London in each of the last five years. [156520]

**Mr. McNulty:** No assessment has been made by the Department about the cost of bad weather disruption to transport in London over the last five years. Responsibility for ensuring London Underground is not adversely affected by bad weather now rests with Transport for London following its transfer last July. Transport for London and London boroughs are also responsible for ensuring London's road network is not unduly disrupted.

### Crossrail Scheme

**Linda Perham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) whether he will make changes to the ownership of Cross London Rail Links to manage the Crossrail scheme; [156077]

(2) whether he will promote a Hybrid Bill to achieve powers for the realisation of Crossrail; [156078]

(3) when the Montague Report on Crossrail will be published; and when he will respond to the Report. [156079]

**Mr. McNulty:** My right hon. Friend has now received advice from Adrian Montague which he is studying closely and whose findings will be published. It covers a

very wide range of issues, including governance arrangements and possible legislation. My right hon. Friend will respond to the report in due course.

### Montreal Convention

**Mr. John Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many EU member states have yet to ratify the Montreal Convention. [157128]

**Mr. McNulty:** For legal reasons it is intended that ratification of the Montreal Convention by the European Community and by individual EU member states should be synchronised. The Commission is pressing member states to finalise their internal ratification procedures as soon as possible. The UK is ready to ratify the Convention.

### Rail Safety

**Linda Perham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to improve rail safety. [156082]

**Mr. McNulty:** The Health and Safety Commission and Executive (HSC/E), as the regulator for railway health and safety, work with the industry to improve health and safety on the railways. Details about the work of the HSE are contained in its annual report on the safety record of the railways in Great Britain, copies of which are available in the House Libraries. Two recent key measures to improve rail safety are the fitment of the Train Protection and Warning System which was completed during 2003 and the continuing removal of Mark 1 rolling stock from the network.

### Rural Bus Services

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* villages and *(b)* towns in Lancashire have been served by rural bus services in each year since 2000; and if he will make a statement. [157294]

**Mr. McNulty:** The information is not available without incurring disproportionate cost.

## CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

### Food Crime

**Mr. Gardiner:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what training *(a)* has been and *(b)* is intended to be provided for magistrates and judges on issues of food crime, with particular reference to cases involving illegally imported meat; [155687]

(2) what advice and guidance his Department has issued to magistrates and judges concerning cases of food crime, with particular reference to cases involving illegally imported meat. [155688]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** I have been asked to reply.

In 2003, The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs produced a case study on illegal imports that was included in the Magistrates' Association training CD.

Defra, HMCE and FSA liaise closely on cases of food crime, and will keep under review the need for further advice, guidance or training.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### Animal Welfare

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether animal welfare agencies and charities have access to lists of *(a)* convicted animal rights abusers and *(b)* those banned from animal ownership. [155680]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Animal welfare organisations do not have direct access to details of those people who have been convicted of animal cruelty or those disqualified from keeping animals.

However, the department is considering, as part of the proposed Animal Welfare Bill, the introduction of an Animal Welfare Enforcement Database which would assist in the enforcement of animal welfare legislation in England and Wales. It is proposed that the database would include details of those people who have been convicted and disqualified from keeping animals. No decisions have been taken as to whether or not those welfare organisations who currently undertake enforcement work would be able to obtain full access to the database.

### Beef Imports

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much beef was imported in each of the last five years, broken down by country of origin. [155333]

**Alun Michael:** The attached table shows the level of beef meat and meat products imported into the UK for the years 1998–2002 broken down by the country of despatch.

The data is subject to a degree of statistical error. The overall level of errors is low, but these errors have a much greater proportional effect on countries with small values or volumes of trade. Therefore, care is needed when interpreting the data.

*UK imports of beef meat/products, 1998–2002*

*Thousand*

| *Country* | *1998* | *1999* | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Irish Republic | 76 | 97 | 113 | 135 | 160 |
| Brazil | 43 | 59 | 66 | 74 | 72 |
| Netherlands | 12 | 14 | 13 | 17 | 20 |
| Argentina | 11 | 10 | 10 | 6 | 24 |
| Uruguay | 13 | 10 | 9 | 9 | 15 |
| Botswana | 6 | 6 | 6 | 11 | 6 |
| Australia | 10 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 5 |
| Germany | 5 | 3 | 5 | 12 | 9 |
| Namibia | 6 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 7 |
| France | 4 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 7 |
| Zimbabwe | 7 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 0 |
| Denmark | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Belgium/Luxembourg | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| Italy | 1 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 4 |
| New Zealand | 6 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Others | 6 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| Grand Total | 208 | 240 | 257 | 306 | 343 |

*Source:*
HM Customs and Excise
Data prepared by Statistics (Commodities and Food) Consultancy
Trade & IT, ESD, DEFRA

### Endangered Species

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action she is taking in conjunction with other governments to aid the protection of endangered species. [155255]

**Mr. Morley:** We are taking action in many ways, particularly through our active participation in the multilateral environmental agreements which help safeguard endangered species, including the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on Migratory Species, the Convention on Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. We are also joining with other Governments to fund numerous conservation projects. Good examples include the Global Tiger Forum, the Great Ape Survival Project and a wide range of Darwin Initiative projects which are helping to protect endangered species.

### GM Crops

**Joan Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what evidence she has from peer-reviewed research of increased yields of GM crops over non-GM crops grown in developing countries; [156127]

(2) if she will *(a)* list the GM crops which have assisted development in developing countries and *(b)* cite the relevant peer-reviewed research. [156128]

**Mr. Morley** *[holding answer 26 February 2004]:* It is for developing countries to make their own assessment of the potential benefits of GM crops. The Government want to help ensure that if developing countries do use GM products they do so safely, appropriately and effectively to bring real benefits to their people. To assist developing countries make their own informed decisions on the possible use of GM technology the UK supports and has ratified the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, a multilateral agreement which provides a common global basis for risk assessment, decision-making and information exchange on GM crops and other products. Of course, GM technology is only one possible tool, not a panacea.

A recently published report by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics contains a number of case studies detailing the actual and potential benefits of GM crops for developing countries. These are not necessarily related to yield increases but may, for example, involve reduced farmer inputs.

### Wild Ponies

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many wild ponies there were on moors in each year since 2000. [156564]

**Alun Michael:** This information is not collected centrally.

### Integrated Administration and Control System

**Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the *(a)* total budget and *(b)* budget for administration were for the Integrated Administration and Control System panel for financial year 2002–03. [156508]

**Alun Michael:** The Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS) Appeal Procedure in England is demand led and throughput determines the level of expenditure. The costs of administering the IACS Appeal Procedure are met from the overall administration costs of the Rural Payments Agency.

The IACS Panel convenes to consider cases that have progressed to the second stage of the Appeal Procedure. Each Panel is made up of three independent members who are drawn from a pool of 16. Members are paid a day and half's fee for each Panel Hearing that they attend together with their travelling expenses.

In 2002–03 three IACS Panel Hearings were held to consider five appeals. The daily fee at that time was £149.

### Market Towns Initiative

**Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent assessment her Department has made of the impact of the Market Towns Initiative. [155949]

**Alun Michael:** An initial assessment of the Market Towns Initiative was undertaken at the end of the first year, in the summer of 2002 and is available at http://www.countryside.gov.uk/Publications/articles/Publication tcm2–13687.asp

Defra and the Countryside Agency are now in the process of carrying out a full assessment which will identify the achievements of the 227 towns taking part in the initiative and any difficulties that have been experienced. A final report will be available in June this year.

An evaluation of the Market Towns Initiative will also be carried out as part of the Rural Policy Evaluation Framework which will cover a range of key policy and programme based areas. The process and timetable for the framework evaluation will be finalised shortly.

### NIREX

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her news release of 16 July 2003, on radioactive waste management, if she will make a statement on *(a)* the progress in making NIREX an independent body and *(b)* the work undertaken so far by Katharine Bryan. [152700]

**Mr. Morley** *[holding answer 3 February 2004]:* The Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) has been set up to recommend the best option, or combination of options, for the long-term management of the UK's higher activity radioactive wastes. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs announced on 16 July 2003 that Katharine Bryan had been appointed as Chair of CoRWM. Katharine subsequently left the Committee on 11 December 2003 to take up a post as Chief Executive of the Water Service, Department for Regional Development (Northern Ireland). She

was succeeded as Chair of CoRWM by Gordon MacKerron, an existing member of the Committee. CoRWM continues to work with the aim of delivering its recommendations by around the end of 2005, building on the foundations laid by Katharine Bryan. The 16 July 2003 announcement also said that Government would be looking at the best way of making Nirex independent of industry and under greater Government control. Despite initial hope that we could resolve this matter during the course of 2003, our considerations are still ongoing and we shall make a statement as soon as we are able.

### Recruitment Advertising

**Pete Wishart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her Department's expenditure on recruitment advertising was in each of the last three years, broken down by publication; and what proportion of such expenditure was *(a)* to advertise vacant posts and *(b)* in the form of other general recruitment advertising. [155529]

**Alun Michael:** As Defra was created in June 2001 information prior to this date is unavailable.

Given the current structure of the HR function within the Department the information requested is available only at disproportionate cost.

### Single Payments

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will introduce historic payments under the Common Agricultural Policy in place of single farm payments. [156505]

**Alun Michael:** No. As my right hon. Friend told the House on 12 February, in England we will introduce the new decoupled single payment from next year on a flat rate basis within a transition period lasting until 2012.

## CABINET OFFICE

### Civil Service

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what plans he has to raise the Civil Service normal retirement age to 65; and if he will make a statement. [156577]

**Mr. Alexander:** In line with all employers in the public and private sector, the Government believe that the Civil Service should be allowed to determine retirement age policy with regard to its business needs while giving staff as much choice as possible about when they retire. Departments and agencies are free to set the normal retirement age for their own staff subject only to the requirement that the minimum age at which civil servants can retire with full superannuation benefits is 60.

The normal retirement age for the Senior Civil Service is 60. However, Heads of Departments and Agency Chief Executives have the flexibility to retain members of the Senior Civil Service beyond 60 if they judge it to be in the public interest and are satisfied about the fitness and efficiency of the individual to carry out his or her duties.

Against this background, 80 per cent. of the Civil Service now has the option to remain in work until 65, and a further 11 per cent. has the option to remain in work on short service concessions. Those Departments and agencies which have decided that there is a strong case for retaining a retirement age of 60 in the current circumstances, will be expected to continue to re-examine the issue and look positively at offering more flexibilities to older staff.

### Government Car Service

**Mr. Chope:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office pursuant to the letter from the Chief Executive of the Government Car and Despatch Agency referred to in his answer of 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1569W, on Government cars, for which Departments the Government Car Service drivers were working at the time of each of the speeding offences identified; and whether any of the offences took place while Ministers were passengers. [157186]

**Mr. Alexander:** The responsibility for the provision of ministerial cars and drivers has been delegated under the terms of the Framework Document to the Government Car and Despatch Agency. I have asked its Chief Executive, Mr. Nick Matheson, to write to the hon. Member. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

## CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### Child Poverty

**Mrs. Roche:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps her Department is taking to achieve the Government's targets of *(a)* ending child poverty by 2020, *(b)* halving it by 2010 and *(c)* reducing it by a quarter by 2004–05; and if she will make a statement. [154371]

**Estelle Morris:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to her by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1590–91W.

### Live Music Task Force

**Miss Kirkbride:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the *(a)* budget and *(b)* aims of the live music task force are; and if she will make a statement. [157783]

**Estelle Morris:** The information is as follows:

*(a)* The Live Music Forum does not have an allocated budget, as its work is essentially advisory.

*(b)* The Forum's aims are to: take forward the commitment made by the Government during the passage of the Licensing Act 2003, to maximise the take-up of reforms in that Act relating to the performance of live music; promote the performance of live music generally; monitor and evaluate the impact of the 2003 Act on the performance of live music; and make recommendations for further action.

### Scottish Football Industry

**Pete Wishart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what responsibilities her Department has in relation to the Scottish football industry; and if she will make a statement. [156855]

**Mr. Caborn:** Sport is a devolved matter. This is the responsibility of the Scottish Executive.

## EDUCATION AND SKILLS

### Individual Learning Account

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when he expects the auditing of Individual Learning Account learning providers to be completed; and if he will make a statement. [156404]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** The Department's Compliance Unit expects to have completed the majority of its Individual Learning Account (ILA) claim validation checks by late summer 2004. Of those registered, learning providers subject to review 68 are currently with the police. It is not possible to assess the time it will take for the police to complete their investigations.

The Department remains committed to making payments to learning providers where ILA claims are properly validated.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many claims from Individual Learning Account learning providers have *(a)* been audited with evidence of fraud discovered, *(b)* been audited without fraud being discovered and received any outstanding payments and *(c)* not yet been audited; and if he will make a statement. [156405]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** Since closure of the Individual Learning Account (ILA) programme reviews carried out by the Department have resulted in: *(a)* evidence of potential fraud being found in connection with 159 registered learning providers of which 68 are with the police; *(b)* investigations and validation checks completed enabling 352 learning providers to be cleared or closed with the Department making payments of £1.1 million to 33 learning providers; and *(c)* 278 learning providers with whom the Department is still carrying out investigation and validation work by seeking further evidence, reviewing such evidence or negotiating a settlement.

In addition, as at 24 February 2004, 186 learning providers have made claims following the ruling on ILAs by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration. 119 claims from learning providers have been reviewed. Of those reviewed, 40 claims could not be validated and payments of £147,920 are being made to 79 providers. A further 67 claims from providers are in process of being validated.

The Department will continue to pursue those providers that have wrongfully claimed from the public purse and where appropriate seek repayment. Where there is evidence of potential fraud, providers are referred to the police. In cases where claims are properly validated, the Department has in place arrangements to pay the outstanding claims.

### Schools (Financial Management)

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the ability of local education authorities to assist schools in improving their financial management skills. [157070]

**Mr. Miliband:** We have made no specific and separate assessment. However, we continue to work closely with LEAs to provide financial management support for schools. The National College for School Leadership and KPMG have provided a workshop programme for head teachers and governors. By the end of March 2004, we expect that leaders from just over 1,000 schools identified by their LEAs will have attended. Consultancy support from KPMG is also available to participating schools that need it, and an extensive website provides financial management advice to all LEAs and schools. LEAs have worked closely with the Department to provide consistent financial reporting data, allowing schools to benchmark their financial situation with other similar schools.

### Medical Practitioner Fees

**Bob Russell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average annual fee is for a student studying to be a medical practitioner from *(a)* the UK, *(b)* another country in the European Union and *(c)* a country outside the European Union. [155877]

**Alan Johnson:** The fees for medical students from:

(a) England and Wales are £1,125 (maximum) in 2003/04;

(b) Elsewhere in the European Union—likewise £1,125 (maximum) in 2003/4; and

(c) Countries outside the European Union are generally around £7,000 to £18,000 per year, depending on the institution and the type of course.

Students under *(a)* and *(b)* have their fees paid for them by the Department of Health from the fifth year of the course onwards.

### School-University Relationship

**Mr. Chaytor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what information his Department collates on the relationship between an individual's first secondary school attended and the likelihood of attending university by the age of *(a)* 20, *(b)* 25 and *(c)* 30 years of age; and if he will make a statement. [155622]

**Alan Johnson** *[holding answer 25 February 2004]:* Cohort 8 of the Youth Cohort Survey (YCS) provides the most recent data for participation in higher education at ages 18 to 19 and 20 to 21 by an individual's secondary school type (pre-16).

*Percentage*

| *School type* | *Participation rate at 18 to 19* | *Participation rate at 20 to 21* |
|---|---|---|
| State | 25 | 41 |
| Independent | 52 | 82 |

*Source:*
Youth Cohort Study: Cohort 8, Sweep 2 (1998) and 3 (2000).

Research published by the Department in 2003: "An Econometric Analysis of the Demand for Higher Education" by Gayle, V. Berridge, D. and Davies, R. B.

(DfES Research Report 472) uses data from cohort 9 of the YCS and shows that after controlling for the effects of GCSE and A level attainment, a number of factors (including Year 11 schooling) have statistically significant effects on the likelihood of an individual attending university at age 18.

The report can be accessed on the Department's research publications website: www.dfes.gov.uk/research

### Sector Skills Agency

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the *(a)* cost in the last financial year and *(b)* purpose is of the Sector Skills Agency; and if he will make a statement. [156588]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** The Sector Skills Development Agency total expenditure for the year 2002–03, its first year of operation, was £15.95 million.

The Sector Skills Development Agency is responsible for developing a network of Sector Skills Councils, the Skills for Business network whose mission is to promote world-leading skills and productivity performance in all business sectors in all regions and nations of the UK.

I am very encouraged by the progress being made by the Agency in establishing a high quality Skills for Business network. 11 Sector Skills Councils have now been licensed and there are plans to license a further 12 Sector Skills Councils by the summer 2004.

### Student Loans

**Chris Grayling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills with how many graduates who were in receipt of income contingent loans the Student Loans Company has lost contact since graduation; and what proportion of the total this represents. [155453]

**Alan Johnson:** Data from the Student Loans Company indicate that it is currently attempting to trace 3,400 borrowers. This represents 0.4 per cent. of the total number of borrowers who will have entered liability to repay up to and including April 2004.

**Chris Grayling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will provide a breakdown by expenditure category of the £2 billion annual Government spending on student loans referred to in Note 82 on Page 16 of the Explanatory Notes for the Higher Education Bill. [155455]

**Alan Johnson:** The figure of £2 billion in Note 82 on Page 16 of the Explanatory Notes for the Higher Education Bill refers to the annual cash cost to the Government of issuing student loans.

In financial year 2002–03, the amount lent to England and Wales domiciled borrowers in student loans was £2,293 million, of which £2,278 million was in respect of income contingent loans, and £15 million was in respect of mortgage style loans.

### TeacherNet

**Mr. Brady:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to his answer of 5 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1033W, on TeacherNet, what proportion of the cost was incurred by *(a)* the consultation process, *(b)* consultancy work by information technology experts and *(c)* marketing and publicity. [156120]

**Mr. Charles Clarke:** My Department met the consultation, marketing and publicity costs from within its own staffing resources, reserving the amount as previously notified for website production by web experts. The number of visits to the site last week made it the 41st most popular on the whole of the TeacherNet website.

### Working-age Population (Skills)

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps he is taking to reduce the number of people in the working age population in the North West Region with no qualifications. [156491]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** The White Paper, "21st Century Skills: Realising Our Potential", published in July last year, set out a number of measures to raise the skills levels of adults including the introduction of a new entitlement to free tuition for those studying for their first full level 2 qualification.

We intend that the level 2 entitlement will apply to those in the workforce of working age who do not already have a full level 2 qualification and who commit to trying to achieve one. To complement this, the Adult Learning Grant (ALG) will offer an allowance of up to £30 a week to help adults with the costs of learning. Lancashire is one of the 10 pilot areas for the ALG scheme. We have also put in place a strategy to ensure that low-skilled adults receive high quality information, advice and guidance to help them choose the most appropriate course.

The Skills for Life Strategy aims to transform people's attitude to literacy and numeracy, and significantly to improve the country's skills levels. In the North West, the target for the combined local LSCs is to improve the skills of 106,000 people by the end of 2004. At July 2003, we estimate that we were on track and 73,000 people in the region had improved their skills. In addition, there has been Skills for Life work carried out by Jobcentre Plus and the Prison Service in the North West.

To help raise the skills levels of those already in employment, we are running 12 Employer Training Pilots, including one in Greater Manchester, to encourage employers to invest in skills and qualifications, particularly for low skilled trainees. The Pilots are testing out a package of financial support measures to improve access to training and enable employees to develop basic skills and NVQ level 2 qualifications.

We are also working to engage employers in activity to address the basic skills needs of their employees. This includes working with Business in the Community (BITC) who have an adviser in each region, including the North West, who is able to meet and discuss basic skills with employers. BITC are also working with a number of major companies in the North West on developing programmes to address basic skills. In addition, a group of Employer Champions has been established, who will act as advocates for basic skills with other employers.

Champions are represented in the North West by the North West Regional Development Agency, Liverpool City Council, and Airbags International.

We recognise that there is a strong regional dimension to the skills problem. Regional Skills Partnerships (RSPs) will be set up in each region to help ensure that the work of different agencies involved in delivering the aims of the Skills Strategy are better co-ordinated and delivered in a way that connects with the needs of employers at regional, local and sectoral levels. Key Partners in the RSPs include the Learning and Skills Council, Jobcentre Plus, the Skills for Business Network, and the Small Business Service. We will be talking to the North West Development Agency and their partners about their plans to set up the Partnership in the North West over the next few months.

### Workplace Skills

**Helen Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the role of trade union learning representatives in improving skill levels in the workplace; and if he will make a statement. [156632]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** Union Learning Representatives are a key component of the Government's new Skills Strategy. In developing the Strategy, we consulted widely and met with trade union representatives on a number of occasions to discuss the vital role that unions and their learning representatives have to play. The TUC is, of course, a key member of the Skills Alliance which will bring together Government, employers and trade unions to oversee the future development and delivery of the Skills Strategy.

Earlier evaluations of the Union Learning Fund and Union Learning Representatives have provided evidence that they have been very effective in helping to encourage workers to improve their skills, particularly workers with low skills and those with literacy and numeracy problems—the very people who so often miss out on learning opportunities.

Analysis of the profile of learners engaged by Union Learning Representatives suggests that they have been very successful in engaging non-traditional learners including older males, people in minority ethnic groups and shift workers. Data for performance management information for 2002–03 confirm that some 19 per cent. of learners from current ULF projects come from ethnic minority backgrounds and 19 per cent. of learners are aged 51 and over (almost 60 per cent. are aged 41 and over).

There are currently around 6,500 Union Learning Representatives. Their new statutory rights, which came into force at the end of April 2003, will help their numbers to grow and we look forward to seeing a national network of over 22,000 trained Union Learning Representatives in place by 2010, helping over 250,000 workers a year into learning.

Regular evaluation of the Union Learning Fund, which includes data on Union Learning Representatives, has taken place up to 2002 and copies of the reports are available in the House of Commons Library. Further longitudinal evaluation, with the aim of measuring the impact of both ULF and ULRs in improving skills levels in the workplace, is commencing from April 2004.

## SCOTLAND

### Scottish Football Industry

**Pete Wishart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what responsibilities his Department has in relation to the Scottish football industry; and if he will make a statement. [156856]

**Mrs. McGuire:** The Department has no responsibilities in relation to the Scottish football industry.

## TREASURY

### Drug-related Deaths

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many drug-related deaths there were in people aged under *(a)* 21, *(b)* 30 and *(c)* 40 years in (i) the North West and (ii) Lancashire in the last year for which figures are available. [157089]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Lindsay Hoyle, dated 27 February 2004:*

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your question asking how many drug-related deaths there were in people aged under *(a)* 21, *(b)* 30, *(c)* 40 in (i) the North West and (ii) Lancashire in the latest year for which figures are available. I am replying in his absence. (157089)

The most recent year for which figures are available is 2002. Data on the number of deaths certified as due to drug poisoning in that year are given in the table below for the North West and Lancashire.

*Deaths related to drug poisoning[1] North West[2] and Lancashire[3] 2002[4]*

| | *Under 21* | *21–29* | *30–39* |
|---|---|---|---|
| (i) North West | 20 | 91 | 131 |
| (ii) Lancashire | [5]— | 17 | 23 |

[1] Defined using the following codes from the International Classification of Diseases Ninth Revision for 1993 to 2000:292, 304, 305.2–305.9, E850-E858, E950.0-E950.5, E980.0-E980.5, E962.0, and the following codes from the International Classification of Diseases Tenth Revision for 2001 and 2002: F11-F16, X40-X44, X60-X64, Y10-Y14, X85.

[2] Usual residents of the Government Office for the North West.

[3] Usual residents of the former county of Lancashire, which comprises the current county and the unitary authorities of Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool.

[4] Data are for deaths occurring in each calendar year.

[5] Fewer than 5 deaths.

*Source:*
Office for National Statistics.

### Child Tax Credit

**Norman Lamb:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what procedures operate in cases where it is

discovered that an overpayment of child tax credit has been made; and whether notification of the position is sent to the recipient of the tax credit. [153465]

**Dawn Primarolo:** The Inland Revenue's Code of Practice 26 "What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?" sets out the Inland Revenue's approach when adjusting an award to avoid paying too much tax credit over the year or to recover an overpayment identified after the tax year has ended.

A revised award notice is sent to claimants when a change is processed.

### Construction Industry

**Brian Cotter:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the evidential basis was for his Department's decision to maintain the £30,000 turnover test for sub-contractors to receive gross payments under the Construction Industry Scheme; and what advice he received from the Inland Revenue on this matter during the recent review of the scheme. [156681]

**Dawn Primarolo:** There has been a specialised taxation scheme for the construction industry since the 1970s to regulate an industry with a long history of poor compliance on taxation matters. The original scheme required a deduction to be made from payments unless the subcontractor could meet certain standards, which allowed him to be paid gross. However, this system failed to limit the numbers receiving gross payment.

The Construction Industry Scheme (CIS) was introduced in Finance Act 1995 and implemented from August 1999. It tightened up the criteria for gaining a gross payment certificate by requiring all subcontractors applying for gross payment status to demonstrate a minimum level of turnover. This approach proved successful and safeguarded monies that were previously at risk to the Exchequer under its predecessor.

The current review of CIS followed industry complaints about its cumbersome processes. The Chancellor announced, in Budget 2003 that the CIS would be replaced by a new system that will relieve some of the industry's administrative burden.

The Inland Revenue has consulted extensively with industry representatives on the detail of the new scheme, including the criteria for gross payment status. Alternatives to the turnover test were suggested by the industry but none was as effective in restricting the number of subcontractors obtaining gross payment required to preserve the effectiveness of the scheme.

Successive Governments have accepted that it is not appropriate to disclose the advice given to Ministers by civil servants.

### Earnings Statistics

**Annabelle Ewing:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list for *(a)* male, *(b)* female and *(c)* all workers in (i) Scotland and (ii) each of the unitary local authority areas in Scotland the (A) weekly median earnings and (B) distribution of earnings for those earning (1) under the point below which 10 per cent. of earners fall and (2) the above point above which 10 per cent. of earners exceed. [156220]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Annabelle Ewing, dated 27 February 2004:*

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question for a list, for *(a)* male, *(b)* female and *(c)* all workers in (i) Scotland and (ii) each of the unitary local authority areas in Scotland the (A) weekly median earnings and (B) distribution of earnings for those earning (1) under the point below which 10 per cent. of earners fall and (2) the point above which 10 per cent. of earners exceed. (156220)

I attach a table showing the mean and median earnings in 2003 of employees in local authority areas in Scotland.

Estimates of the boundary points for the highest and lowest 10 per cent. of earners in these areas are published on the National Statistics web site at: http://www. statistics. gov.uk/downloads/theme_labour/NES2003_Analyses_By_Region/NES2003_Analyses_By_Region.pdf

Tables El 5, El6 and El7 give this information for all workers, male workers and female workers respectively, along with other earnings figures for Scottish Local Authorities.

Average earnings are estimated from the 2003 New Earnings Survey (NES) and are provided for full-time employees on adult rates of pay whose pay was unaffected by absence during the pay period. This is the standard definition used for NES tables. The NES does not collect data on the self employed and people who do unpaid work.

The New Earnings Survey publication criteria ensures that all estimates are undisclosive and of reliable quality, and suppresses estimates that do not meet these criteria. A number of estimates have been removed from the table for this reason. The information is based on the 2003 NES, the latest survey for which data are available.

*Gross weekly earnings of full-time employees in Scotland in 2003*

*£ per week*

| | *Male* | | *Female* | | *All* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Area* | *Mean* | *Median* | *Mean* | *Median* | *Mean* | *Median* |
| Scotland | 483.7 | 409.5 | 372.4 | 323.8 | 436.8 | 373.1 |
| Local Authorities | | | | | | |
| Aberdeen City | 591.4 | 507.8 | 417.7 | 363.9 | 524.7 | 441.1 |
| Aberdeenshire | 479.3 | 418.5 | 336.9 | 292.2 | 422.2 | 367.4 |
| Angus | [1] | [1] | 344.1 | 298.6 | 398.3 | 335.9 |
| Argyll & Bute | 400.1 | 375.6 | [1] | [1] | 381.2 | 358.0 |
| Scottish Borders, The | [1] | [1] | [1] | [1] | 355.6 | 299.9 |
| Dumfries & Galloway | 407.6 | 358.1 | [1] | [1] | 381.6 | 322.5 |
| Dundee City | 482.4 | 421.9 | 376.0 | 336.0 | 436.8 | 392.4 |
| East Ayrshire | [1] | [1] | [1] | [1] | 425.7 | 380.3 |
| East Lothian | [1] | [1] | [1] | [1] | 394.8 | 365.2 |
| Edinburgh, City of | 509.0 | 426.8 | 409.2 | 352.0 | 467.0 | 393.5 |

*Gross weekly earnings of full-time employees in Scotland in 2003*

*£ per week*

| Area | Male | | Female | | All | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | Median | Mean | Median | Mean | Median |
| Falkirk | [1] | [1] | 359.6 | 302.7 | 412.9 | 364.7 |
| Fife | 455.7 | 399.5 | 345.7 | 304.7 | 409.7 | 352.5 |
| Glasgow City | 489.1 | 407.0 | 374.7 | 324.0 | 437.9 | 364.9 |
| Highland | 471.2 | 377.1 | 345.7 | 317.4 | 419.6 | 348.4 |
| Inverclyde | [1] | [1] | 333.6 | 304.8 | 379.7 | 334.1 |
| Midlothian | 429.0 | 413.2 | [1] | [1] | 409.1 | 398.1 |
| North Ayrshire | [1] | [1] | 359.8 | 340.5 | 409.3 | 378.4 |
| North Lanarkshire | [1] | [1] | 376.6 | 330.6 | 444.1 | 378.4 |
| Perth & Kinross | [1] | [1] | 353.3 | 303.2 | 405.5 | 370.4 |
| Renfrewshire | 476.2 | 418.7 | 381.6 | 349.8 | 439.7 | 391.2 |
| South Ayrshire | 479.3 | 451.0 | [1] | [1] | 442.5 | 420.7 |
| South Lanarkshire | 479.8 | 417.8 | 346.9 | 309.5 | 421.8 | 382.2 |
| Stirling | [1] | [1] | [1] | [1] | 429.8 | 374.4 |
| West Lothian | 459.7 | 387.0 | [1] | [1] | 423.0 | 363.0 |

[1] Estimate removed since it did not meet criteria for publication

### Economic Growth

**Mr. Spring:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) by what rate real GDP grew in *(a)* the United Kingdom, *(b)* the Republic of Ireland, *(c)* Denmark, *(d)* Sweden, *(e)* Finland, *(f)* Germany, *(h)* the Netherlands, *(i)* Belgium, *(k)* Luxembourg, *(l)* France, *(m)* Spain, *(n)* Portugal, *(o)* Italy, *(p)* Austria, *(q)* Greece, *(r)* the area now forming the euro-12, *(s)* the EU 15 and *(t)* the United States for each year since 1992; [157182]

(2) what the average real terms annual rate of growth in GDP was in *(a)* the United Kingdom, *(b)* the Republic of Ireland, *(c)* Denmark, *(d)* Sweden, *(e)* Finland, *(f)* Germany, *(h)* the Netherlands, *(i)* Belgium, *(k)* Luxembourg, *(l)* France, *(m)* Spain, *(n)* Portugal, *(o)* Italy, *(p)* Austria, *(q)* Greece, *(r)* the area now forming the euro-12, *(s)* the EU 15 and *(t)* the United States since (i) 1992 and (ii) 1997. [157183]

**Ruth Kelly:** The statistics requested are available in the OECD Economic Outlook, December 2003.

### Electricity Generation (Fuel Taxation)

**Mr. Trimble:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, following the introduction of the European Union's Emissions Trading Scheme, he will take steps to ensure that no fuels used in power stations for the generation of electricity are subject to duties or taxes. [156101]

**John Healey:** The EU emissions trading scheme is expected to be running from January 2005, and the Government will take account of its impact on the existing tax system.

Decisions on taxation are a matter for the Chancellor as part of the Budget process, taking account of the Government's economic, social and environmental objectives.

### Government-guaranteed Borrowing

**Mr. Tyrie:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the instances of borrowing by private organisations since 1997–98 on which the Government have given a guarantee of any form; and what the amounts concerned were in each case. [156212]

**Mr. Boateng:** All of the Government's contingent liabilities, including guarantees, which meet the reporting criteria set out in "Government Accounting chapter 26" will have been set out in annual Supplementary Statements to the Consolidated Fund and National Loans Fund accounts.

In addition, Departments' resource accounts prepared since 1999–2000 accounted for probable contingent liabilities in line with the relevant accounting standard. Thus they include those liabilities which are probable but which are not reportable to Parliament. From 2002–03, Departments have also had to disclose remote contingent liabilities where they meet the reporting criteria set out in "Government Accounting", as well as following FRS12.

### Computer Initiatives

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what plans he has to assess the proportion of private sector employees who received computers as a result of employer-provided home computer initiatives in each year since 1997; [157204]

(2) if he will assess the impact of the £500 annual exemption from the taxable benefit on loaned computers introduced in the Finance Act 1999. [157205]

**Dawn Primarolo:** The Office for National Statistics have included extra questions in their quarterly internet access survey to assess consumer awareness and take up of Home Computing Initiatives (HCI) which use the annual tax exemption on loaned computers. Industry partners are also conducting tracking which the Office of the e-Envoy and the Department of Trade and Industry will use as part of their overall assessment. The impact of HCI schemes on levels of home computer penetration and internet access will also be monitored on an ongoing basis.

### Inheritance Tax

**Mr. Keith Simpson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much revenue was raised through inheritance tax in each of the last 20 years. [156780]

**Dawn Primarolo:** Receipts of Inheritance Tax (including Capital Transfer Tax where appropriate) for 1983–84 to 2002–03 are published in Table 1.2 of Inland Revenue Statistics at the following website: www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/tax_receipts.

**Mr. Keith Simpson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will list the changes in inheritance tax thresholds where the limit had been uplifted by inflation since 1997; [156795]

(2) if he will list the changes in inheritance tax thresholds since 1974. [156796]

**Dawn Primarolo:** Inheritance Tax Thresholds since the financial year 1988–89 are shown in the following table.

*Lower limit of slice of chargeable capital (£000)*

| | *Rates of tax—40%* |
|---|---|
| 15 March 1988 to 5 April 1989 | 110 |
| 6 April 1989 to 5 April 1990 | 118 |
| 6 April 1990 to 5 April 1991 | 128 |
| 6 April 1991 to 9 March 1992 | 140 |
| 10 March 1992 to 5 April 1995 | 150 |
| 6 April 1995 to 5 April 1996 | 154 |
| 6 April 1996 to 5 April 1997 | 200 |
| 6 April 1997 to 5 April 1998 | 215 |
| 6 April 1998 to 5 April 1999 | 223 |
| 6 April 1999 to 5 April 2000 | 231 |
| 6 April 2000 to 5 April 2001 | 234 |
| 6 April 2001 to 5 April 2002 | 242 |
| 6 April 2002 to 5 April 2003 | 250 |
| From 6 April 2003 | 255 |

Prior to 1988–89, different rates of tax were charged in respect of multiple thresholds. Details of all chargeable tax bands relating to Inheritance Tax and its predecessors from November 1974 to March 1988 are given in Appendix A.6, page 99, of Inland Revenue Statistics 1987, a copy of which is available in the Library.

Since 1997–98, the threshold has been indexed by the rate of inflation in each year except for 2002–03, when the indexed threshold would have been £247,000 rather than £250,000.

### Project Aspire

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his answer of 30 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 569–70W, what the names were in each case of the individuals forming the Inland Revenue team which met, as part of the market making exercise for Project Aspire, with *(a)* EDS, *(b)* IBM, *(c)* CGEY, *(d)* CSC, *(e)* Accenture, *(f)* Fujitsu Services, *(g)* CMG Logica and *(h)* PWC Consulting. [156518]

**Dawn Primarolo:** John Yard, the Director of Business Services; Don Brown, the Aspire Project Director and Ian Pretty, Head of Aspire Stakeholder Relations formed the Inland Revenue team which met with EDS, IBM, CGEY, CSC, Accenture, Fujitsu Services, CMG Logica and PWC Consulting.

### Lord Butler

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when *(a)* Sir Nicholas Montagu KCB, Chairman of Inland Revenue, *(b)* Mr. Timothy Flesher CB, former Commissioner of Inland Revenue, *(c)* Mr. Gabriel Maklouf, former Director of Inland Revenue International Division and *(d)* Mr. Graham Dean, former Inland Revenue employee, was informed that Lord Butler of Brockwell had joined the advisory board of IBM UK; and what action each of them took upon receipt of this information. [156519]

**Dawn Primarolo:** Lord Butler's appointments are not a matter on which any action by the Inland Revenue is appropriate.

### Mortality Statistics

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people died from *(a)* cancer and *(b)* coronary heart disease in (i) Lancashire and (ii) the North West in the last year for which figures are available; and what this represented for each 1,000 of population. [156499]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Evans, dated 27 February 2004:*

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question concerning how many people died from *(a)* cancer and *(b)* coronary heart disease in (i) Lancashire and (ii) the North West in the last year for which figures are available; and what this represented for each 1,000 of population. (156499)

The latest year for which the requested figures are available is 2002 and these are given in the attached table.

*Numbers of deaths and death rates[1] from cancer and coronary heart disease[2] in the former county of Lancashire,[3] and the North West government office region,[4] 2002[5]*

| | *Numbers of deaths* | *Rate per 1,000 population* |
|---|---|---|
| *Cancer* | | |
| Former county of Lancashire | 4,020 | 2.8 |
| North West | 19,104 | 2.8 |
| *Coronary heart disease* | | |
| Former county of Lancashire | 3,149 | 2.2 |
| North West | 14,977 | 2.2 |

[1] Crude rates per 1,000 population.

[2] The cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10). The codes used are listed below: Cancer (malignant neoplasms)—ICD-10 C00-C97.

Coronary Heart Disease-ICD-10 I20-I25.

[3] The former county of Lancashire comprises the current county and the unitary authorities of Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool.

[4] Usual residents of these areas.

[5] Deaths occurring in 2002.

### Private Finance Initiative

**Mr. Tyrie:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much capital spending by the private sector there has been or is projected on Private Finance Initiative or associated schemes, using the same departmental analysis as Table C18 of the Budget Report 2003, in each year from 1997–98 to 2005–06, separately distinguishing expenditure on assets that have been or will be accounted for *(a)* on-balance sheet and *(b)* off-balance sheet to the public sector client. [156159]

**Mr. Boateng:** The value of capital spending by the private sector under signed PFI schemes, listed by Department and by year, is available from the PFI signed projects list on the HM Treasury website. A total of 563 PFI transactions reached financial close by 4 April 2003, with a total capital value of £35.5 billion. The estimated capital value of signed PFI contracts where capital assets are accounted for on departmental balance sheets is £20.2 billion. This represents 57 per cent. of the total estimated capital value.

Projections of capital spending under signed projects and projects at preferred bidder to 2005–06 are published in Tables C18 and C19 of the Financial Statement and Budget Report 2003.

PFI contracts where the assets concerned are on departmental balance sheets are reported in departmental accounts, together with disclosure of information relating to any contracts assessed as off balance sheet.

### Royal Mint

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his latest estimate is of the *(a)* net asset value and *(b)* annual profitability of the Royal Mint; and if he will make a statement. [156764]

**Ruth Kelly:** The Royal Mint's net asset value (total assets less current liabilities) as at 31 March 2003 was £63,278,000. Its operating profit (before exceptional items) for the year 2002–03 was £1,285,000.

During 2003–04 to date there has been a small growth in the Mint's net asset value. The Mint forecast a modest improvement in profitability for 2003–04. This has been achieved largely through cost reductions, particularly in terms of employment costs.

The 2003–04 Accounts of the Royal Mint Trading Fund together with a Certificate and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General will be prepared, and laid before Parliament, pursuant to section 4(6) of the Government Trading Funds Act 1973. Until then it would be inappropriate to provide an interim estimate based on unaudited accounts.

### Savings Gateway Project

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what interim conclusions he has reached on the Savings Gateway project; and when he will report conclusions to Parliament. [157051]

**Ruth Kelly:** The Saving Gateway pilot final evaluation is due in early 2005. No substantial conclusions can be drawn until we receive the full research findings, however indicators so far are good. The latest interim evaluation report showed that 1,478 accounts had been opened (the maximum was 1,500), and the participants were mostly drawn from young families with children. By the end of August 2003, the total amount saved was £150,000, and there was little evidence that people had transferred money from existing savings accounts or borrowed to save. This report is available on the HM Treasury website.

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to re-examine the introduction of a Savings Advice Gateway. [157054]

**Ruth Kelly:** The Saving Gateway is being piloted in five locations, four of which are being run in conjunction with the Community Finance and Learning Initiative (CFLI), which is led by the DfES. Part of the remit of the community organisations involved in the CFLI is to provide advice and support to the Saving Gateway participants. The impact of the CFLI is being evaluated alongside the Saving Gateway evaluation. Final evaluation for the Saving Gateway is due in early 2005 and the DfES research findings are due to be published shortly.

### Taxation (Self-assessment)

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer under what circumstances a person who pays tax under PAYE is also required to fill in a self-assessment form. [156395]

**Dawn Primarolo:** A person paying tax under PAYE is also required to fill in a self-assessment return if they are:

A company director

An employee paying higher rate tax

An employee with more complex tax affairs

A pensioner with more complex tax affairs.

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what definitions of *(a)* employed and *(b)* self-employed are used by the Inland Revenue for the purpose of a self-assessment form for income tax. [156396]

**Dawn Primarolo:** As set out in the self assessment tax return guide, a taxpayer who receives a self assessment return, has to complete the employment pages if he or she is an employee, or office holder, or director, or agency worker or receiving benefits from a former employer. A taxpayer has to complete the self employed pages if he or she carried on a trade, profession or vocation as a self employed person in the UK or abroad.

### Unemployment

**Mr. Wills:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females aged (i) 21 to 30, (ii) 31 to 40, (iii) 41 to 50 and (iv) 51 to 60 years have been unemployed for (A) less than one month, (B) less than three months, (C) less than six months, (D) six to 12 months and (E) over 12 months; [156088]

(2) how many people aged *(a)* 21 to 30, *(b)* 31 to 40, *(c)* 41 to 50 and *(d)* 51 to 60 years are unemployed. [156089]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Michael Wills, dated 27 February 2004:*

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Questions about numbers of people unemployed by age group and duration of unemployment. (156088 & 156089)

The attached table shows the available information for the most recent period for which data have been compiled, the three months ending in November 2003.

This information is derived from the Labour Force survey (LFS). As with any statistical sample survey, estimates from the LFS are subject to sampling variability.

*Number of unemployed adults by sex, age and duration[1] of unemployment: United Kingdom, September to November 2003[2]*

*Thousands*

| | Age group | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Group* | *21–30* | *31–40* | *41–50* | *51–60* |
| Total unemployed adults | 384 | 306 | 222 | 172 |
| Adults unemployed for: | | | | |
| Less than 3 months | 201 | 120 | 85 | 56 |
| 3 months but less than 6 months | 62 | 57 | 37 | 26 |
| 6 months but less than 12 months | 57 | 50 | 36 | 28 |
| Over 12 months | 62 | 79 | 64 | 62 |
| Total unemployed men | 244 | 173 | 124 | 107 |
| Men unemployed for: | | | | |
| Less than 3 months | 116 | 55 | 34 | 28 |
| 3 months but less than 6 months | 38 | 33 | 19 | 14 |
| 6 months but less than 12 months | 43 | 32 | 26 | 18 |
| Over 12 months | 46 | 54 | 45 | 46 |
| Total unemployed women | 139 | 133 | 99 | 65 |
| Women unemployed for: | | | | |
| Less than 3 months | 85 | 65 | 51 | 28 |
| 3 months but less than 6 months | 24 | 25 | 18 | 12 |
| 6 months but less than 12 months | 14 | 18 | 10 | 10 |
| Over 12 months | 16 | 25 | 19 | 16 |

[1] Duration of unemployment is defined as the length of time for which a person has been seeking work or the length of time since he or she left their most recent job (whichever is the shorter).

[2] These estimates are not seasonally adjusted and have not been adjusted to reflect the 2001 Census results.

*Source:*

ONS Labour Force Survey

### Valuation Office Agency

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the vacancy taken up by Miss Ann Grinstead as a non-executive Director of the Valuation Office Agency was advertised; where the vacancy was advertised ; how many applications were received by the Valuation Office for the vacancy; how many candidates were shortlisted; and who the Chairman and the members of the interview panel charged with selecting the successful applicant were. [156615]

**Dawn Primarolo:** Miss Grinstead was appointed an external member of the Valuation Office Agency Management Board with effect from 1 April 2002. The post was filled through the Cabinet Office's Public Appointments list which maintained a list of people interested in appointments of this nature rather than through advertisement. The names of 43 people who had notified their interest were considered, four were short listed and approached, and Miss Grinstead was interviewed for suitability by the Chief Executive of the Agency, Mr. Michael Johns, the Agency's Director of Business Resources, Mrs. Wheatcroft, and the Inland Revenue's sponsor of the Agency at that time, Mr. David Park.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Cyprus

**Mr. Spring:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the current state of the negotiations on the island of Cyprus' future. [157108]

**Mr. Hawkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on progress towards a settlement in Cyprus. [157147]

**Mr. MacShane:** Following the UN Secretary-General's 4 February invitation to the parties, and the procedural agreement subsequently reached in New York on 13 February, substantive talks resumed in Nicosia on 19 February.

These talks, under UN auspices and on the basis of the UN Secretary-General's plan, aim to reach agreement on a settlement that will be put to the two Cypriot communities in separate simultaneous referendums on 21 April.

The settlement would take effect on the day after it had been approved, thus enabling a united Cyprus to join the European Union on 1 May.

Initial reports of progress are encouraging. The timetable is tight, and both sides are arguing for changes to the plan on some substantive points. But we hope that the constructive spirit shown by the parties in New York will enable them to reach agreement to their mutual benefit. The UK will continue to give its full support to the UN Secretary-General and to the parties in order to help realise this historic opportunity.

### Gibraltar

**Andrew Mackinlay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the initiative by Spain to challenge the extension of the European franchise to people of Gibraltar, to limit the franchise to European Union citizens in the United Kingdom and Gibraltar and to exclude Commonwealth citizens. [156455]

**Mr. MacShane:** We are confident that the European Parliament (Representation) Act is consistent with our EU obligations. A statement by the Commission on 29 October 2003 confirmed that:

> "the UK has organised the extension of voting rights to residents in Gibraltar within the margins of discretion presently given to member states by the EU law".

We have received no official notification that Spain intends to pursue this case to the European Court of Justice. We would defend any such case.

### Israel

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his answer of 19 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 924W, to the right hon. Member for Suffolk, Coastal (Mr. Gummer), when Israel first tested a nuclear explosive device. [151868]

**Mr. MacShane:** Israel has never announced it has tested a nuclear explosive device.

### Sri Lanka

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action the Government are taking to encourage the Sri Lankan authorities to give full protection to religious minorities in Sri Lanka. [154625]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** We are concerned about reports of discrimination against religious minorities in Sri Lanka and regularly raise this, and other human rights issues, with the Sri Lankan Government. On 27 January 2004, our High Commissioner in Colombo discussed our concerns about a possible Anti-conversion Bill with the Minister for Hindu Affairs. We will continue to look to the Government of Sri Lanka to protect the rights to freedom of religion enshrined in the Sri Lankan constitution.

### US Non-proliferation Initiative

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what response Her Majesty's Government have made to the global non-proliferation and counter-proliferation initiative President Bush announced on 11 February. [155862]

**Mr. MacShane:** The Government welcome moves to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to strengthen, and achieve universal adherence to, the Treaties and Conventions against such proliferation.

I refer my hon. Friend to the written statement made on 25 February by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Asylum and Immigration

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the statement made by the hon. Member for Stretford and Urmston (Beverley Hughes) in Standing Committee on 27 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 446–47, how many failed asylum seekers have left the UK in each year since 1999; what the evidential basis was for the Minister's assertion that Migration Watch UK's assumptions are spurious; what steps are being taken to ensure recent increases in work permit numbers are short-term; what proportion of the estimated population increase between *(a)* 2001 to 2026, *(b)* 2003 to 2026 and *(c)* 2002 to 2031 is attributable to net immigration; and to what less than 0.3 per cent. refers. [156086]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer 25 February 2004]:* The following table contains the number of asylum seekers who have been removed from the UK in each year since 1999, including those departing voluntarily after enforcement action had been initiated against them and persons departing under the Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes run by the International Organisation for Migration. The figures do not include those who have departed voluntarily under their own means without informing the Government.

*Asylum removals 1999 to 2003*[1]

| | *Principal applicants* | *Dependants* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1999 | 7,655 | n/a | n/a |
| 2000 | 8,980 | n/a | n/a |
| 2001[2] | 9,285 | 1,495 | 10,780 |
| 2002[3] | 10,740 | 3,170 | 13,910 |
| 2003[3] | 12,490 | 4,550 | 17,040 |

n/a = Data on dependants removed have only been collected since April 2001.

[1] Includes persons departing voluntarily after enforcement action had been initiated against them and persons departing under the Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes run by the IOM.

[2] Data on dependants are for April to December only.

[3] Provisional data.

*Note:*

Data are rounded to nearest five and may not sum due to rounding.

The population projections produced by the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) are part of National Statistics and are covered by the National Statistics Code of Practice. This means that they are completely independent and produced to the highest professional principals and standards. We believe that this, along with access to the most relevant and up to date information captured by the Home Office's statistical branch and the Office for National Statistics, makes GAD's assumptions more credible than those of groups such as Migration Watch UK. I have written to Sir Andrew Green of Migration Watch UK setting out why the assumptions produced by his group are incorrect.

Work permits are issued in respect of posts which UK-based employers are unable to fill with suitably qualified resident workers and, except in the case of the Sectors Based Scheme for low skilled workers, are not subject to any numerical ceiling on the number of permits issued. Work Permits (UK), which administers these arrangements, seeks to ensure that the criteria for the issuing of work permits are responsive to changes in labour market conditions. The work permit arrangements are demand-led and the overall number of work permit applications in either the short or long-term will be dictated by the extent to which UK-based employers are able to fill vacancies with suitably qualified workers.

In his latest (2002-based) projections for the UK, the Government Actuary projects that *(a)* between 2001 and 2026 total population growth will be 5.1 million, of which total net inward migration is assumed to be 3.3 million; *(b)* between 2003 and 2026 total population growth will be 4.8 million, of which total net inward migration is assumed to be 3.0 million and; *(c)* between 2002 and 2031 total population growth will be 5.6 million, of which total net inward migration is assumed to be 3.8 million.

My reference to "less than 0.3 per cent." (Standing Committee, *Official Report*, column 447) should have been to the average population increase per annum. I am happy to take this opportunity to clarify this point for the record.

### Citizenship/Naturalisation

**Mr. Denham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the number of applications for *(a)* naturalisation and *(b)* citizenship that will be made between January and the implementation of the sections of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 that require knowledge of life in the UK and language. [156163]

**Beverley Hughes:** New applications for all types of citizenship have increased since the publication of the final report of the "Life in the UK" Advisory Group in September 2003. Current trends indicate that application rates, which have fallen slightly since 1 January, will continue at the present level until the implementation of the relevant provisions of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002. Forecast figures are not routinely published.

### Drug Treatment

**Mr. Stinchcombe:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many places are available in residential drug treatment services in England; and how many were available in each of the previous five years. [153714]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** I have been asked to reply.

The Department does not collect annual figures centrally on the number of places available in residential drug treatment in England.

However, as part of the consultation exercise leading up to the implementation of the National Minimum Care Standards, a survey was commissioned by the Department at the end of 2000 to establish the number of places within the residential drugs and alcohol sector collectively. This survey showed that at the end of 2000 there were approximately 3,100 residential care places in England.

### Sex Offenders

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the availability of residential treatment for sex offenders in the community. [155956]

**Paul Goggins:** We are actively considering the need for, and feasibility of, such facilities as part of a national accommodation strategy for offenders.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Police

**Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many students have been sent down from *(a)* the current intake and *(b)* each of the preceding three intakes to the Police Service of Northern Ireland. [156969]

**Jane Kennedy:** No recruits have been sent down from the groups of trainees taken into the Police College on 8 February 2004, 4 January 2003, 23 November 2003 or 19 October 2003.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### Ballast Plc

**Sir Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will establish an occupational pension rescue package for the former employees of Ballast plc following the company's liquidation; and if he will make a statement. [156685]

**Malcolm Wicks:** The Government remains sympathetic to all those people who will not receive the pension they worked so hard to build up for their future retirement. Ministers have been meeting those affected by pension losses in order to understand their plight and to listen to suggestions regarding assistance ahead of the Pension Protection Fund's introduction.

We are examining closely all the suggestions that have been put to us but, given all these workers' anxieties, which we understand, we owe it to those affected to do that without raising their expectations.

They must know that we have been absolutely straight with them all along. If it is not possible to do anything, as might ultimately be the case, they need to know that that has been the position from the outset. At the same time, we should not prematurely close off the opportunity of assistance if we can identify a proper basis on which it can be done.

### Direct Payment Benefits

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people are receiving benefits into post office card accounts, broken down by *(a)* Child Benefit, *(b)* veterans agency payments, *(c)* pensions and *(d)* Jobcentre Plus payments. [156057]

**Mr. Pond** *[holding answer 26 February 2004]:* All the information is not available in the format requested.

Information available for the latest available date of 24 January 2004 is given as follows from IAD Information Centre.

The number of Post Office Card Accounts receiving payments of State Pension and Pension Credit is 125,205.

The number of Post Office Card Accounts receiving payments from Jobcentre Plus is 140,854.

Child Benefit accounts are now the responsibility of Inland Revenue. War Pension accounts are now the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence and are not included in these figures.

As many customers have already supplied their account details it is expected that the figures for Direct Payment into bank or building society accounts and Post Office card accounts will quickly rise, as customers existing methods of payment expire, and they move over to payment being made direct into their nominated account.

*Source:*

DWP IAD Information Centre

## EU Accession Countries

**Annabelle Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what plans he has to provide support to citizens of EU accession states working within the UK when they cease employment, from 1 May onwards; [156789]

(2) what plans he has to provide support for families of citizens of EU accession states working within the UK when they cease employment, from 1 May onwards; [156791]

(3) what plans he has to allow citizens of EU accession states to claim, from 1 May onwards, *(a)* Working Tax Credit, *(b)* Child Tax Credit, *(c)* Child Benefit, *(d)* Disability Living Allowance, *(e)* Incapacity Benefit, *(f)* Income Support, *(g)* Carer's Allowance, *(h)* Jobseeker's Allowance, *(i)* Housing Benefit, *(j)* Council Tax Benefit and *(k)* minimum income guarantee while (i) living and (ii) working in the United Kingdom. [156972]

**Glenda Jackson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when citizens of EU accession states working in the UK will be entitled to claim *(a)* Housing Benefit, *(b)* Child Benefit, *(c)* Income Support, *(d)* Jobseeker's Allowance and *(e)* Working Tax Credit. [156935]

**Mr. Pond:** Our intention is to introduce legislation so that the accession state nationals who are in the UK but who cannot find work, or will not work, will not have access to Income Support, income based Jobseekers Allowance, Pension Credit, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit. After 12 months of working legally without interruption, citizens of EU accession states will be entitled to the full range of UK benefits. Tax credits and Child Benefit will be available to those citizens of EU accession states who are working legally in the UK; Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit may also be available to those workers on low income.

Incapacity Benefit and contribution-based Jobseekers Allowance are contributory benefits. People who have not lived and worked in the UK will not have paid National Insurance contributions and therefore will not normally have entitlement to these benefits.

For Disability Living Allowance and Carers Allowance, a person must have been resident for 26 out of the previous 52 weeks. However, time spent in another EEA or EU country may in some cases be treated as a period in the UK for the purpose of determining entitlement.

## Pension Credit

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners are claiming pension credit in *(a)* Vale of Clwyd constituency and *(b)* each ward in the County of Denbighshire; how many pensioners he estimates are entitled to claim pension credit but have not done so in each case; and what the average amount claimed by pensioners in the Vale of Clwyd is. [156042]

**Malcolm Wicks:** The information is not available in the form requested. Numbers of Pension Credit recipients and average levels of award for *(a)* the Vale of Clwyd and *(b)* Denbighshire are given in the table. Numbers of recipients are not currently available at ward level. Estimates of the number of eligible households are not available at constituency, local authority area or ward level. However, we estimate that there are approximately 250,000 pensioner households in Wales likely to be eligible for Pension Credit.

*Pension Credit recipients in Vale of Clwyd and Denbighshire, 31 January 2004*

| | *Households* | *Individuals* | *Average weekly award per household (£)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Vale of Clwyd | 3,965 | 4,900 | 44.96 |
| Parliamentary constituency | | | |
| Denbighshire | 4,810 | 5,920 | 44.66 |

*Notes:*
1. Numbers of recipients have been rounded to the nearest five.
2. Average weekly awards have been rounded to the nearest penny.
3. Numbers of recipients exclude small numbers of clerical cases. At 31 January there were approximately 400 such cases in Wales.
4. Average weekly awards refer to the amount received by households, which may be a single person or a couple.

## Pensioner Population

**David Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the pensioner population is in *(a)* the East Midlands and *(b)* England. [155638]

**Malcolm Wicks** *[pursuant to his reply, 23 February 2004, c. 320W]:*

The figures requested are in the following table.

| | *Pensioner population* |
|---|---|
| East Midlands | 784,000 |
| England | 9,119,000 |

*Note:*
1. The figures are from the mid-year population figures, 2002
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest thousand
3. 'Pensioner' is defined as those over state pension age

*Source:*
Office for National Statistics

## Pensions (Northern Ireland)

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how the Pensions Bill will affect people in Northern Ireland; and whether there will be any assistance to those who have lost out in pension schemes in the past. [156099]

**Malcolm Wicks:** Pensions legislation is a devolved matter to Northern Ireland. The provisions of the Pensions Bill therefore generally extend only to Great Britain. The exceptions to this are set out in clause 246, which specifies the provisions that also extend to Northern Ireland. These include those establishing the two new Non-Departmental Public Bodies, The Pensions Regulator and the Board of the Pension Protection Fund, which—as currently with the Occupational Pensions Regulatory Authority and the Pensions Compensation Board—will operate throughout the United Kingdom, but with functions relating to Northern Ireland conferred by Northern Ireland legislation.

Clause 247 allows provision corresponding to the Pensions Bill to be made for Northern Ireland by Order in Council subject to negative resolution.

The Government remains sympathetic to all those people who will not receive the pension they worked so hard to build up for their future retirement. Ministers have been meeting those affected by pension losses in order to understand their plight and to listen to suggestions regarding assistance ahead of the Pension Protection Fund's introduction.

We are exploring all the suggestions that have been put to us and are considering them in depth. But there are complex arguments on both sides so we need to consider very carefully what the appropriate course of action should be.

It would be very cruel to raise expectations for these people who have suffered such a dramatic blow to their security in retirement, if we cannot then provide assistance.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Post Office Accounts

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether interest will be paid on Post Office accounts opened for the purpose of benefit payments under the automated credit transfer system. [156583]

**Mr. Timms:** I understand that interest will not be paid on Post Office card accounts. The Post Office card account is a deliberately simple financial product developed by Post Office Ltd. on behalf of Government to cater exclusively for those customers in receipt of pensions, benefits and tax credits who do not have or choose not to use a commercial bank account.

### Broadband/Mobile Phones

**Michael Fabricant:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry with whom she has held discussions on her strategy to encourage growth in the broadband and third-generation mobile phone sectors. [156178]

**Mr. Timms:** Since launching the broadband strategy to have the most competitive and extensive broadband market in the G7 by 2005 in 2001, discussions have been held with a wide range of stakeholders throughout the broadband value chain involving the full range of technologies. These discussions were usually held through the Broadband Stakeholder Group, which was established to advise the Government on the development and implementation of a strategy to achieve this target and provide a focal point for stakeholders to address both short and long-term issues related to the deployment and take-up of broadband services. The Government values the work of the Broadband Stakeholder Group and the contribution it has made to the successful deployment of broadband in the UK.

**Michael Fabricant:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what strategy she is pursuing to encourage growth in the broadband and third-generation mobile phone sectors; and if she will make a statement. [156180]

**Mr. Timms:** The primary focus of the Government's strategy is to meet the needs of end-users through the promotion of competition at all levels in the value chain in terms of quality, choice of broadband services and value for money. This means the effective and sustainable competition in the provision of broadband networks and services and a regulatory framework that is conducive to further investment and rollout to all areas of the United Kingdom. The third generation mobile phone sector offers not only increased competition and greater consumer choice; it will also provide a true mobile broadband service for individuals and businesses alike.

The Government's policy in licensing spectrum early for the third generation mobile phone sector has enabled the UK along with Italy to launch the first services in Europe. The auction of third generation licences enabled a new entrant, Hutchinson 3G, to enter the market and provide increased competition. The licence condition for third generation mobile phone operators will ensure that at least 80 per cent. of the UK population will be covered by third generation services by 2007.

### Business Link

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 6 February 2004, Official Report, column 1090W, on business link operators, which are the five business link operators referred to as seriously underperforming; and if she will give their *(a)* performance results and *(b)* budget for each year since their establishment. [155320]

**Nigel Griffiths:** Of the five business link operators, three (BL Derbyshire, BL Tees Valley and BL Bedfordshire and Luton) did not have their contracts automatically extended and were required to undergo a business performance review. The remaining two operators (Cambridge Business Services and Sussex Enterprise) were only required to undergo business performance reviews.

The performance results for the five operators as at the end of Quarter 3 in 2002–03 and their performance results for each full year since the business link network was re-engineered in 2001–02, are as follows:

*(a) Quarter 3 2002–03 Performance Results*

*Percentage*

| | *Market penetration (businesses helped as a proportion of the inter Departmental Business Register)* | *Customer Satisfaction (April to September 2002 survey)* |
|---|---|---|
| BL Derbyshire | 12.2 | 76.0 |
| BL Tees Valley | 25.1 | 71.3 |
| BL Bedfordshire and Luton | 8.8 | 78.4 |
| Cambridgeshire Business Services | 9.5 | 75.6 |
| Sussex Enterprise | 11.8 | 85.7 |

*(b) Performance Results at each year end since 2001–02*

*Percentage*

| | *2001–02* | *2002–03* |
|---|---|---|
| *Market Penetration* | | |
| BL Derbyshire | 18.1 | 15.5 |
| BL Tees Valley | 26.1 | 29.4 |
| BL Bedfordshire and Luton | 10.1 | 12.3 |
| Cambridgeshire Business Services | 9.8 | 11.4 |
| Sussex Enterprise | 18.0 | 15.5 |

| | | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| | 2001–02[1] | 2002–03[2] |
| *Customer Satisfaction* | | |
| BL Derbyshire | 77.4 | 83.1 |
| BL Tees Valley | 81.7 | 78.2 |
| BL Bedfordshire and Luton | 89.2 | 82.4 |
| Cambridgeshire Business Services | 82.1 | 75.5 |
| Sussex Enterprise | 86.6 | 79.5 |

[1] October 2001 to March 2002 survey
[2] October 2002 to March 2003 survey

Since SBS took action to address underperformance last year all five business link operators have, following their business performance reviews, taken effective action to address their problems and have all subsequently achieved significant improvements in their performance.

The performance improvements registered by BL Derbyshire, BL Tees Valley and BL Bedfordshire and Luton have been sufficient enough for SBS to extend their contracts to the full three years with effect from April 2004.

### Cancun Agreements

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on her policy regarding *(a)* the Cancun agreements on trade and *(b)* bilateral agreements. [155114]

**Ms Hewitt:** There are welcome signs that the DDA negotiations could make significant progress in 2004. I welcome the recent appointment of WTO chairs, which should instil fresh impetus to these negotiations following the disappointing conclusion to the Cancun ministerial.

While bilateral agreements have a complementary role to play in promoting closer political, social and economic co-operation, the UK firmly believes that the biggest gains to the global economy would come from securing a successful outcome to the current round of WTO multilateral trade negotiations. This will ensure a global framework for free and fair trade, providing increased opportunity and prosperity for developed and developing countries alike.

### Cyber-terrorism

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps are being taken to deal with the threats to UK businesses from cyber-terrorism. [153559]

**Mr. Timms:** Policy on the protection of the UK from terrorist attack is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary. The Department contributes to the overall goal of protecting UK interests from electronic attack by seeking to improve the information security management of UK business. We do this by promoting relevant research and our innovation activities which seek to promote the adoption of new technologies such as biometrics. In particular, we have worked for many years on the identification and promotion of management best practice, we have regularly surveyed the nature of the problems and the solutions adopted and have a suite of material aimed at demystifying the subject for smaller companies working on-line.

### F-16 Fighter Jets

**Sir Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many head-up display units have been supplied to the United States for incorporation into F-16 fighter jets since 2000; how many of these jets were destined for Israel; and if she will make a statement. [154541]

**Nigel Griffiths:** The DTI is responsible for holding information only on licences we have issued.

From March 2003, information on whether goods were for incorporation has been recorded on the DTI Export Control Organisation's (ECO) databases. Information prior to this can be obtained only at disproportionate cost, via a manual search of licensing files.

Statistics on incorporation cases will be published in the Government's 2003 Annual Report on Strategic Export Controls later this year.

### Fish

**Adam Price:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 11 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1476W, on fish, what the application numbers of the two transgenic fish referred to are. [156035]

**Ms Hewitt:** Of the two applications referred to, one has been published and its number is GB 2377221. The other application is not due to be published until 17 August 2004, and under UK patent law it remains confidential until that time.

Details of published applications can be found via the espacenet database which can be reached via our website http://www.patent.gov.uk/patent/dbase/espacc.htm

### Military Equipment (Exports)

**Sir Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the *(a)* amount and *(b)* make of (i) handguns, (ii) ammunition, (iii) weapons sights and (iv) gun mountings exported to Jamaica under licences granted during 2001; and if she will make a statement. [154540]

**Nigel Griffiths:** The DTI is responsible for holding information only on the licences we have issued.

Details of all export licences granted for Jamaica in 2001 were published in the Government's 2001 Annual Report on Strategic Export Controls, copies of which are available from the Libraries of the House.

**Sir Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* Scorpion tanks, *(b)* Saracen Light Vehicles and *(c)* Hawk jets have been supplied to Indonesia since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [154542]

**Nigel Griffiths:** The DTI is responsible for holding information only on the licences we have issued.

Since May 1997, the Government has published an Annual Report on Strategic Export Controls containing details of all goods authorised for export from the UK and to which destinations. Copies of the Annual Report (up to and including 2002) are available from the Libraries of the House. Details of export licences approved in 2003 will be published later this year in the 2003 Annual Report, and for 2004, similarly in the 2004 Report next year.

**Sir Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many of the rifles licensed for export to Nepal in 2001 were delivered; to whom; by whom they were manufactured; and if she will make a statement. [154593]

**Nigel Griffiths:** The DTI is responsible for holding information only on the licences we have issued.

Details of all export licences granted for Nepal in 2001 were published in the Government's 2001 Annual Report on Strategic Export Controls, copies of which are available from the Libraries of the House.

Information on manufacturers and end-users of equipment licensed for export is commercially confidential and is exempt from disclosure under the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

**Sir Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry for what reasons 6,780 rifles licensed for export to Nepal in 2001 were not mentioned in table 4, Part III of the 2001 and 2002 annual report on Statistics on Exports of Military Equipment; and if she will make a statement. [154594]

**Nigel Griffiths:** The Annual Report table, 'Statistics on Exports of Military equipment', provides details on the number of weapons and small arms that have actually been exported from the UK, by destination, in that year. HM Customs & Excise have checked their records and have no record of these rifles being exported.

**Sir Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the *(a)* items, *(b)* quantities and *(c)* end use conditions attached to military exports to Nepal exported under licences granted during 2001 and listed in the Strategic Export Controls Annual Report 2001; and if she will make a statement. [154595]

**Nigel Griffiths:** The 2001 Annual Report on Strategic Export Controls contains summaries of all export licences granted for Nepal in 2001, and describes the items licensed.

Quantities of goods exported are in the case of small arms and weapons licensed under SIELs (table 5 of the Annual Report).

End-use conditions imposed on licences are confidential and not disclosed in the Annual Report.

### Personal Computers

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 19 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1041W, on personal computers, what steps she is taking to assess the *(a)* take-up and *(b)* effectiveness of the annual tax exemption on loaned computers; and what assessment will be undertaken following the recently published guidelines for employers. [152227]

**Dawn Primarolo:** I have been asked to reply.

The Office for National Statistics have included extra questions in their quarterly internet access survey to assess consumer awareness and take up of Home Computing Initiatives (HCI) which use the annual tax exemption on loaned computers. Industry partners are also conducting tracking which the Office of the e-Envoy and the Department of Trade and Industry will use as part of their overall assessment. The impact of HCI schemes on levels of home computer penetration and internet access will also be monitored on an ongoing basis.

### Post Offices

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether she plans to provide hon. and right hon. Members with a rationale for the proposed area plan in those areas that *(a)* are involved in and *(b)* have undergone post office closure programmes. [156485]

**Mr. Timms** *[holding answer 26 February 2004]:* No, these are operational matters for Post Office Limited. The changes to the consultation arrangements announced in my Written Statement of 5 February were not retrospective in effect.

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether information from local authorities on infrastructure and regeneration projects already made available to Post Office Limited will be taken into account when determining closure proposals on post offices where no final decision has yet been reached. [156486]

**Mr. Timms** *[holding answer 26 February 2004]:* Yes. The changes to the consultation arrangements announced in my Written Statement of 5 February took immediate effect.

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* rural and *(b)* urban post offices have closed in Lancashire since 1997, broken down by constituency. [156500]

**Mr. Timms:** I am advised by Post Office Ltd. that data on post office closures is not available in the form requested as the company does not require this data for its operational purposes.

Before March 2000, Post Office Ltd. maintained records of net closures on a nationwide basis only and these were as follows:

1997–98: 243

1998–99: 233

1999–2000: 382

Post Office Ltd. has recorded details of the total number of post office closures in the United Kingdom, by Government region and urban/rural classification from March 2000.

| Year | Region: North West | |
|---|---|---|
| | Urban | Rural |
| 2000–01 | 11 | 28 |
| 2001–02 | 9 | +4 |
| 2002–03 | 25 | 12 |

Post Office Ltd. produces information on post office closures on a quarterly basis. There were 88 net urban post office closures and 11 net rural closures in the North West region in the nine months to the end of December 2003, the latest quarter for which figures are currently available.

Since the commencement of the urban reinvention programme in October 2002, there have been a total of 92 urban closures under the programme in the North West region.

### Renewable Energy

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the contribution of renewable energy to the energy policy. [156467]

**Mr. Timms:** The Government have set the target of obtaining 10 per cent. of our electricity from renewable sources by 2010, with the aspiration of doubling this by 2020. Towards achieving such expansion, I announced in December the Government's intention to extend the rising profile of Renewables Obligation by further annual stages beyond 2010–11 to reach 15.4 per cent. by 2015–16.

Renewable energy will make an important contribution to the Government's wider climate change programme. It is estimated that increased renewable energy generation will deliver additional carbon savings of some 2.5 million tonnes of carbon per year by 2010, and of a further 3–5 million tonnes of carbon per year above that by 2020.

Renewable energy also adds to the diversity of sources from which the UK derives electricity, which is important for maintaining reliable supplies.

### Royal Mail

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many employees work for the Royal Mail; and if she will make a statement. [156707]

**Mr. Timms:** As stated in Royal Mail Holdings Plc.'s interim report for the half year ended 28 September 2003, published on 13 November 2003, there were 208,000 people employed within the company's UK operations.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people work for Royal Mail in Lancashire. [157086]

**Mr. Timms:** The number of people employed by Royal Mail in Lancashire is an operational matter that falls within the responsibility of the Royal Mail Board. I have therefore asked the Chief Executive to reply direct to the hon. Member.

## DEFENCE

### Airfield Support Services

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 6 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1103W, how the public private partnership scheme for Airfield Support Services will be adjudicated, with regard to comparison of *(a)* overall costs and *(b)* total manpower; and if he will make a statement. [155216]

**Mr. Ingram:** The way forward in respect of the Airfield Support Services Project will be determined on the basis of what offers best value for money to the Ministry of Defence, without compromising operational capability and/or safety. In doing so, full and proper account will be taken of all the relevant factors in a fair and equitable manner, including overall costs and the total manpower requirements necessary to deliver the requirement.

### Anglo-French Battle Groups

**Mr. Keith Simpson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what arrangements he will put in place for providing the necessary enabling personnel for the Anglo-French battle groups. [156793]

**Mr. Hoon:** There are no plans to form UK-French battle groups. There is, however, a UK/French/German proposal to develop European capabilities in support of the EU's ability to undertake rapid crisis response operations. This advances the UK-French Summit declaration made on 24 November, and the UN's demand for more rapid reaction peacekeeping forces. As part of the Helsinki Headline Goal, EU member states agreed to develop rapid response elements available and deployable at very high readiness.

The proposal being discussed by EU member states is to create battle group-sized forces (approximately 1,500 strong including Combat Support and Combat Service Support), deployable within 15 days, and sustainable for 30 days (but extendable up to 120 days). The target date for such forces to be available is 2007, and they will be designed for compatibility with typical UN Chapter VII mandates (to restore international peace and security). EU member states would be able to offer such formations individually—as is likely to be the case for the UK—or on a multinational basis, from existing forces. The concept will be developed coherently and transparently with the NATO Response Force. This initiative is compatible with current UK force structures and the UK's Joint Rapid Reaction Force, which already includes a number of very high readiness battlegroup formations. It is not envisaged that any additional military or civilian personnel will be required.

### Armed Forces Pensions

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on his plans to raise the normal retirement age for members of the armed forces; what estimate he has made of the savings from raising the pension age to 65; and if he will make a statement. [156573]

**Mr. Caplin:** We have no plans to raise the normal retirement age for members of the armed forces from the current age of 55. This reflects the continuing fitness

requirements for most of those who serve a full career in the armed forces. For the future, the age at which the preserved pension is paid to those leaving before age 55 will be deferred from the current age of 60 to age 65. This will affect both the current and the new schemes. We have not decided when to make the change to the existing scheme. The saving from the change to the preserved pension age in the new scheme is some £50 million a year and has been used to fund unmarried partners benefits and improved death-in-service benefits, as well as contributing to the costs of increased longevity. The right under the current scheme to take an Immediate Pension from age 38 with 16 years service (Officers) or age 40 with 22 years service (Other Ranks) is not affected.

### Commandos (Winter Weather Training)

**Mr. Flook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the dates on which *(a)* 40 Commando Brigade, *(b)* 42 Commando Brigade and *(c)* 45 Commando Brigade carried out winter weather training in Norway since 1990. [156785]

**Mr. Ingram:** This information is not held centrally and it has not therefore been possible in the time available to provide an answer. Work is in hand to collate the details requested. I will write to the hon. Member when that work is complete and a copy of my reply will be placed in the Library of the House.

**Mr. Flook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Royal Marines of 3 Commando Brigade were in Norway on cold weather exercise in January and February, broken down by commando unit. [156786]

**Mr. Ingram:** The following details the number of 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines personnel, which includes personnel from the Royal Marines, Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force, broken down by unit[1], who have deployed on Winter Deployment 04 at any time between January and February 2004:

a. 40 Commando RM: 604

b. 42 Commando RM: 590

c. Headquarters 3 Commando Brigade RM and Landing Force Command Support Group: 422

d. 539 Assault Squadron RM: 118

e. Commando Logistics Regiment: 335

f. 29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery: 322

g. 59 Independent Commando Engineer Sqn RE: 141

[1] Units at a, b and c are predominantly RM personnel. Unit e has a large number of Army and RN ranks. Units at f and g are entirely Army personnel.

**Mr. Flook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Royal Marines of 3 Commando Brigade have been sent home early from Norway due to lack of medical fitness owing to cold weather illnesses; and what the attributable cause of the illnesses was in each case. [156787]

**Mr. Ingram:** As at 24 February, 78 members of 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines had been evacuated to the UK owing to cold weather illness/injury. This is not unusual during a Winter Deployment compared against previous historical data. Changes to Health and Safety regulations however, have reduced the threshold at which those suffering cold weather injuries are sent home. Previously many would have been treated in theatre and returned to training.

A full analysis of the precise nature of these injuries will not be completed for some time. This is because, to provide a useful assessment of the injury, examination has to take place three months after the initial injury. The earliest date medical assessments can begin is May. It is anticipated that all casualties will have been examined by the end of June 2004.

Initial feedback from theatre does, however, indicate that the cause of these cold injuries is varied. There is no evidence of one particular cause of cold weather injuries or of any specific equipment deficiencies.

None is directly attributable to sleeping bags, contrary to recent press speculation.

**Mr. Flook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether cold weather sleeping bags are issued to Royal Marines of 3 Commando Brigade on winter weather training in Norway. [156788]

**Mr. Ingram:** Royal Marines of 3 Commando Brigade on winter training in Norway are issued with sleeping bags that form part of a 'sleeping system'. It comprises a Gortex outer bag, a sleeping bag and a roll mat. The system is designed for use in a range of temperatures, including those sub-zero temperatures experienced in the Arctic. No Royal Marine on this Winter Deployment has related a cold weather injury to any perceived failing in the sleeping system.

### Formation Readiness Cycle

**Mr. Keith Simpson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his letter of 21 February, on the formation readiness cycle, whether the formation readiness cycle has met the delivery aims set out in the Strategic Defence Review. [156794]

**Mr. Hoon:** The formation readiness cycle (FRC) provides a framework for the existing six non-specialist brigades in which readiness and commitments can be programmed, and resources can be matched to levels of collective training.

The FRC is a predictable, symmetric force generation mechanism, designed to generate fully trained and appropriately equipped forces that are ready to deploy and remain sustainable throughout operations.

Overall, the FRC has served us well, and has enabled us to meet a variety of commitments, as laid out in the Strategic Defence Review. As we explained in the recent White Paper we are examining possible changes to the current and future capabilities of the armed forces, and supporting infrastructure, required to deliver a network enabled capability. Part of this work will be to consider the effect these changes will have on the FRC.

### Gulf War

**Mr. Donohoe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many Gulf War veterans of the 1990–91 campaign are estimated to be suffering from auto-immune induced osteoporosis; [156356]

(2) what plans he has to introduce *(a)* a compensation scheme and *(b)* additional pension entitlement for Gulf War veterans of the 1990–91 campaign who are suffering from auto-immune induced osteoporosis. [156357]

**Mr. Caplin:** There is no clinical evidence to support an autoimmune basis for osteoporosis and therefore the Ministry of Defence has no plan to introduce a related compensation scheme or additional pension entitlement. In respect of the prevalence of osteoporosis, I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Blaenau Gwent (Llew Smith) on 27 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 245–46W.

### Iraq

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what arrangements have been put in place in the southern sector of Iraq under British control to secure *(a)* state assets and *(b)* archaeological sites; and what discussions he has had with (i) his United States counterpart and (ii) the Administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority on the lessons learned from securing sites and assets, including ministries, in the United States-controlled sector. [151972]

**Mr. Ingram:** Initially, coalition forces were committed to securing and protecting a wide variety of key cultural and public assets and sites across Iraq. However, as Iraqi authorities have steadily regained capability, they have taken on increasing responsibility for securing and protecting their own assets and sites (administrative, economic and cultural). While coalition forces remain on hand to assist and support those elements of the Iraqi Security Forces involved in this work, the day-to-day security of these assets and sites is now, as it should be, in the hands of Iraqis.

In the course of discussions with my US counterpart and the CPA, we keep arrangements for the security and protection of key cultural and public assets under review.

**Mr. Soames:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the timing of the completion of the Status of Force Agreement for British troops in Iraq. [153515]

**Mr. Ingram:** The arrangements under which British forces will remain in Iraq after 30 June 2004 are still under discussion.

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the numbers of British service personnel based in Iraq. [156993]

**Mr. Ingram:** There are currently around 8,000 UK service personnel serving in Iraq.

### RM Condor

**Mr. Weir:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* civilians and *(b)* service personnel are based in RM Condor in Angus. [157072]

**Mr. Caplin:** When 45 Commando Royal Marines and 7 Commando Battery are not deployed, the total scheme of complement for units based at RM Condor is 835 military personnel and 54 MOD civil servants.

## HEALTH

### Abortion/Cancer

**Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the link between induced abortion and breast cancer. [155817]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The Government believe that any woman considering an abortion must have all the facts to make an informed decision. The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) guidance, "The care of women requesting induced abortion" (2000), states that professionals involved in abortion care should be equipped to provide women with information on the long-term effects of abortion which are rare or unproven, including breast cancer.

The RCOG is in the process of updating its guidance. It has carried out an extensive review of the literature and concluded that the evidence shows that induced abortion is not associated with an increase in the risk of breast cancer.

A similar review of recent evidence has taken place in the United States, where the American College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists also concluded that there was no evidence in the body of medical research to suggest any causal link between abortion and breast cancer[1].

Cancer Research UK is undertaking a study of the risk factors associated with breast cancer, including a further international review of the research evidence on abortion and breast cancer. The results of this study will be made available when completed.

[1] International Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, November 2003.

### Ambulance Service

**Helen Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many 999 calls in the Mersey Regional Ambulance Service area have been answered by the Greater Manchester Ambulance Service in each of the last 12 months; [156672]

(2) how many 999 calls in the Greater Manchester Ambulance Service area have been answered by the Mersey Regional Ambulance Service in each of the last 12 months. [156673]

**Miss Melanie Johnson** *[holding answer 26 February 2004]:* The information is not collected centrally.

**Helen Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many times in the past six months ambulance services have had 999 calls passed to them by BT operators who were unable to connect calls to the Mersey Regional Ambulance Service; [148253]

(2) what discussions have taken place between BT and the Mersey Regional Ambulance Service since November on improving the handling of 999 calls. [148254]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The information is not collected centrally. These are matters which are the responsibility of the Mersey Regional Ambulance Service National Health Service Trust.

## Ancillary Medicine Workers

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* nurses, *(b)* midwives, *(c)* nursing assistants and *(d)* professionals ancillary to medicine were employed in the area of each primary care trust in the North East in (i) 1997 and (ii) the most recent year for which figures are available. [155964]

**Miss Melanie Johnson** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* Information on the numbers of nurses, midwives, nursing assistants and professionals ancillary to medicine in the North East for 1997 and 2002 are shown in the following tables.

*NHS hospital and community health services: Qualified nursing including Practice Nurses employed by Unrestricted Principals and equivalents (UPEs)[1] and Allied Health Professionals in the North East Government Office Region and each specified Strategic Health Authority and organisation as at 30 September 1997*

*Headcount*

| | | *Total Qualified Nursing*[2] | *Of which: Qualified Midwives* | *Nursing Assistants* | *Allied Health Professionals* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | North East Government Office Region | 18,390 | 1,774 | 7,364 | 2,323 |
| Q09 | Northumberland, Tyne and Wear SHA | 10,866 | 699 | 4,681 | 1,370 |
| RAB | Freeman Group of Hospitals NHS Trust | 1,060 | 0 | 56 | 125 |
| RCK | Royal Victoria Infirmary NHS Trust | 2,185 | 226 | 509 | 243 |
| RE2 | Gateshead Hospitals NHS Trust | 687 | 91 | 266 | 93 |
| RES | Northumberland Mental Health NHS Trust | 290 | 0 | 177 | 31 |
| RE9 | South Tyneside Healthcare NHS Trust | 905 | 88 | 337 | 113 |
| RLC | North Tyneside Health Care NHS Trust | 763 | 82 | 325 | 128 |
| RLH | Priority Healthcare Wearside NHS Trust | 569 | 0 | 405 | 6 |
| RLK | Cheviot and Wansbeck NHS Trust | 646 | 86 | 309 | 108 |
| RLM | Northumberland Community Health NHS Trust | 423 | 0 | 120 | 39 |
| RLN | City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Trust | 1,238 | 126 | 511 | 219 |
| RM6 | Northgate and Prudhoe NHS Trust | 357 | 0 | 840 | 22 |
| RM7 | Gateshead Healthcare NHS Trust | 444 | 0 | 332 | 51 |
| RNM | Newcastle City Health NHS Trust | 896 | 0 | 494 | 192 |

[1] UPEs include GMS Unrestricted Principals, PMS Contracted GPs and PMS Salaried GPs.

*Note:*

Totals include Practice Nurses working in these SHA areas.

*Source:*

Department of Health non-Medical Workforce Census/Department of Health General and Personal Medical Services Statistics.

Due to changes in the structure of the NHS it is not possible to give an exact breakdown on a one to one basis between the PCTs geographic area and their former organisations.

*NHS hospital and community health services: Qualified nursing including Practice Nurses employed by Unrestricted Principals and equivalents (UPEs)[1] and Allied Health Professionals in the North East Government Office Region and each specified Strategic Health Authority and organisation as at 30 September 2002*

*Headcount*

| | | *Total Qualified Nursing*[2] | *Of which: Qualified Midwives* | *Nursing Assistants* | *Allied Health Professionals* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | North East Government Office Region | 21,504 | 1,241 | 9,339 | 2,874 |
| Q09 | Northumberland, Tyne and Wear SHA | 12,857 | 675 | 6,257 | 1,696 |
| 5D7 | Newcastle PCT | 564 | 0 | 118 | 77 |
| 5D8 | North Tyneside PCT | 267 | 0 | 73 | 12 |
| 5KF | Gateshead PCT | 334 | 0 | 65 | 74 |
| 5KG | South Tyneside PCT | 257 | 1 | 46 | 19 |
| 5KL | Sunderland Teaching PCT | 463 | 0 | 83 | 1 |
| RE9 | South Tyneside Health Care NHS Trust | 615 | 99 | 370 | 124 |
| RLN | City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Trust | 1,475 | 121 | 784 | 237 |
| RM6 | Northgate and Prudhoe NHS Trust | 386 | 0 | 1,191 | 72 |
| RNP | Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland Mental Health NHS Trust | 960 | 0 | 685 | 156 |
| RR7 | Gateshead Health NHS Trust | 943 | 96 | 329 | 134 |
| RTD | Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Trust | 3,616 | 184 | 1,086 | 383 |
| RTF | Northumbria Health Care NHS Trust | 1,659 | 174 | 910 | 297 |
| RVK | North East Ambulance Service NHS Trust | 89 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| RW9 | South of Tyne and Wearside Mental Health NHS Trust | 803 | 0 | 441 | 33 |
| TAC | Northumberland Care Trust | 426 | 0 | 76 | 77 |

[1] UPEs include QMS Unrestricted Principals, PMS Contracted GPs and PMS Salaried GPS.

*Source:*

Department of health Non-Medical Workforce Census/Department of Health General and Personal Medical Services.

### Cancer Plan

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made towards implementing the waiting time targets between referral and treatment by 2005 as outlined in the Cancer Plan; what statistics are published with which to measure progress; and if he will make a statement. [154581]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The primary purpose of the NHS Cancer Plan is to save more lives. Reducing waiting times is key to achieving this. Data on achievement of current milestones towards achievement of the NHS Cancer Plan waiting times targets, for children's and testicular cancers and acute leukaemia, and breast cancer, are published on the Department's website for strategic health authorities and trusts, at, http://www.dh.gov.uk/cancerwaits

### Children (Alcohol)

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children aged between 11 and 15 years were admitted to hospital owing to alcohol-related problems in each of the last six years. [155637]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The information is shown in the following table.

*Number of young people aged 11–15 years admitted to NHS hospitals in England with a selection of alcohol-related primary diagnoses, 1997–98 to 2002–03*

| | *Finished Admission Episodes* | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Primary diagnosis* | *1997–98* | *1998–99* | *1999–2000* | *2000–01* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* |
| Mental and behavioural disorders due to alcohol[1] | 2,457 | 2,326 | 2,950 | 2,918 | 2,921 | 2,760 |
| Alcoholic liver disease[2] | — | — | 1 | 1 | — | — |
| Toxic effect of alcohol[3] | 895 | 737 | 764 | 739 | 674 | 562 |
| Total | 3,352 | 3,063 | 3,715 | 3,658 | 3,595 | 3,322 |

*ICD 10 codes:*
[1] ICD-10code F10
[2] ICD-10code K70
[3] ICD-10code T51

*Notes:*
1. A finished admission episode is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.
2. Figures are grossed for both coverage and missing/invalid clinical data, except for 2001–02 and 2002–03, which are not yet adjusted for shortfalls.
3. The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (7 prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.

*Source:*
Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Department of Health.

### Drug-related Deaths

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answers of 29 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 472W and 5 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1065W on drug-related deaths, what the reasons are for the difference in the figures for the number of drug-related deaths since 1999. [156469]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The discrepancy in the *Official Reports* is because the figure stated in the 29 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 472W, refers to England and Wales and the figure stated in the 5 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1065W refers to England only.

### Contraceptive Services

**Mrs. Calton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will increase funding for contraceptive services to ensure that *(a)* all methods of contraception including new methods are made available and *(b)* medical practitioners are able to prescribe emergency contraception in advance where appropriate; [154431]

(2) how much was spent on contraceptive services in each of the last five financial years. [154432]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** "Shifting the Balance of Power" has allowed primary care trusts (PCTs) to have the necessary financial flexibility to provide services to best meet local needs. This includes ensuring access to the full range of methods of contraception, including emergency contraception, according to need. In addition, the Government has boosted these resources by providing an extra £1 million to help improve access to contraceptive services.

The table contains family planning expenditure figures for National Health Service trusts and PCTs for the last four financial years. However, around three quarters of contraceptive care is provided by general practitioners in primary care for which expenditure figures are not available.

£

| | *Community based family planning* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *NHS Trust expenditure* | *Primary Care Trust expenditure* | *Total expenditure* |
| 1998–99 | 65.9 | n/a | 65.9 |
| 1999–2000 | 70.5 | n/a | 70.5 |
| 2000–01 | 74.2 | 1.2 | 75.4 |
| 2001–02 | 57.8 | 19.9 | 77.6 |

*Note:*
Figures rounded to one decimal place.

*Sources:*
Annual Financial Returns of NHS Trusts, 1998–99 to 2002–03.
Annual Financial Returns of Primary Care Trusts, 2000–01 to 2002–03.

### Drug Rehabilitation

**Mr. Stinchcombe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many individuals each local authority

in England funded to undergo residential drug rehabilitation in the last year for which figures are available. [153712]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The Department does not collect numbers of individuals funded by local authorities in residential rehabilitation.

**Mr. Stinchcombe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much money each local authority in England and Wales spent on residential drug rehabilitation places in the last year for which figures are available. [153713]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The Department does not collect details of funding that local authorities make available for residential drug rehabilitation.

### Early Intervention Teams

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what reasons no more than 27 early intervention teams have been established. [154410]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Establishing early intervention teams is a complex process and, in some localities where the approach is a relatively new one, it represents a significant shift in the culture of care. Services are working towards establishing the full complement of early intervention teams by the end of the year. The "Mental Health Policy Implementation Guide" (2001) sets out detailed guidance to help them, and support is also provided through the development centres of the National Institute for Mental Health in England. We are encouraged by the progress that is continuing to be made.

### Hepatitis C

**Dr. Iddon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to establish the "Hepatitis C Strategy for England", published in consultation form in August 2002. [154833]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The Department intends to publish an action plan to implement the "Hepatitis C Strategy for England" in the next few months.

**Dr. Murrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much he *(a)* has spent in each of the last five years and *(b)* plans to spend in each of the next five years on raising Hepatitis C awareness. [155535]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The information requested is shown in the following table.

*Department of Health central funding of activities related to raising awareness of hepatitis C*

| *Financial year* | *Amount (£)* |
|---|---|
| 1999–2000 | [1]None identifiable |
| 2000–01 | [1]30,000 |
| 2001–02 | [1]241,000 |
| 2002–03 | [1]163,000 |
| 2003–04 | [2]224,500 |
| 2004–05 | [3]986,000 |
| 2005–06 | [3]1,500,000 |

[1] Actual Expenditure.
[2] Forecast Expenditure.
[3] Provisional allocation.

Funding beyond 2005–06 is yet to be determined.

### Illegal Meat Imports

**Mr. Gardiner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice has been issued to ethnic minority communities by the Food Standards Agency about the risk posed to human health through the consumption of *(a)* illegal meat imports and *(b)* bushmeat. [155388]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Responsibility for raising public awareness of the issue of illegal imports lies with the Food Standards Agency (FSA), the Department for Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra) and Her Majesty's Customs and Excise. In terms of advice specifically targeted towards ethnic minority communities, the FSA has discussed the issue of illegal meat imports with its Muslim organisations working group and has subsequently spoken on this topic at seminars organised by the Muslim community. These have included, most recently, talks at the Husaini Cultural Centre in Peterborough in September 2003 and also at Haringey Mosque and the Islamic Cultural Centre in London in November 2003.

Defra has commissioned the Central Office of Information to undertake research in this area. The research phase of the project is currently under way and the results of this research will then be used to inform publicity campaigns among ethnic minority communities later in the year.

The scope of the research includes examining attitudes among these communities to imports of meat, including bushmeat, and the possible risks to both animal and human health.

The FSA and Her Majesty's Customs and Excise are involved in this project, as are stakeholders such as the Greater London Authority, the International Fund for Animal Welfare, the Bushmeat Campaign, Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and Local Authorities Co-ordinators of Regulatory Services.

### Lupus

**Sarah Teather:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many specialists there are who see patients suffering from Lupus (SLE). [156162]

**Dr. Ladyman:** Information on the clinical specialties of individual consultants is not held centrally. Patients with lupus can be seen by a range of specialists, depending on their symptoms. Lupus can mimic other diseases, such as multiple sclerosis and rheumatoid arthritis, making it difficult to diagnose.

### Mental Health

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have died under restraint in mental health institutions in each of the last six years; and how many of these were from ethnic minorities. [155631]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Information about the number of people who have died under restraint in each of the last six years from an ethnic minority comes from two sources.

The Mental Health Act Commission collects data on individuals who have died while being retained under the Mental Health Act 1983. Data provided by the Commission are shown in the table.

| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total number of deaths (from all causes) | 621 | 386 | 403 | 390 | 361 | 304 |
| Number of deaths of detained patients where Control and Restraint was used in the seven days preceding death | 18 | 16 | 25 | 10 | 11 | 9 |
| Number of deaths of detained patients where Control and Restraint was used in the 24 hours preceding death | n/a[1] | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Number of those from ethnic minorities | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

[1] Data not readily available.

Sudden and unexplained deaths data are collected by the National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Homicide by People with Mental Illness.

In the study period of March 1999 to February 2002 the following cases were reported:

*All cases:*
Cases of Sudden and Unexplained Deaths (SUD) who were physically restrained in the 24 hours before death:

Four patients (4 per cent. of 110).

Cases of SUD who were physically restrained 1 hour before death:

Two patients (2 per cent. of 109).

*Ethnic minorities:*
Cases of SUD who were physically restrained in the 24 hours before death:

One patient (9 per cent. of 11).

Cases of SUD who were physically restrained 1 hour before death:

One patient (9 per cent. of 11).

However, it is important to note that the populations from which these data were selected from are not identical. Therefore the figures should be viewed with caution.

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many trusts offer women-only mental health day care facilities in England. [154425]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Following "Shifting the Balance of Power", strategic health authorities (SHAs) carry responsibility for the development of local delivery plans that show how proposals for mental health modernisation will be taken forward.

Information to guide local services on applicable service models is available in guidance published by the Department of Health. "Women's mental health: into the mainstream" was made available to services in September 2002. A copy has been placed in the Library.

In addition, a programme of work led by the National Institute for Mental Health in England focuses on the development of services for women, including day care provision.

SHAs carry responsibility for the direct management of trust performance, taking account of national guidance and local population needs and resources. Our annual national assessment of local services1 self-assessment of development shows that progress is being made but information is not captured centrally on a trust by trust basis.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average wait for a mental health bed is in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley. [154743]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** As at September 2003, there were five patients from primary care trusts in the Lancashire area waiting for admission to a mental health bed for up to two months. There were no patients waiting for longer than that time in Lancashire. No patients were waiting for admission to a mental health bed in Chorley.

In view of the small numbers involved, it is not possible to calculate average waiting times.

*Source:*
Department of Health Quarterly Monitoring Data

### NHS Trusts (Chief Executive Misconduct)

**Helen Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 12 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 616W, on NHS Trusts (Chief Executive Misconduct), what advice was given by the Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority to the Mersey Regional Ambulance Service concerning the investigation of a possible case of gross misconduct by the Chief Executive; by whom such advice was given, and when; and what action was taken following such advice by the Mersey Regional Ambulance Service to investigate the matter, and by whom. [149347]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** As an employment issue, this is a matter for the non-executives of the Mersey Regional Ambulance Service National Health Service Trust.

### Breast Screening

**Dr. Murrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of women in *(a)* urban and *(b)* rural areas aged between 50 and 65 have undergone breast screening. [154905]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** This information is not held centrally in the format requested. Statistics on breast screening are published annually in the Department of Health Statistical Bulletin, Breast Screening Programme, England, a copy of which is available in the Library.

### TETRA Masts

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance he has issued to local authorities regarding health implications of TETRA masts. [155653]

**Miss Melanie Johnson** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* Advice to local authorities on the health implications for all electronic communication developments is contained in Planning Policy Guidance

Note 8 (revised), issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, which has also issued a code of best practice on mobile phone network development.

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the findings were of the latest research commissioned by his Department is into health and safety aspects of TETRA masts; and what plans he has to update this. [155654]

**Miss Melanie Johnson** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* The Stewart Report, in 2000, provided a thorough and comprehensive consideration of the public health concerns associated with mobile phone systems and is available on the website of the independent expert group on mobile phones at: www.iegmp.org.uk The report dealt principally with signals from the widely used mobile phone (GSM) technologies, but it did note some contradictory results when examining the biological effects of pulsed radio signals similar to those associated with TETRA (terrestrial trunked radio). While no obvious health effect was suggested, it did recommend a precautionary approach.

The main conclusion about base stations from the Stewart Report was that:

"the balance of evidence indicates that there is no general risk to the health of people living near to base stations on the basis that exposures are expected to be small fractions of guidelines".

A substantial number of measurements of potential exposures of the public from base station emissions have now been made by a number of bodies, including the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) at: www.nrpb.org and the Radiocommunications Agency (now part of Ofcom) at: www.ofcom.org.uk These measurements include emissions from TETRA base stations. In all cases exposures have been very much lower than the guidelines published by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP).

The latest report from NRPB's advisory group on non-ionising radiation (AGNIR), entitled "Health Effects from Radiofrequency Electromagnetic Fields", was published on 14 January 2004. It addressed the base station issue and concluded that:

"Exposure levels from living near to mobile phone base stations are extremely low, and the overall evidence indicates that they are unlikely to pose a risk to health."

Following a request by the Home Office to the NRPB, the issue of possible health effects caused by signals from TETRA base stations was comprehensively addressed by AGNIR. They published their report, "Possible Health Effects from Terrestrial Trunked Radio (TETRA)", in 2001, which is available as Documents of NRPB, Volume 12, No. 2, 2001, or on the NRPB website: www.nrpb.org They noted that whereas the signals from the TETRA handsets are pulsed, those from TETRA base stations are not pulsed. They concluded, therefore, that there is no reason to believe that signals from TETRA base stations should be treated differently from other base stations. The AGNIR report also found that exposures of the public to signals from TETRA base stations are small fractions of international guidelines.

TETRA technologies are included within the Mobile Telecommunications and Health Research (MTHR) programme, set by the Government in 2001 and available at: www.mthr.org.uk An associated programme, specifically on TETRA, is being funded by the Home Office (www.homeoffice.gov.uk). A number of projects are already under way, but it will be some time before the results are available.

### Welsh Hospital Closures

**Mr. Wiggin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hospitals have been closed in Wales since 1997. [150527]

**Mr. Touhig:** I have been asked to reply.

Approximately one third of the NHS Wales estate is over 50-years-old. It is generally accepted that the technological developments which are driving forward medical and clinical advances, and the demands for better patient environments are best accommodated by modern, purpose built facilities. In order to achieve this, NHS Wales has disposed of 30 healthcare properties (i.e. those with overnight beds) over the period from April 1997 to March 2003. Receipts from these disposals are reinvested in the modernisation process and have contributed to a total spend of £667million over the same period.

## DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

### Community Funding

**Mr. Edward Davey:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what budgets have been allocated for *(a)* the Community Chest, *(b)* the Community Learning Chest and *(c)* the Community Empowerment Fund for each financial year from 2003–04 to 2005–06, broken down by English region. [156472]

**Yvette Cooper:** The following tables provide details of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister budget allocations for the Community Chest, Community Learning Chest and Community Empowerment Funds for each financial year between 2003–04 and 2005–06.

*Budget allocation to community chest funding*

£

| *Region* | *2003–04* | *2004–05* | *2005–06* |
|---|---|---|---|
| East | 341,916 | 341,916 | 341,916 |
| East Midlands | 1,739,056 | 1,739,056 | 1,739,056 |
| London | 5,313,331 | 5,313,331 | 5,313,331 |
| North East | 3,549,043 | 3,549,043 | 3,549,043 |
| North West | 6,490,702 | 6,490,702 | 6,490,702 |
| South East | 585,151 | 585,151 | 585,151 |
| South West | 729,480 | 729,480 | 729,480 |
| West Midlands | 2,890,901 | 2,890,901 | 2,890,901 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 3,360,419 | 3,360,419 | 3,360,419 |

*Budget allocation to community learning chest funding*

£

| Region | 2003-04 | 2004-05 | 2005-06 |
|---|---|---|---|
| East | 89,434 | 89,434 | 89,434 |
| East Midlands | 425,508 | 425,508 | 425,508 |
| London | 1,287,209 | 1,287,209 | 1,287,209 |
| North East | 865,727 | 865,727 | 865,727 |
| North West | 1,540,664 | 1,540,664 | 1,540,664 |
| South East | 158,402 | 158,402 | 158,402 |
| South West | 188,336 | 188,336 | 188,336 |
| West Midlands | 664,409 | 664,409 | 664,409 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 780,309 | 780,309 | 780,309 |

*Budget allocation to community empowerment fund*

£

| Region | 2003-04 | 2004-05 | 2005-06 |
|---|---|---|---|
| East | 228,033 | 228,033 | 228,033 |
| East Midlands | 905,245 | 905,245 | 905,245 |
| London | 2,654,485 | 2,654,485 | 2,654,485 |
| North East | 1,824,502 | 1,824,502 | 1,824,502 |
| North West | 2,967,301 | 2,967,301 | 2,967,301 |
| South East | 436,573 | 436,573 | 436,573 |
| South West | 465,082 | 465,082 | 465,082 |
| West Midlands | 1,132,771 | 1,132,771 | 1,132,771 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 1,386,008 | 1,386,008 | 1,386,008 |

## Decent Homes

**Mr. Byers:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the number of local authority dwellings in North Tyneside which do not meet the decent homes standard; and what estimate he has made of the cost of raising them all to this standard. [157184]

**Keith Hill:** North Tyneside Council report that they have 8,973 dwellings which do not currently meet the decent homes standard and that it will cost up to £31 million to tackle this problem.

## EU Structural Funding

**Ann Winterton:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 2 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 739W, on European Regional Funding, what the level of matched funding is *(a)* in financial terms and *(b)* as a percentage of EU funding for each of the regions for the period 2000 to 2006; and to which financial years the figures relate. [155077]

**Mr. Raynsford:** Tabled as follows are the budgeted levels of match funding both in total financial terms and as a percentage of the total programmes for 2000 to 2006, for the North West, North East and Yorkshire and the Humber regions. Regions have discretion to vary the levels of actual spend between years and we expect some programmes will do so, up to the absolute deadline of 31 December 2008.

European funding programmes operate to calendar years. The domestic financial years to which these figures relate are from 1999–2000 (part) to 2006–07 (part).

*Merseyside Objective 1 budgeted EU funding*

€

| North West | EU funds | Match funding |
|---|---|---|
| 2000 | 204.503 | 301.403 |
| 2001 | 200.934 | 296.234 |
| 2002 | 197.091 | 290.391 |
| 2003 | 193.248 | 284.748 |
| 2004 | 171.014 | 252.114 |
| 2005 | 184.464 | 271.964 |
| 2006 | 181.994 | 267.694 |
| Total | 1,333.248 | 1,964.548 |
| Total programme value | | 3,297.796 |
| Match funding as a percentage of total programme value | | 60 per cent. |

*Objective 2 budgeted EU funding*

€

| North West | EU funds | Match funding |
|---|---|---|
| 2000 | 90.676 | 107.966 |
| 2001 | 92.709 | 120.049 |
| 2002 | 94.585 | 133.972 |
| 2003 | 96.303 | 136.996 |
| 2004 | 88.956 | 126.471 |
| 2005 | 90.989 | 127.893 |
| 2006 | 92.711 | 128.893 |
| Total | 646.929 | 882.240 |
| Total programme value | | 1,529.169 |
| Match funding as a percentage of total programme value | | 58 per cent. |

*Objective 2 budgeted EU funding*

€

| North East | EU funds | Match funding |
|---|---|---|
| 2000 | 95.082 | 155.397 |
| 2001 | 97.207 | 158.875 |
| 2002 | 99.177 | 162.091 |
| 2003 | 100.983 | 165.041 |
| 2004 | 93.276 | 152.445 |
| 2005 | 95.408 | 155.929 |
| 2006 | 97.217 | 158.884 |
| Total | 678.350 | 1,108.662 |
| Total programme value | | 1,787.012 |
| Match funding as a percentage of total programme value | | 62 per cent. |

*South Yorkshire Objective 1 budgeted EU funding*

€

| Yorkshire and the Humber | EU funds | Match funding |
|---|---|---|
| 2000 | 179.843 | 286.332 |
| 2001 | 176.705 | 281.338 |
| 2002 | 173.325 | 285.179 |
| 2003 | 169.946 | 270.446 |
| 2004 | 150.392 | 239.446 |
| 2005 | 162.221 | 258.277 |
| 2006 | 160.048 | 245.593 |
| Total | 1,172.480 | 1,866.611 |
| Total programme value | | 3,039.091 |
| Match funding as a percentage of total programme value | | 61 per cent. |

*Yorkshire and the Humber Objective 2 budgeted EU funding*

€

| *Yorkshire and the Humber* | *EU funds* | *Match funding* |
|---|---|---|
| 2000 | 64.924 | 107.498 |
| 2001 | 66.380 | 109.909 |
| 2002 | 67.723 | 112.133 |
| 2003 | 68.954 | 114.172 |
| 2004 | 63.693 | 105.458 |
| 2005 | 65.148 | 107.868 |
| 2006 | 66.378 | 109.904 |
| Total | 463.200 | 766.942 |
| Total programme value | | 1,230.142 |
| Match funding as a percentage of total programme value | | 62 per cent. |

## HMOs

**Mr. Edward Davey:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list those respondents to Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation in England, a consultation paper, who believed that university owned or managed accommodation should not *(a)* fall within the definition of houses in multiple occupation and *(b)* be covered by the houses in multiple occupation licensing scheme. [153138]

**Keith Hill:** A total of 579 responses were received to the 1999 consultation paper on Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation in England. The consultation paper asked for views on including University owned or managed accommodation within the scope of the proposed licensing scheme. It did not seek views on whether this accommodation should fall within the proposed definition of HMOs.

Most respondents did not express a view on the proposal to exempt university owned or managed accommodation from the HMO licensing scheme. However, the following individuals or bodies supported the proposal:

1. Ian R. Broughton
2. Tony Bayliss
3. Oxford Fire Service
4. University of Newcastle
5. Torbay Council
6. John Stather
7. Cornwall County Council
8. Cheshire Fire Brigade
9. Bath and North East Somerset Council
10. The Institute of Legal Executives
11. Higher Education Funding Council
12. Southampton Federation of Residents' Associations
13. Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service
14. Ipswich Borough Council
15. Ely Valley Council
16. The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
17. Torridge District Council
18. Teignbridge District Council
19. The Borough of Basingstoke and Dean
20. Hartlepool Borough Council
21. Portsmouth City Council
22. Wansbeck Borough Council
23. Kent CIEH Housing Technical Group
24. St. Helens Metropolitan Borough Council
25. Borough of Spelthorn
26. County Durham and Darlington Fire Rescue Brigade
27. Taunton Deane Borough Council
28. South Hams District Council
29. Somerset HMO Group
30. Essex County Fire and Rescue Service
31. Newcastle City Council
32. Rochford District Council
33. Wandsworth Borough Council
34. North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service
35. Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals
36. London Borough of Brent
37. Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
38. Home Office Fire Policy Unit
39. Lancaster University
40. Tendring District Council
41. Chartered Institute of Environmental Health
42. ROOM-The National Council for Housing and Planning
43. London Borough of Ealing
44. Merseyside Fire and Civil Defence Authority
45. Newport County Borough
46. Welsh Funding Councils
47. Reading Borough Council
48. Oxford University: Christ Church College
49. Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors in Wales
50. Blaenau Gwent County Borough
51. Rhondda Cynon Taff
52. Association for Student Residential Accommodation (Wales)
53. The Treforest Community Joint Committee
54. University of Wales

University owned and managed accommodation is not excluded from the definition of HMOs for the purposes of Part 1 (Housing Conditions) of the Housing Bill currently before parliament. These provisions would enable local authorities to take action against university landlords in certain circumstances when there are risks to students arising from the condition of their university accommodation.

## Homelessness

**Andy King:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the statutory definition is of intentional homelessness. [156113]

**Yvette Cooper:** The circumstances when a person becomes homeless intentionally are set out in section 191 of the Housing Act 1996. The 1996 Act extends to England and Wales.

Section 191 is reproduced as follows:

1. A person becomes homeless intentionally if he deliberately does or fails to do anything in consequence of which he ceases to occupy accommodation which is available for his occupation and which it would have been reasonable for him to continue to occupy.

2. For the purposes of subsection 1. an act or omission in good faith on the part of a person who was unaware of any relevant fact shall not be treated as deliberate.

3. A person shall be treated as becoming homeless intentionally if:

(a) he enters into an arrangement under which he is required to cease to occupy accommodation which it would have been reasonable for him to continue to occupy, and

(b) the purpose of the arrangement is to enable him to become entitled to assistance under this Part, and there is no other good reason why he is homeless.

4. A person who is given advice or assistance under section 197 (duty where other suitable alternative accommodation available), but fails to secure suitable accommodation in circumstances in which it was reasonably to be expected that he would do so, shall, if he makes a further application under this Part, be treated as having become homeless intentionally.

### Merseyside Pathfinder

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much of the £86 million which has been awarded to the Merseyside Pathfinder will go to Sefton. [156097]

**Yvette Cooper:** On 2 February 2004 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister announced that the Merseyside Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder would receive up to £86 million for the period up to March 2006. We have allocated this funding to the Pathfinder. It is for the Pathfinder's board to decide on how it will meet its strategic aims and in which parts of the Pathfinder area it will spend these resources.

### Local Government Finance

**Sir Paul Beresford:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 27–28W, on local government finance, what the total gross English local authority expenditure was for each year since 1992–93, including that sourced from council tax, central grant and any other source, as well as those services funded by other bodies since 1992–93. [156726]

**Mr. Raynsford:** English local authority gross expenditure 1992–93 to 2001–02 is listed in the following table.

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1992–93 | 69,351 |
| 1993–94 | 69,102 |
| 1994–95 | 71,700 |
| 1995–96 | 73,568 |
| 1996–97 | 75,596 |
| 1997–98 | 77,209 |
| 1998–99 | 81,431 |
| 1999–2000 | 84,824 |
| 2000–01 | 90,179 |
| 2001–02 | 97,794 |

*Notes:*
Gross expenditure here includes spending from the General Fund Revenue Account, the Housing Revenue Account, External Trading Services accounts and the Capital Account. Adjustments have been made to eliminate double counting where possible. The General Fund Revenue Account is financed from formula grant (which includes revenue support grant, redistributed non-domestic rates, police grant), and specific grants within Aggregate External Finance (AEF) as well as specific grants outside AEF, sales, fees and charges and other non-grant income. The answer of 23 February, was restricted to the General Fund Revenue Account and excluded specific grants outside AEF and sales, fees and charges and other non-grant income.
*Source:*
Local Government Financial Statistics England No.5 to No.14

### Non-domestic Rate Pool

**Mr. Dhanda:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make it his policy to consult on changing the operation of the national non-domestic rate pool. [156821]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The Balance of Funding Review is looking at the options for changing the Local Government Finance system, which include the future of non-domestic rates. The Review will report in the summer.

### Parliamentary Constituencies

**Ann Winterton:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many parliamentary constituencies make up (a) the North West region, (b) the North East region and (c) Yorkshire and the Humber region. [155046]

**Mr. Raynsford:** There are 76 parliamentary constituencies in the North West, 30 in the North East and 56 in Yorkshire and the Humber.

### Planning Applications

**Dr. Evan Harris:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister for how long he has been considering the planning application (SUN/2963/11 or GOSE/103/3/VALE/29) for residential development on the Foxcombe Road site of the old Warnborough College on Boars Hill, near Oxford; and when he plans to make a decision. [156054]

**Keith Hill:** Planning application SUN/2963/11 was first referred to my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister for consideration on 13 December 2000. The application was called in for my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister's own determination on 19 February 2001 and, following a public inquiry, was refused on 13 November 2001, against the Inspector's recommendation. The decision was successfully challenged in the High Court but the application was again refused on 12 March 2003. That decision has again been successfully challenged and the application now falls to be re-determined a second time. My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister attaches great importance to preserving the openness of the Green Belt, and has asked for any further representations the parties may wish to make by the closing date of 27 February 2004. A decision will be made as soon as possible.

**Dr. Evan Harris:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister for what reasons he submitted to judgment in the High Court the planning application (SUN/2963/11 or GOSE/103/3/VALE/29) for residential development on the Foxcombe Road site of the old Warnborough College on Boars Hill, near Oxford in (a) April 2002 and (b) September 2003. [156055]

**Keith Hill:** The main reason my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister submitted to judgment in each case was:

(a) My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister attached too much weight to the extant planning permission for residential conversion of the existing buildings, whereas the applicants had stated that, if the current application were refused, they would not implement the permission and would sell the site to an institutional user; and

(b) My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister failed to take into account a material consideration, namely the relative effects of a more than 'low-key' institutional use of the site.

**Dr. Evan Harris:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the cost of the time *(a)* his officials and *(b)* officials of the Government office for the South East spent on dealing with the planning application (SUN/2963/11 or GOSE/103/3/VALE/29) for residential development on the Foxcombe Road site of the old Warnborough College on Boars Hill, near Oxford. [156056]

**Keith Hill:** This has been a complex and long-running case. My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister attaches great importance to the Green Belt policy. No estimate has been made of the cost of the time spent by his officials on dealing with the planning application.

**Dr. Evan Harris:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what targets he has set for the time taken to reconsider planning applications after a decision he has taken is legally challenged successfully. [156053]

**Keith Hill:** No targets have been set for the time taken to re-determine a planning application following a successful legal challenge, although the aim is to re-determine all cases as soon as possible. However, for the re-determination of called-in applications, we would aim to issue a decision within 13 weeks from the conclusion of the written representations procedure or receipt of the Inspector's report if it has been decided to re-open the inquiry.

### Regional Assemblies

**Mr. Jenkin:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the evidential basis was for his estimate that an elected regional assembly would have *(a)* running costs of £25 million a year and *(b)* set-up costs of £30 million. [155142]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The evidence is drawn from the cost of setting up the Greater London Authority and its first year running costs, reflecting differences between the London arrangements and those proposed for elected regional assemblies. For example, it is not proposed to provide elected assemblies with new, purpose built headquarters.

### Regional Funding

**Ann Winterton:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 2 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 743W, on regional funding, whether the recipient organisations were ever under local authority control. [155041]

**Mr. Raynsford:** None of the recipient organisations have recently been under local authority control.

### Retirement Age

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on his plans to raise the normal retirement age for firefighters; what estimate he has made of the savings from raising the normal retirement age and pension age to 65; and if he will make a statement. [156574]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is reviewing pension arrangements for firefighters in accordance with the Government's White Paper "Our Fire and Rescue Service" (CM 5808), and in the light of the Department of Work and Pensions Green Paper (CM 5865). Proposals, which will reflect changes to the tax and policy framework for pensions, including on retirement and pension ages, have still to be formulated: consequently costings of possible savings to employers are not available. There will be consultation on the proposals that emerge.

# Written Answers to Questions

*Monday 1 March 2004*

## INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Actis/CDC

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the management agreement and associated fees between Actis and CDC. [156399]

**Hilary Benn:** The management agreement will be a five-year commercial contract between CDC Group plc and Actis. The contract will set out the amounts that CDC shall commit to each of Actis's regional and sectoral funds, the minimum service levels that Actis shall provide (for example in terms of overseas office coverage), the management fees to be charged and all the detailed provisions necessary to this complex transaction.

Actis's management fees will be determined as a percentage of the capital committed to each of the new funds that it is establishing. The percentages will vary from fund to fund, depending on the management services to be provided and the market norms (where these exist). The total sum of the management fees has been calculated to equate to the anticipated total operating costs of Actis on an approximately break-even basis over the first five years. The CDC Board has taken independent expert advice on the fee levels appropriate in the circumstances.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the *(a)* valuation and *(b)* organisational arrangements of Actis. [156401]

**Hilary Benn:** Actis will be a limited liability partnership between its management and staff, and the Government. Management and staff will have a 60 per cent. controlling interest, providing independence of ownership and investment decision taking. However, under "clawback" arrangements, over the first 10 years 80 per cent. of any profits and proceeds from a sale of Actis would accrue to the Government.

The board of CDC Group plc has an obligation to obtain full value for the sale of any part of CDC. The Independent Committee of the CDC board instructed KPMG to value the new company, as well as the interest to be acquired by management and staff.

Taking into account the clawback arrangements and other obligations to Government, KPMG's opinion was that the market value of the 60 per cent. interest in Actis to be sold to management and staff was some £338,000 to £408,000. The Independent Committee recommended that management and staff should pay £373,000, the mid-point figure, which I have accepted. The Shareholder Executive and our financial advisers have endorsed the valuation process and the NAO has been kept informed about this and other aspects of the CDC reorganisation.

Actis will have a supervisory board, and the Government will retain the right to veto on the choice of chairman and two non-executive directors. Corporate governance arrangements will be in accordance with best practice for a public limited company. The other details of the organisation of Actis will be set down in the Partnership Agreement.

**Gregory Barker:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much is being spent on the refurbishment of the office space of *(a)* CDC and *(b)* Actis; and how much is being spent on office space used by the chief executive of each. [157841]

**Hilary Benn:** Expenditure over the last four months on the preparation of new offices for CDC and Actis is estimated at £0.5 million and £4.9 million respectively. CDC, which now has a staff complement of about 20, moved to their new office in February. Actis, who employ some 150 staff in their UK headquarters, will move later this month.

The offices of the chief executives were part of the overall refurbishment work and were not separately costed.

**Gregory Barker:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the cost of corporate entertaining by CDC was for the last seven years; and what the budget for corporate entertainment by *(a)* CDC and *(b)* Actis is for the next three years. [157842]

**Hilary Benn:** The information requested is not immediately available and will be provided shortly.

**Gregory Barker:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the projected new investment in sub-Saharan Africa by CDC and Actis is in the next three years. [157843]

**Hilary Benn:** CDC is required by the Investment Policy to make 50 per cent. of its new investments in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Under the management contract, CDC will be committing $250 million to Actis's Africa Fund 1 to be drawn-down for investment over the period to 2006. A further $100 million will be committed to the fund for 2005. Actis will launch an Africa Fund 2 in 2006 to which it is intended that CDC will commit $320 million alongside $160 million to be raised from third party investors.

In addition, some of the capital that CDC has committed to the Actis Power Fund and the Small and Medium Sized Enterprise (SME) Funds will also be invested in sub-Saharan Africa.

**Gregory Barker:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the *(a)* salary and *(b)* bonus and options payments of the 12 highest paid employees of *(a)* CDC and *(b)* Actis will be in 2004. [157844]

**Hilary Benn:** Decisions on the 2004 salary and bonus levels for both CDC and Actis will be the responsibility of the Remuneration Committees of their respective boards, working within guidelines agreed with the Government.

Bonus payments are dependent on performance, both that of the individual and of the company. It has been agreed that total remuneration for achieving Business Plan targets should move towards the 60th percentile of the nearest equivalent industries.

**Gregory Barker:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the *(a)* length and *(b)* terms of the contracts of the directors of Actis are. [157845]

**Hilary Benn:** These matter have not yet been finalised, but will follow best practice for corporate governance.

### Extractive Industries

**Tom Brake:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will support the recommendations of the World Bank commissioned Extractive Industries Review. [156465]

**Hilary Benn:** The Government have been actively involved in the Extractive Industries Review (EIR).

We support the main conclusion of the review that the World Bank Group should remain involved with the extractive sector. We agree that it is important that social and environmental safeguards are rigorously applied, that human rights are respected, and that efforts are made to improve the governance and transparency of revenue flows from the sector.

In light of the World Bank's existing and planned work to deal with these issues, we believe that the EIR's recommendation to end investments in the oil sector by 2008 is premature. We also believe that the primary responsibility to address climate change should rest with developed countries, and that it would not be appropriate to deny the potential economic benefits of extractive industries to developing countries.

### Swaziland

**Tom Brake:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much *(a)* bilateral and *(b)* multilateral aid his Department plans to offer Swaziland in 2004–05 and 2005–06, broken down by (i) programme type and (ii) amount. [156517]

**Hilary Benn:** DFID currently funds only two bilateral programmes in Swaziland, both of which are due to end during 2004–05. We expect to spend around £300,000 on a Rural Water Supply Programme, and around £80,000 on a programme of support to the Co-ordinating Assembly of Non-Government organisations.

In addition, DFID will continue to support Swaziland through a number of regional initiatives. In particular we are supporting work on HIV/AIDS through the International Partnership against AIDS in Africa (implemented by UNAIDS and ActionAid), and through a programme implemented by the Southern African Development Community.

I am afraid it is not possible to provide future projections of DFID's share of multilateral aid to Swaziland.

## TRANSPORT

### Northern Ireland Airports

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what facilities are available in Northern Ireland for checking the safety and maintenance records of airlines and aircraft using Northern Ireland's airports; and with what frequency safety inspections have been carried out on airlines and aircraft using airports in Northern Ireland in the last 12 months. [156943]

**Mr. McNulty:** The Civil Aviation Authority is responsible for the safety oversight of UK registered aircraft and aircraft operators. The oversight for Northern Ireland is carried out by CAA Airworthiness Surveyors located at the Regional Office in Irvine and CAA Flight Operations Inspectors based at Stirling. UK operators serving Northern Ireland but based on the mainland will receive oversight from the other CAA Regional Offices.

In the last 12 months CAA maintenance surveyors have visited Northern Ireland approximately once a month, each visit lasting several days. Flight Operations Inspectors have visited and conducted inspections on three separate occasions and have also conducted additional inspections on Northern Ireland operations from the mainland.

A number of foreign airlines also operate services to airports in Northern Ireland. These airlines are subject to oversight and inspection from their national aviation authorities and we require them to be operated in accordance with international standards. If we have reason to suspect that a foreign airline is not meeting international standards we will arrange for it to be inspected by the CAA. Such inspections will take place at the most appropriate airport. It was not necessary to carry out any such inspections in Northern Ireland last year.

### Road Fuels (Supply)

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to improve security of supply of road fuels. [157179]

**Mr. Jamieson:** I refer the hon. Member to the written statement made on 25 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 41WS, by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department. In addition, on 6 February we published a voluntary code of practice on the security of dangerous goods by road. Copies have been placed in the Libraries of the House. The code implements the security provisions of the United Nations model regulations on the transport of dangerous goods by road until secondary legislation is in place in 2005. Similar provisions for the security of dangerous goods by rail are in preparation to supplement existing rail security measures.

### School Parking

**Mark Tami:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what guidelines his Department issues to local authorities on the use of double yellow lines outside school premises. [156544]

**Mr. McNulty:** Guidance on the use of double yellow lines and "SCHOOL KEEP CLEAR" markings outside schools has been published in sections 22.19–22.25 of Chapter 5 of the Traffic Signs Manual (Road Markings), ISBN 0–11–552479–7, available from The Stationery Office. I have arranged for a copy of Chapter 5 to be placed in the Library.

### Channel Tunnel Rail Link

**Jonathan Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what investigations were carried out by the Government's representative to ensure compliance with the undertakings made to Parliament during the passage of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link Act 1996 for the planning and construction of the North Downs Tunnel; and if he will place in the Library copies of the relevant reports. [157305]

**Mr. McNulty:** The Government's representative (The CTRL Project Representative) carried out audits, including audits of the North Downs Tunnel, during the construction period and in the run up to the opening of Section 1 of the railway.

There is a multitude of references to the audits within the CTRL Project Representative's records and it would not be practicable to place these within the Library.

### Computer Hazard Perception Test

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the Computer Hazard Perception Test rates over the past three months. [156038]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The pass rate for the moving-image hazard perception testing element of the theory test for learner drivers, riders and those qualifying as Approved Driving Instructors since November 2003 are:

*Percentage*

| | *November 2003* | *December 2003* | *January 2004* | *February 2004 to date* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Car | 64.5 | 69.3 | 78.9 | 79.9 |
| Motorcycle | 79.8 | 81.6 | 89.9 | 89.0 |
| Lorry | 65.8 | 69.5 | 79.3 | 79.3 |
| Bus | 70.5 | 70 | 80.2 | 80.5 |
| Driving Instructor | 49.4 | 55.8 | 65.2 | 63.8 |

In December, the tutorial video that candidates are shown at the start of the hazard perception part of the theory test was revised following comments from candidates that they did not fully understand what they were expected do in that part of the test. A copy of tutorial in CD-ROM format was sent to all driving instructors. Since then, the pass rates for the hazard perception part of the test have increased significantly.

### Driving Theory Tests

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many driving theory tests have been booked online in each year since the service became available. [158040]

**Mr. Jamieson:** Since 19 December 2001, when the facility to book theory tests online via the Driving Standards Agency's website became available, the following numbers of tests have been booked.

| | *Number of bookings* |
|---|---|
| December 2001 | 157 |
| 2002 | 139,315 |
| 2003 | 364,085 |
| 2004 to date | 51,421 |

### Energy Saving Trust

**David Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether there will be an increase in the funds allocated to the Energy Saving Trust for the next financial year. [156199]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The funds allocated to the Energy Saving Trust for the Transport Energy programmes in England and Wales will be maintained at their 2003–04 levels in the next financial year.

**David Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment has been made of the extra money the Energy Saving Trust would require to provide Powershift grants to all qualifying applications received since the scheme was set up. [156200]

**Mr. Jamieson:** Prior to 2003–4, the Powershift grant programme had been under-subscribed. In November 2003, the Trust estimated that it would overspend the Transport Energy budget for England and Wales by at least £8 million if it continued accepting new applications to the end of the financial year.

**David Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans there are to extend the Energy Saving Trust's *(a)* Powershift and *(b)* CleanUp schemes in the next financial year. [156201]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The Transport Energy programmes administered by the Energy Saving Trust, which include the Powershift and CleanUp schemes, will continue to receive financial support for 2004–05 at the same level as provided in 2003–04. However, in response to the increase in demand for Powershift and CleanUp experienced this year, individual grants levels provided by these two schemes (in England and Wales) are being reviewed by the Energy Saving Trust following discussions with stakeholders. The Trust will announce levels and arrangements for the 2004–05 programme shortly.

**David Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment has been made of the effectiveness of the Energy Saving Trust's Powershift scheme in increasing the number of vehicles using liquid petroleum gas. [156245]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The number of LPG vehicles converted or purchased with the aid of Powershift grants since 2000–01 is as follows:

| | *Number of Powershift LPG vehicles*[1] |
|---|---|
| 2000–01 | 3,971 |
| 2001–02 | 4,259 |
| 2002–03 | 2,086 |
| 2003–04 (Forecast) | 3,200 |

This can be compared to the growth in the total number of UK LPG vehicles since 2000.

| | *Total Number of UK LPG Vehicles*[2] |
|---|---|
| 2000 | 39,000 |
| 2001 | 65,000 |
| 2002 | 89,000 |
| 2003 | 107,000 |

[1] Figures from the Energy Saving Trust
[2] Figures from the Liquid Petroleum Gas Association

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* cars, *(b)* vans and *(c)* trucks have gained grants from the Powershift scheme. [157267]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The following numbers of cars, vans and trucks have gained grants from the Powershift scheme since 1997–08 (figures from the Energy Saving Trust).

| *Year* | *Passenger cars* | [1]*Vans* | [2]*Trucks* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1997–98 | 92 | 198 | 25 |
| 1998–99 | 285 | 373 | 39 |
| 1999–2000 | 685 | 695 | 26 |
| 2000–01 | 1,714 | 2,347 | 67 |
| 2001–02 | 2,260 | 2,382 | 31 |
| 2002–03 | 720 | 1,379 | 11 |
| 2003–04[3] | 1,638 | 1,410 | 66 |
| Total | 7,394 | 8,784 | 265 |

[1] Includes car derived vans
[2] Includes light trucks, refuse trucks and large commercial vehicles
[3] To date

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many taxis have claimed a Powershift grant. [157268]

**Mr. Jamieson:** No taxis have claimed a Powershift grant since 2000. Obtaining information for earlier years would incur disproportionate cost as it would require a manual trawl of the Energy Saving Trust's paper records. In addition, information on the number of passenger cars that received Powershift grants and were subsequently operated as taxis is not held on the Trust's record.

### London, Tilbury and Southend Rail Line

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many rail passengers originating from Canvey Island on average each day use the London, Tilbury and Southend rail line; [157171]

(2) how many passengers on average each day used *(a)* Benfleet Station and *(b)* Shoeburyness Station on the London, Tilbury and Southend Line in the last year for which figures are available. [157172]

**Mr. McNulty:** According to the London Area Travel Survey conducted by the Strategic Rail Authority, on a typical weekday in 2001, 4428 passengers boarded trains at Benfleet between 0600 and 1900. Of these, 1895 gave their origin address as Canvey Island. 476 passengers boarded trains at Shoeburyness. Another London area survey is planned for 2006.

### Lorry Drivers (Rest Areas)

**Mr. Damian Green:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made with the pilot study aimed at providing dedicated rest areas for lorry drivers away from the motorway network. [157009]

**Mr. Jamieson:** I have asked officials to work up a pilot scheme to provide a dedicated rest area for lorry drivers away from the motorway network. This is in response to concerns raised by the haulage industry, and others, about the lack of such facilities. These proposals are still at an early stage, although it is envisaged that any such scheme should be a joint initiative involving the Highways Agency, the haulage industry, and the ultimate operator of the facility. Much of the work to date has concentrated on identifying a suitable site and undertaking discussions with relevant local planning authorities, the haulage industry and potential operators.

### M6

**Mr. Laurence Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will allow cars which are free of road fund licences to travel free on the M6 toll road; and if he will make a statement. [157316]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The legislation (the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991) enabling tolling at the M6 toll road provides exemptions from toll charges for police vehicles, identifiable as such by writing or markings on them or otherwise by their appearance, if being used for police purposes.

The same legislation also provides exemption from liability to pay toll charges for certain types of vehicle, which are exempt from vehicle excise duty. These are:

(i) fire engines as defined by paragraph 4(2) of Schedule 2 of the Vehicle Excise and Regulation Act 1994;

(ii) ambulances as defined by paragraph 6(2) of that schedule;

(iii) invalid carriages as defined by paragraph 18 of that schedule;

(iv) vehicles used by or kept for use by or for the purposes of a disabled person as defined by paragraph 19 of that schedule; and

(v) vehicles used for the carriage of disabled persons by recognised bodies in accordance with paragraph 20 of that schedule.

The provision of any further exemptions from toll charges for other vehicles using the M6 toll road is solely at the discretion of the M6 toll concessionaire, Midland Expressway Ltd.

### Motor Vehicle Licensing Applications

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what sum was paid to the Post Office in each of the last five years for dealing with motor vehicle licensing applications. [157159]

**Mr. Jamieson:** Post Office Ltd. provides facilities for motor vehicle relicensing at over 4,500 post office branches. The costs are as follows.

| | £ million |
|---|---|
| 1999 | 41 |
| 2000 | 39.2 |
| 2001 | 37.5 |
| 2002 | 40.5 |
| 2003 | 41.7 |

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what considerations control the number of post offices permitted to deal with motor vehicle licensing applications. [157160]

**Mr. Jamieson:** A number of factors have to be taken into consideration. The main one being striking a balance between cost to the taxpayer and convenience to the motorist. The current network of offices means that 95 per cent. of customers have access to a MVL issuing post office branch within two miles of their home.

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* post offices and *(b)* sub-post offices were authorised to deal with motor vehicle licensing applications in 1997; and how many are now authorised to deal with motor vehicle licensing applications. [157161]

**Mr. Jamieson:** There were 4,000 Motor Vehicle Licensing [MVL] offices in 1997. Of these around 600 were Branch (Crown) Offices and 3,400 other post offices.

At present there are 4,548 MVL issuing offices. These comprise 552 Branch (Crown) offices and 3,996 others.

By the end of March 2004 a further 44 offices will provide the service, bringing the number of MVL offices to 4,592.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the post offices in Chorley which deal with motor vehicle licences. [157719]

**Mr. Jamieson:** At present there are seven motor vehicle licensing post office(r) branches in the Chorley constituency. They are:

| | *Address* |
|---|---|
| Whittle Le Woods | 23 Shaw Brow, Chorley, PR6 7LE |
| Chorley | Cleveland Street, Chorley, PR7 1AW |
| Adlington | 18/20 Market Place, Chorley, PR7 4EZ |
| Eccleston | Unit 14a Carrington Centre, Chorley, PR75UP |
| Coppull | 165 Spendmore Lane, Coppull, Chorley, PR7 5BY |
| Brinscall | 50/54 School Lane, Brinscall, Chorley, PR6 8QP |
| Hoghton | The Straits, Hoghton, Preston, PR5 0DA |

### Motor Insurance

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what action his Department is taking to tackle the problem of uninsured driving. [157532]

**Mr. Jamieson:** Last August, we commissioned an independent review of motor insurance with uninsured driving as a key consideration. The reviewer, Professor David Greenaway of Nottingham university, will report in April. We shall study his findings closely, with a view to taking effective action to tackle the problem. We expect to consider a range of measures, some of which may involve legislative change.

### Motorway Service Stations

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the value is of the Government stake in the ownership of motorway service stations; and if he will make a statement. [156695]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The Government have retained a freehold interest in 21 of the 64 existing Motorway Service Areas (MSAs) in England; these have a total current book value of £28,626,000. There are currently no plans to dispose of these remaining freehold interests, with the possible exception of Burtonwood MSA on the M62.

### Parliamentary Questions

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many parliamentary questions have been tabled to his Department since 1st January 2003, broken down by *(a)* ordinary written and *(b)* named day; what percentage in respect of *(a)* were answered within 10 working days and what percentage in respect of *(b)* were answered by the specified date. [157737]

**Mr. McNulty:** At 27 February 2004, the Department for Transport had answered 3,541 written parliamentary questions tabled since 1 January 2003. This comprised 3,002 ordinary written questions (98.5 per cent. of which were answered within 10 sitting days) and 539 named day questions (76 per cent. of which were given a substantive answer on the specified date).

### Practical Driving Tests

**Norman Lamb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the *(a)* target lead time and *(b)* average waiting time for practical driving tests are; what the waiting time for a practical driving test at the Jupiter Road Test Centre in Norwich is; and if he will make a statement. [156967]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The Driving Standards Agency has a national target for the average annual waiting time for a practical car driving test of six weeks. The current national average waiting time for a test is 10 weeks. The current waiting time for a test at the Jupiter Road test centre in Norwich is 18 weeks.

Demand for driving tests rose sharply in 2002–03, with demand for car tests 20 per cent. higher than forecast. In response, 235 driving examiners were recruited and a further 85 examiners will be recruited by the end of the financial year. The recruitment of another 140 examiners is planned for next financial year. By November 2003, the national average waiting time for a car test was down to 8.7 weeks. However, waiting times rose in December, mainly as a result of the holiday period. In January, bad weather resulted in some tests being cancelled nationally, with certain parts of the country more badly affected than others. Some 120 tests were cancelled at the Jupiter Road centre. Bad weather has resulted in some 30 tests being cancelled in February. Industrial action by driving examiners on 17 February resulted in around 30 tests being cancelled.

A continued work to rule is likely to result in more tests being cancelled, further adversely affecting waiting times.

### Rail/Aviation Safety

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects the provisions of the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 relating to *(a)* the Rail Accident Investigation Board and *(b)* the testing of alcohol levels in pilots will take effect. [156887]

**Mr. McNulty:** A consultation on the secondary legislation required for the Rail Accident Investigation Branch is planned before the Summer with the expectation that the provisions will come into force by the end of the year.

It is anticipated that the aviation alcohol testing provisions of the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 will be brought into force before Easter.

### Road Traffic Accidents

**Peter Bottomley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will undertake a review of the *(a)* law on and *(b)* penalties for (i) failing to stop and (ii) failing to summon assistance after a road crash. [154916]

**Caroline Flint** *[holding answer 12 February 2004]:* I have been asked to reply.

Section 170 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 imposes a duty on drivers to stop and report accidents in which personal injury or damage to other vehicles is caused. Failing to summon assistance is not an offence. Failure to comply with any of the requirements of section 170 is a criminal offence with a maximum penalty of six months imprisonment or a fine not exceeding £5,000, or both.

We are currently reviewing road traffic offences involving bad driving and intend to issue a consultation paper on this shortly. Failing to stop and report an accident falls outside the scope of the review (although if the accident were itself caused by bad driving this would be covered). Nevertheless we will of course look carefully at any representations made during the consultation.

**Mr. Damian Green:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many road traffic accidents involving car drivers overtaking lorries on single carriageway roads occurred in each year since 2000. [157001]

**Mr. Jamieson:** Information on road accidents which only involve damage to property are not available. The table below shows the number of road accidents involving personal injury on single carriageway roads in which at least one heavy goods vehicle and at least one car overtaking a moving vehicle were involved.

*Number of Accidents*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 2000 | 317 |
| 2001 | 348 |
| 2002 | 300 |

### Speed Limits

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the case for introducing minimum speed limits. [157341]

**Mr. Jamieson:** There are no plans to introduce minimum speed limits on our roads. Minimum speed limits are difficult to enforce as there may be instances where traffic congestion or roadworks reduce traffic flow to a standstill. This would have the effect of criminalising drivers for circumstances beyond their control.

### Train Overcrowding

**Mrs. Ellman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the levels of train overcrowding on *(a)* the Liverpool to London route, *(b)* Transpennine routes and *(c)* the Liverpool to Manchester route; and if he will make a statement. [156797]

**Mr. McNulty** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]:* None. All train operating companies are required by their franchise agreements to ensure that adequate capacity is provided to address excessive crowding. This applies to all services, although in commuter routes to London a specific capacity requirement has been made. The SRA has also announced its intention to review its policy on dealing with crowding. It plans to publish a consultation document later this year.

**Mrs. Ellman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many seats for *(a)* standard class and *(b)* first class passengers (i) are available in Pendolino trains running between London and Liverpool and (ii) were available in the trains which operated previously. [156798]

**Mr. McNulty** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]:* Seat numbers on trains running between London and Liverpool vary from service to service. Currently Virgin generally operate eight-car Pendolino trains providing 217 Standard Class and 140 First Class seats. Later this year Virgin propose to operate nine-car Pendolino trains with between 263 and 293 Standard Class, depending on the nature of the ninth carriage, and 140 First Class seats. The other trains which operate on this route are: Mark 3 stock operating with nine carriages providing 392 Standard Class and 132 First Class seats; Mark 2 stock operating with nine carriages providing 332 Standard Class and 120 First Class seats; and West Coast High Speed Trains operating with eight carriages providing 249 Standard Class and 105 First Class seats.

### Train Services (Chorley)

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many trains stop at stations in the Chorley constituency; and if he will make a statement. [157265]

**Mr. McNulty:** On weekdays, 94 trains call at Chorley, 42 trains call at Adlington, 26 trains call at Croston and 31 trains call at Euxton Balshaw Lane.

## LEADER OF THE HOUSE

### Ministerial Speeches

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Leader of the House how many speeches he made between 9 June 2003 and 1 February 2004; and where a copy of each speech can be obtained. [156107]

**Mr. Hain:** I have given 12 speeches in my official capacity as Leader of the House of Commons and Lord Privy Seal. Those given from a text are marked with an * and are available on my website www.CommonsLeader.gov.uk

| *Date* | |
|---|---|
| Friday 20 June 2003 | Bevan Foundation Annual Lecture* |
| Tuesday 29 July 2003 | IPPR Breakfast Discussion: Always the Silly Season? Is the relationship between the media and politics bad for civil society? * |
| Tuesday 16 September 2003 | Parliamentary Press Gallery Lunch Club* |
| Monday 6 October 2003 | Club of Three trilateral Ameurus Conference Dinner |
| Thursday 9 October 2003 | Jean Monet Lecture. "The Progressive Case for Europe" |
| Thursday 16 October 2003 | Institute for Citizenship 'Get the Vote Out! 2004' Launch event |
| Monday 17 November 2003 | CBI Conference. 'The Future of Europe' |
| Tuesday 2 December 2003 | House Magazine's conference on The Coming Year in Parliament. "The Government's Priorities"* |

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### British Coal Staff Pensions

**Adam Price:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many cases of British Coal Staff Superannuation Scheme members who were mis-sold private pensions have been dealt with by *(a)* reinstatement to the BCSSS and *(b)* compensation. [154919]

**Mr. Timms:** This is an issue for the Trustees of the British Coal Staff Superannuation Scheme (BCSSS).

### Employment Law Exemptions

**David Burnside:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what exemptions are in place in *(a)* England, *(b)* Wales and *(c)* Scotland from equal and fair employment laws; and whether these exemptions are from (i) United Kingdom, (ii) European and (iii) international law. [156670]

**Mr. Sutcliffe** [*holding answer 26 February 2004*]: Employment rights legislation is extensive and contains detailed definitions of those to whom it does and does not apply. To give only two examples, the unfair dismissal legislation generally applies to employees who have completed one year's qualifying service with their employer, but this qualifying period is waived if a dismissal is for one of a number of specified reasons; while the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 and the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003 contain provisions (similar to those in other anti-discrimination legislation) which permit differences of treatment on grounds of sexual orientation or religion or belief respectively in certain limited circumstances where a particular sexual orientation or religion or belief is a genuine occupational requirement for the particular post, as allowed by the Employment Directive 2000/78/EC which they transpose. If the hon Member would like to provide more specific information about his concerns, I shall be happy to try to address them.

### Employment Rights Leaflets

**Ms Keeble:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans her Department has to reprint its advisory leaflets on employment rights. [156288]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer given today PQ No. 156289. Following a recent review the Department will move towards producing employment rights information mainly in internet format. We will continue to provide hard copy prints of national minimum wage guidance and a booklet summarising individual employment rights (PL716) as required.

We are mindful that not everyone has access to the internet. We have put in place arrangements to print copies on request for people who are either unable to use or do not have access to the internet.

We are working in partnership with Acas to provide advice on employment issues. Acas produce a series of booklets, which will be reprinted according to demand and any necessary textual revisions. These booklets are available in hard copy.

**Ms Keeble:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment her Department has made of the use by advice agencies of its leaflets on employment rights. [156289]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** Last year the Department consulted leading customers to find out how our information on employment rights could be better focussed on users' needs. As part of this review, an assessment was made on the impact of withdrawing employment rights booklets, using information provided by the Department's

distribution service. Although advice agencies appeared they were not among the most regular users of the service.

End users generally told us that they did not need the detailed explanations of the law given in DTI's existing publications. Users want practical advice and guidance on what they should actually do in respect of employment issues. Acas, who provide advice and guidance to employers and employees, are usually better placed to provide user focussed advice based on factual information supplied by the Department. Acas recently produced a series of booklets summarising individual rights. These can be obtained free of charge from the Acas distribution centre on 08702 429090. I understand that feedback on the publications has been generally very positive.

### Globalisation

**David Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she *(a)* has taken and *(b)* is taking to assess the impact of globalisation on UK (i) manufacturing and (ii) services. [155973]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** Globalisation affects our manufacturing and service industries in many ways. It offers great opportunities and benefits as well as tough challenges. Globalisation must not be something to which we respond passively: instead we must actively shape it to meet people's needs, in Britain and abroad.

The impact of globalisation and our appropriate policy response will be a key theme of the White Paper on Trade and Investment, which will be published in the summer.

### Large Combustion Plants Directive

**Paddy Tipping:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what new analysis her Department has conducted as to the impact of the proposed national emission reduction plan for implementation of the large combustion plants directive on indigenous coal production industry. [155898]

**Mr. Timms:** We are continuing to assess the potential economic impact of the introduction of the directive on the UK coal industry, and on the coal-fired electricity generating industry which is its major market, using both internal analyses and independent research. The aim of this analysis will be to understand the probable available market for indigenous coal under both implementation options and to form an understanding of the likelihood that UK coal producers will be able to fully exploit this available market.

**Paddy Tipping:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent discussions her Department has had with the indigenous coal production industry on the implementation of the large combustion plants directive. [155899]

**Mr. Timms:** Officials from both the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs are in continuing dialogue with the UK coal industry regarding the implementation of the large combustion plants directive. In addition, my noble Friend Lord Whitty, the Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and I met representatives from the UK coal industry and the electricity generating industry, which is its major market, on 9 February to discuss their key concerns.

### Lung Disease (Compensation Claims)

**Mr. Foulkes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she is taking to deal with claims for compensation for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease received after the deadline. [156516]

**Nigel Griffiths:** Claims for compensation for respiratory disease received after the scheme deadline of 31 March 2004 will be dealt with under common law.

So far 4,506 claims have been made in my right hon. Friend's area. I encourage anyone else who may be eligible to claim before 31 March.

### Nuclear Decommissioning Authority

**Mr. Laurence Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the cost was of the advertisement for a policy adviser (non-executive chairman designate) for the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. [156973]

**Mr. Timms** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]*: The cost of the advertising in *The Sunday Times*, *Glasgow Herald* and *The Scotsman* for a policy adviser to the Department, who subject to the successful passage of the Energy Bill will be appointed as Chair of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority on Royal Assent, was £20,400. The appointment details were also placed on the Cabinet Office's Public Appointments website.

**Mr. Laurence Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what fee is being paid to Whitehead Mann in connection with the recruitment of a policy adviser (non-executive chairman designate) for the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority; when this fee will be paid; and if she will make a statement. [156974]

**Mr. Timms** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]*: The Department asked the recruitment consultants Whitehead Mann, following a competitive tender, to undertake a recruitment campaign for the post of policy adviser to the Department. He/she will advise on the preparations for the establishment of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. Subject to the successful passage of the Energy Bill, it is anticipated that the policy adviser will then become the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority Chair. The company's fee for undertaking the recruitment campaign is scheduled to be paid in accordance with Cabinet Office's framework agreement with the company and fees will be charged in 0, 30, and 60 days. The charge to my Department to date has been £17,635 including VAT.

### Overseas Trade Exhibitions

**Mr. Arbuthnot:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what regular overseas trade exhibitions which in 2003 were supported by funds originating from her Department are receiving reduced or no funding support originating from her Department or British Trade International in 2004. [157121]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** It is not possible to say which regular overseas trade exhibitions supported in the 2003–04 financial year will not be supported in 2004–05. The final programme of supported exhibitions is not fully fixed a year in advance, and there is flexibility for events to be added to replace those that are cancelled (e.g. through lack of interest, or other factors such as terrorism, SARS etc.).

It is not possible to say which overseas exhibitions supported in 2003–04 will receive reduced funding in 2004–05. The exact funding level for an exhibition is not fixed in advance. It will normally depend upon the number of businesses wishing to join the UK Trade and Investment supported group, the actual Pound Sterling cost of stand space and construction, and the demands of other events in the same industry sector. Furthermore, the actual cost of many 2003–04 exhibitions is still unknown, as claims can be submitted up to four months after the date of an exhibition.

### Port Clarence

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much One NorthEast plans to invest in the development of Port Clarence in Stockton. [156612]

**Jacqui Smith:** One NorthEast has been working with English Partnerships and others on a proposal for a potential development at Port Clarence on the River Tees. The project is at an early stage of development, with costs and feasibility yet to be determined.

### Recruitment Advertising

**Pete Wishart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what her Department's expenditure on recruitment advertising was in each of the last three years, broken down by publication; and what proportion of such expenditure was *(a)* to advertise vacant posts and *(b)* in the form of other general recruitment advertising. [155522]

**Ms Hewitt:** When running recruitment campaigns, recruitment costs, including advertising costs are generally devolved to individual management units and there are no central records held of the breakdown of advertising costs. When advertising vacancies, my Department uses the most appropriate advertising media, be it national, regional, local, trade magazine or website, depending on the nature of the vacancy to be filled.

### Security Breaches

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps the Government are taking to address the problems arising from information security breaches. [157245]

**Mr. Timms:** The Department works with business to produce a biennial survey of information security breaches. The 2004 Information Security Breaches Survey will be launched on 27 April at the Infosecurity Europe exhibition. These surveys help to raise awareness of the need for good information security practice and help to inform our own activities. Recent surveys have identified a need for easy to understand security advice for small and medium-sized companies. In response to this need, our most recent initiative was the launch last year of an online source of information on e-security. This resource draws together a range of tools, advice and guidance on core areas of information security and is aimed particularly at smaller businesses. New content is currently being added to this site which can be found at www.ukonlineforbusiness.gov.uk/informationsecurity. This will assist businesses in preventing and recovering from information security breaches.

### Singapore Issues

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the inclusion of the Singapore issues in trade negotiations. [156328]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** The Government believe that there are arguments that it is important for developed and developing countries alike to reduce bureaucracy on cross border trade (trade facilitation), to encourage a climate which facilitates foreign direct investment, to promote economic growth through fair competition and to encourage transparency in the procurement of public goods and services to help reduce corruption and increase good governance. However, we have made clear to our European Community partners that the UK prefers not to insist on including negotiations on investment and competition within the WTO Doha Development Agenda if doing so would jeopardise the DDA as a whole, given the benefits we believe a successful trade round could bring particularly to developing countries.

### VAT Registration

**Brian Cotter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many businesses have *(a)* registered and *(b)* de-registered for VAT since 1997 in each of the government regions. [156711]

**Ms Hewitt** *[holding answer 26 February 2004]:* The number of VAT registrations and de-registrations for each Government Office Region and for each calendar year is as follows:

*VAT registrations*

| | *1997* | *1998* | *1999* | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| United Kingdom | 187,690 | 187,515 | 181,370 | 184,035 | 174,620 | 175,800 |
| North East | 4,195 | 4,215 | 4,255 | 4,375 | 4,110 | 4,200 |
| North West | 18,460 | 18,720 | 17,830 | 18,285 | 17,445 | 17,595 |
| Yorkshire and the Humber | 12,165 | 12,110 | 11,980 | 12,180 | 11,675 | 12,140 |
| East Midlands | 12,035 | 11,925 | 11,480 | 12,010 | 11,425 | 12,075 |
| West Midlands | 14,745 | 14,905 | 14,530 | 14,675 | 14,055 | 14,265 |
| East | 18,950 | 18,215 | 17,385 | 18,465 | 17,330 | 17,655 |
| London | 37,280 | 39,305 | 37,655 | 37,760 | 34,385 | 33,490 |
| South East | 30,740 | 30,120 | 29,115 | 29,285 | 28,520 | 28,480 |

*VAT registrations*

| | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| South West | 16,185 | 16,005 | 15,705 | 15,725 | 14,580 | 14,960 |
| England | 164,755 | 165,515 | 159,930 | 162,765 | 153,520 | 154,865 |
| Wales | 6,415 | 6,220 | 6,150 | 6,310 | 5,985 | 6,110 |
| Scotland | 12,515 | 12,010 | 11,620 | 11,490 | 11,505 | 11,365 |
| Northern Ireland | 4,010 | 3,770 | 3,670 | 3,470 | 3,610 | 3,460 |

*Source:*
Business Start-ups and Closures: VAT Registrations and De-registrations 1994–2002, Small Business Service

*VAT de-registrations*

| | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| United Kingdom | 151,900 | 153,450 | 160,410 | 165,475 | 167,185 | 176,040 |
| North East | 3,970 | 3,955 | 3,995 | 3,935 | 4,405 | 4,120 |
| North West | 16,230 | 16,270 | 16,290 | 16,735 | 16,550 | 17,750 |
| Yorkshire and the Humber | 11,130 | 10,975 | 11,430 | 11,550 | 12,025 | 12,340 |
| East Midlands | 10,125 | 10,170 | 10,460 | 10,720 | 10,825 | 11,115 |
| West Midlands | 12,610 | 12,705 | 13,180 | 13,040 | 13,445 | 14,180 |
| East | 14,520 | 14,520 | 14,985 | 15,895 | 16,905 | 17,190 |
| London | 26,735 | 28,950 | 30,430 | 32,560 | 32,565 | 35,605 |
| South East | 22,955 | 22,140 | 23,900 | 25,135 | 25,455 | 27,355 |
| South West | 13,285 | 13,375 | 14,080 | 14,665 | 14,190 | 15,290 |
| England | 131,560 | 133,060 | 138,750 | 144,235 | 146,370 | 154,940 |
| Wales | 6,190 | 6,265 | 6,585 | 6,265 | 5,950 | 6,785 |
| Scotland | 10,925 | 10,915 | 11,410 | 11,255 | 11,325 | 11,140 |
| Northern Ireland | 3,220 | 3,210 | 3,665 | 3,725 | 3,535 | 3,170 |

*Source:*
Business Start-ups and Closures: VAT Registrations and De-registrations 1994–2002, Small Business Service

### Working Hours

**Michael Fabricant:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what work the Government has undertaken *(a)* with the Confederation of British Industry and *(b)* in the EU to ensure that workers in the UK have flexible working hours; and if she will make a statement. [156177]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** The Work and Parents Taskforce, established by the Government in 2001, was responsible for the design of the flexible working law aimed at encouraging the take-up of flexible working patterns in the workplace. John Cridland, Deputy Director-General of the CBI, was a member of the 10 person taskforce.

To maintain flexible labour markets we are currently considering our response to the European Commission's Communication on working time so as to ensure that key decision makers in the EU understand the benefits of our approach, which provides protection to workers who do not wish to work long hours without restricting those who wish make a different choice.

The Government's Work-Life balance campaign also encourages employers to adopt best practice and provide flexible working practices right across the workforce.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### Carbon Sinks

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to allow the carbon sink capacities of agricultural crops to be incorporated into emissions trading schemes. [155665]

**Mr. Morley:** The Department recognises the important benefits of agricultural crops acting as carbon 'sinks', and removing a significant greenhouse gas from the atmosphere. The inclusion of sinks in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme via Joint Implementation and Clean Development Mechanism projects (Kyoto Protocol mechanisms) is currently under discussion at EU level where the UK supports their inclusion.

The UK Emissions Trading Scheme includes direct emissions of greenhouse gases from installations and indirect emissions associates with electricity use. There is no provision for carbon sinks projects in the Scheme. The Scheme will be reviewed once final agreement has been reached on the inclusion of credits from Joint Implementation and Clean Development Mechanism in the EU Scheme.

### Crop Spraying

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what plans she has to ban crop spraying within a set distance of residential properties; [156359]

(2) if she will make prior notification to nearby domestic properties of the intention to crop spray a requirement; [156360]

(3) when she will announce her intentions in respect of the consultation exercise on crop-spraying. [156361]

**Alun Michael:** There has been a very large response to the formal consultation on no-spray buffer zones near residential properties and the responses are currently being evaluated. Once the evaluation has been completed Ministers will decide whether such zones should be required.

## Flood Defences

**Mr. Paul Marsden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what assessment has been made of the Bauer-IBS demountable flood defences used in Shrewsbury in the latest floods; [154889]

(2) what the cost was of temporary flood defences in Shrewsbury in the recent floods; [154895]

(3) whether Shrewsbury is eligible to apply for funding under the Bellwin Scheme for costs associated with the recent floods; [154896]

(4) what signage was provided around flooded areas in Shrewsbury to warn people of the dangers of contaminated water during the recent floods; [154897]

(5) what assessment was made of the flood defences in Frankwell in Shrewsbury during the recent floods; [154898]

(6) what long-term plans she has to provide permanent flood defences in place of the temporary flood defences used in Shrewsbury in the recent floods; [154899]

(7) what plans she has to provide flood defence protection to properties in *(a)* Underdale Road, *(b)* Abbey Foregate and Longden Coleham, *(c)* Coton Manor, *(d)* Smithfield Road, *(e)* Coton Hill and *(f)* the left bank of English Bridge in Shrewsbury. [154900]

**Mr. Morley:** The demountable flood defences form an integral part of the Shrewsbury Flood Alleviation Scheme. The February 2004 floods were the first time such barriers had been used in the UK and were a great success, holding back 1.9 metres of water at the peak. Seventy properties in Frankwell are now protected for the first time in their history. The performance of the barriers was assessed and recorded and operational matters are currently being reviewed by the Environment Agency and Bauer—IBS.

The Environment Agency and Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council jointly purchased 1400m of Danish Mobile Dam at a cost of £72,000 two years ago. A 90 metre length was used in Shrewsbury during the recent floods (pro rata cost of circa £5,000) and together with associated pumps helped protect approximately 40 properties and kept the main road into Shrewsbury open.

A comprehensive monitoring and survey programme of all the defences was carried out during the floods. Debrief meetings with professional partners are now scheduled to assess the overall response. However it is clear the defences and associated drainage pumping stations worked very successfully and Frankwell remained dry.

The Environment Agency has undertaken a thorough assessment of the remaining flood risk areas of Shrewsbury. Further permanent defences are difficult to justify but the Environment Agency will continue to keep the possibilities for further protection under review.

The Bellwin scheme is only operated in circumstances that are exceptional by local standards and unforeseeable. ODPM have not received any application from the relevant Councils.

General advice about health hazards of flood waters was disseminated via local radio, leaflet circulation and on site manning. No specific signs were deployed.

**Mr. Michael Foster:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the savings to households resulting from flood defences funded by her Department, for each year since 1997, broken down by constituency. [155090]

**Mr. Morley:** Defra grant aids capital projects and related studies that meet specified economic, technical and environmental criteria and achieve the threshold priority score for the year in which they start. Decisions regarding which flood and coastal defence projects to promote, their timing and appropriate solutions are matters for the operating authorities the Environment Agency (EA), local authorities and (in areas with special drainage needs) internal drainage boards.

No central record is kept of estimated savings from flood defences during actual flood events but appraisal of proposed defences includes assessment of estimated costs and benefits to the national economy. The Department estimates that total benefits of approximately £17 billion (in terms of flood damages avoided) were attributable to urban areas (at the time of project approval) for projects approved since 1997 over the lifetime of the defences.

While savings to households will contribute significantly to the overall benefit, centrally held records do not identify them separately from other benefit items nor by constituency or year. I regret, therefore, that I am unable to answer the specific question without incurring disproportionate cost.

## Greyhounds

**Phil Sawford:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many prosecutions there have been under the Protection of Animals Act 1911 with regard to greyhounds in each of the last 10 years. [153528]

**Caroline Flint:** I have been asked to reply.

It is not possible to identify those prosecutions under the Protection of Animals Act 1911 that relate to greyhounds because details of the circumstances of the offences are not collected centrally.

## Horses

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many horses there were in the UK in each year since 2000. [156563]

**Alun Michael:** This information has not been collected centrally in the past but I have been working closely with the industry to achieve a national equine database which will then be able to provide such information. This opportunity arises from the implementation of the Horse Passport legislation. Currently the best estimate is provided by the British Equestrian Trade Association's National Equestrian Survey published in 1999, which estimated that there were some 900,000 privately owned horses or ponies in Great Britain.

### Large Combustion Plants Directive

**Paddy Tipping:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what new analysis her Department has conducted on the impact of the proposed national emission reduction plan for implementation of the large combustion plants directive on the indigenous coal production industry; and if she will make a statement. [155895]

**Alun Michael:** With the Department of Trade and Industry, we are continuing to assess the potential economic impact of the introduction of the Directive on the UK coal industry, and on the coal-fired electricity generating industry which is its major market, using both internal analyses and independent research. The aim of this analysis will be to understand the probable available market for indigenous coal under both implementation options and to form an understanding of the likelihood that UK coal producers will be able to fully exploit this available market.

**Paddy Tipping:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent discussions her Department has had with the indigenous coal production industry on the implementation of the large combustion plants directive. [155896]

**Alun Michael:** Officials from both the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Department of Trade and Industry are in continuing dialogue with the UK coal industry regarding the implementation of the Large Combustion Plants Directive. In addition, my noble Friend Lord Whitty, the Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Trade and Industry (Mr. Timms) met representatives from the UK coal industry and the electricity generating industry, which is its major market, on 9 February to discuss their key concerns.

### Market Towns Initiative

**Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how many applications for funding under the Market Towns Initiative her Department has received; and what proportion has been successful; [155946]

(2) which towns have been awarded grant funding under the Market Towns Initiative; and how much has been spent through the scheme, broken down by *(a)* town and *(b)* region in each year for which records are available. [155950]

**Alun Michael:** The £37 million funding identified in the Rural White Paper was to enable the Regional Development Agencies and the Countryside Agency to support market town regeneration in the regions. The initiative was therefore not established as a national funding programme, but as a means of enabling regional partnerships to target towns in their region according to regionally agreed selection criteria.

When the announcement of the funding was made, it was envisaged that 100 towns would benefit from this funding. I am pleased to report that, through the innovative methods used in each of the regions, currently 227 towns are receiving support.

As the Initiative is being delivered through regional partnerships in different ways and we need to collate the data, I will be writing to the hon. Member with more detailed information in due course. In the meantime, set out as follows is a list of the market towns in each of the regions.

*Market towns chosen in the Regions*

*North East*

*Northumberland*
Alnwick
Berwick-upon Tweed
Haltwhistle
Hexham
Morpeth
Seahouses
Wooler
Rothbury
Amble
Prudhoe

*Co. Durham*
Barnard Castle
Crook
Middleton-in-Teesdale
Stanhope

*Redcar and Cleveland*
Guisborough (pilot)

*North West*

*Cumbria*
Cockermouth
Egremont
Keswick
Longtown
Millom
Penrith
Ulverston
Wigton with Silloth and Aspitria (pilot)
Windermere, Ambleside and Bowness

*Lancashire*
Barnoldswick
Carnforth
Clitheroe
Garstang
Padiham

*Cheshire*
Sandbach (pilot)
Neston
Frodsham

*Yorkshire and Humber*

*North Yorkshire*
Malton/Norton (pilot)
Pateley Bridge
High Bentham (pilot)
Pateley Bridge
Thirsk
Whitby
Richmond

*Calderdale*
Todmorton (pilot)

*Doncaster*
Thorne (pilot)
*North Lincs*
Brigg (pilot)
*East Riding*
Hornsea (pilot)
Market Weighton
*Leeds*
Otley
*Barnsley*
Penistone
*Wakefield*
Hemsworth
*North East Lincs*
Immingham
*West Midlands*
Shropshire
Craven Arms
Oswestry
Wem
Bridgnorth, Highley and Alveley
Market Drayton
Whitchurch
*Herefordshire*
Kington
Ledbury
Bromyard
*Staffordshire*
Leek and Cheadle
Uttoxeter
*Warwickshire*
Alcester
Atherstone and Polesworth
*Worcestershire*
Pershore
Evesham
Bewdley
*East Midlands*
*Derbyshire*
Belper
Bolsover
Chapel-en-le-Frith
Clowne
Glossop
Heanor
Killamarsh
S Normanton
New Mills
*Lincolnshire*
Louth
Spalding
Market Rasen
Mablethorpe
Alford
Spilsby
Wainfleet
Horncastle
*Leicestershire*
Market Harborough
Melton Mowbray
Thurmaston
Broughton Astley
Earl Shilton
Bottesford
Ibstock
Lutterworth
Market Deepening
*Northants*
Rothwell
Thrapston
Desborough (pilot)
Brackley
Towcester
Heathfield (funded by RDA)
*Rutland*
Oakham
*Nottinghamshire*
Ollerton
Retford
Harworth Bircotes
Bingham
Eastwood
*East of England*
*Cambridgeshire*
Wisbech
March
Chatteris
Ely
Littleport
Whittlesey
*Essex*
Walton on the Naze
Manningtree
Brightlingsea
Burnham on Crouch
Saffron Walden
*Norfolk*
Dereham
Walton
Downham Market
Diss
Aylsham
Harleston
Wymondham
*Suffolk*
Beccles
Brandon
Wickham Market
Debenham
Woodbridge
Newmarket
Mildenhall
Haverhill

*Hertfordshire*
Tring
Berhamsted
*South East*
*Kent*
Aylesham
Minster
New Romney
Cranbrook (funded by RDA)
Hythe (funded by RDA)
Sheerness
Lenham (funded by RDA)
Edenbridge
*Oxfordshire*
Faringdon
Carterton
Thame
*Hampshire* (co-ordinator to work with 11 towns within the county)
Yatley
Odiham
New Milton
Botley
Hythe
Alton
Petersfield
Whitchurch
Whitehill
Wickham
Bishop's Waltham
Fordingbridge
Dibden
*East Sussex*
Battle (funded by RDA)
Hailsham (funded by RDA)
Rye (funded by RDA)
*Isle of Wight* (island wide partnership and Co-ordinator)
Sandown
Shaklin
Wooton Bridge
Brading
Cowes/East Cowes
Ventnor (separate health check funded by RDA)
*West Sussex*
Pullborough
Steynning
Storrington
Billinghurst
*Surrey*
Haslemere
Cranleigh
*Buckinghamshire*
Princes Risborough
Buckingham
*Milton Keynes*
Wolverton
Stoney Stratford

*South West*
*Devon*
Hatherleigh
Okehampton
Holsworthy
South Molton
Crediton
Great Torrington
Tavistock
Tamar Valley (pilot) (including Tavistock)
Collumpton
Dartmouth
Ilfracombe
Ivybridge
Kingsbridge
Somerset
Totnes
Minehead (pilot) (funded by RDA)
*Cornwall*
Launceston
Helstone (pilot)
Camelford and Delabole
Mevagissey
Bodmin
Hayle
Lostwithiel
Saltash
Tamar Valley
Torpoint
Westward Ho!
*Gloucestershire*
Lydney (pilot)
Cinderford
Newent
Coleford
Stroud
Cam
Dursley
Tewkesbury
Wotton Under Edge
*Somerset*
Minehead (pilot) (funded by RDA)
Langford (pilot) (funded by RDA)
Wiveliscombe
Burnham on Sea and Highbridge
Chard
Shepton Malet
Sturminster Newton
*BANES ( Bath and North East Somerset)*
Midsomer Norton and Radstock (pilot) (funded by RDA)
Wiltshire
Melksham (pilot)
Tidworth
Devizes (pilot)
Calne
Corsham
Trowbridge
Warminster

Westbury
Wilton
*Dorset*
Bridport (pilot)
Sturminster Newton
Shaftsbury

### Science Advisory Council

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the percentage of the membership of her Department's Science Advisory Council which has expertise in environmental matters. [154764]

**Mr. Morley:** Defra has established the Science Advisory Council as an independent, advisory NDPB to provide advice to the CSA and through him to Ministers on the scope, balance and direction of science that underpins the Departments policies. The full terms of reference were set out in the Defra News Release 34/04. The Council membership of 12 covers a wide range of senior, external expertise. Those Members who have a particular background in environmental science issues include:

*Professor John Shepherd, FRS* is Professor of Marine Sciences and Director of the Earth System Modelling Initiative at the Southampton Oceanography Centre, University of Southampton. He possesses broad professional/scientific knowledge of environmental science, especially marine ecology, climate management and fisheries management.

*Professor Alan Thorpe* is Director of the NERC Centres for Atmospheric Science and Professor of Meteorology at the University of Reading. As an atmospheric science research scientist he has a broad perspective of atmospheric science issues relevant to the environment including air quality and composition.

*Professor Jeffrey Waage* is Head of the Department of Agricultural Sciences, Imperial College and Provost of the Wye campus. His principal area of scientific expertise is ecology and the biological control of pests. He has a broad knowledge of the interactions between agriculture and the environment.

*Professor Thomas Meagher* is Professor of Plant Biology at the University of St. Andrews and a member of NERC's Environmental Genomics Steering Committee. He specialises in population genetics and its societal relevance of this.

*Professor Richard Mithen* is Head of plant food for the health protection programme at the Institute for Food Research. He has broad scientific background in plant and crop science and agricultural production including biodiversity.

*Professor Philip Lowe* is Director of the Centre for Rural Economy, University of Newcastle upon Tyne and Director for the Rural Economy and Land Use Programme of the UK Research Councils.

*Dr. Andrew Stirling* is a senior lecturer and research fellow within the Science and Technology Policy Research Department, University of Sussex. A social scientist, he also has a broad knowledge of environmental issues and was a board member of Greenpeace International.

In appointing Members, we looked for those able to contribute to the issues facing the Department not merely in their chosen areas of expertise but also the wider agenda of the Department. We expect the Council to carry forward much of its work through subgroups and will co-opt appropriate experts as required to bring to bear on the issues. We shall keep the Council's workings and membership under review.

### Warm Front

**David Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what procedures are used to deal with complaints relating to the Warm Front scheme; [154163]

(2) how the Warm Front scheme is administered. [154164]

**Mr. Morley:** Warm Front is administered by two Scheme Managers, Eaga Partnership and Powergen Warm Front Ltd. The Scheme Managers are responsible for all day to day aspects of running Warm Front including marketing the scheme, processing applications and the appointment and management of installers.

As part of their role both Scheme Managers have in place procedures to handle complaints about Warm Front. Complaints should be acknowledged in writing within four working days of receipt and a written response provided within ten working days. In cases where it is not possible to adhere to these deadlines Scheme Managers are required to update the complainant with progress every ten working days.

The Department reviews the number of complaints received and time taken to deal with complaints as part of their regular monitoring of the Scheme Manager's performance.

In addition, the Department has its own complaints procedure.

## CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### Departmental Officials

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport which former officials of the Department have asked for permission to join *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* Deloitte & Touche, *(c)* Ernst & Young and *(d)* KPMG. [156911]

**Mr. Caborn:** There have been no requests by former officials of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport for permission to join *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* Deloitte & Touche, *(c)* Ernst & Young and *(d)* KPMG.

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what secondments *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* Deloitte & Touche, *(c)* Ernst & Young and *(d)* KPMG has made to her Department since 2001; for what (i) periods and (ii) tasks the secondments were made; whether secondments of staff from her Department have been made to those firms; and for what (A) periods and (B) tasks. [157060]

**Mr. Caborn:** There have been no secondments from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* Deloitte & Touche, *(c)* Ernst & Young and *(d)* KPMG for any period of time since 2001. Nor have there been any secondees from these organisations to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport since 2001.

### Digital Television

**Miss Kirkbride:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on her Department's plans to encourage people to transfer to digital television. [157770]

**Estelle Morris:** The Digital Television Action Plan addresses the need to ensure that consumers are aware of the benefits of switching to digital television; that they get clear authoritative information on the options open to them; and the right advice on equipment and installation. The Action Plan's Market Preparation Group and the Communications Strategy Group are taking this work forward. The Action Plan, together with details of the work undertaken to date, are available on the website: www.digitaltelevision.gov.uk.

### Grants

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what grants have been made by her Department to support rugby league in *(a)* the North West, *(b)* Lancashire and *(c)* Chorley in each of the last five years. [156510]

**Mr. Caborn:** Details of Lottery support from Sport England for Rugby League are as follows:

| | *1998–1999* | *1999–2000* | *2000–01* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Awards for All* | | | | | | |
| Awards in Chorley (Number) | — | — | — | — | 1 | 1 |
| Total sum for Chorley (£) | — | — | — | — | 4,190 | 4,190 |
| Awards in Lancashire (Number) | — | 9 | 13 | 10 | 9 | 41 |
| Total sum for Lancashire (£) | — | 36,054 | 44,963 | 34,218 | 37,036 | 152,271 |
| Awards in North West (Number) | — | 12 | 37 | 20 | 30 | 99 |
| Total sum for North West (£) | — | 43,974 | 132,100 | 71,323 | 117,414 | 364,811 |
| *Community Capital* | | | | | | |
| Awards in Chorley (Number) | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Total sum for Chorley (£) | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Awards in Lancashire (Number) | — | — | — | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Total sum for Lancashire (£) | — | — | — | 200,000 | 40,000 | 240,000 |
| Awards in North West (Number) | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 12 |
| Total sum for North West (£) | 588,407 | 144,649 | 219,623 | 754,346 | 644,727 | 2,351,752 |

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what grants have been made by her Department to support rugby union in *(a)* the North West, *(b)* Lancashire and *(c)* Chorley in each of the last five years. [156511]

**Mr. Caborn:** Details of Lottery support from Sport England for Rugby Union are as follows:

| | *1998–99* | *1999–2000* | *2000–01* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Awards for All* | | | | | | |
| Awards in Chorley (Number) | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Total sum for Chorley (£) | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Awards in Lancashire (Number) | — | 2 | 9 | 4 | 16 | 31 |
| Total sum for Lancashire (£) | | 2,375 | 34,405 | 18,695 | 64,174 | 119,649 |
| Awards in North West (Number) | | 8 | 19 | 11 | 38 | 76 |
| Total sum for North West (£) | | 23,675 | 75,700 | 45,465 | 159,750 | 304,590 |
| *Community Capital* | | | | | | |
| Awards in Chorley (Number) | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Total sum for Chorley (£) | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Awards in Lancashire (Number) | — | — | — | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Total sum for Lancashire (£) | — | — | — | 501,876 | 172,445 | 674,323 |
| Awards in North West (Number) | 2 | — | 1 | 6 | 2 | 11 |
| Total sum for North West (£) | 752,199 | — | 30,575 | 699,661 | 1,167,445 | 2,649,880 |

### Ministerial Speeches

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many speeches she made between 9 June 2003 and 1 February 2004; and where a copy of each speech can be obtained. [156153]

**Tessa Jowell:** The information is as follows.

*9 June 2003 to 1 February 2004*

| *Date* | *Details* |
|---|---|
| 9 June 2003 | FT Business of Sport Conference |
| 12 June 2003 | Speech to London Business School |
| 17 June 2003 | Valuing Culture Conference |
| 24 June 2003 | Speech to Royal College of Physicians Faculty of Public Health Medicine Annual Scientific Conference |
| 25 June 2003 | IPPR Seminar in Newcastle |

*9 June 2003 to 1 February 2004*

| *Date* | *Details* |
|---|---|
| 3 July 2003 | Lottery Monitor Annual Conference |
| 7 July 2003 | Music Education Councils 'Importance of Music' Symposium |
| 15 July 2003 | Digital Stakeholders Group Meeting |
| 23 July 2003 | British Library |
| 23 August 2003 | Speech and CA to TV Festival, Edinburgh |
| 18 September 2003 | Royal Television Society, Cambridge |
| 14 October 2003 | Speech on Cultural Identity, Egypt |
| 17 November 2003 | Speech to CBI on Tourism |
| 19 November 2003 | Speech to Business In Sport and Leisure . |
| 4 December 2003 | Speech to Arts & Kids |
| 4 December 2003 | Speech to Millennium Commission |
| 16 December 2003 | Speech to All Party Media Group |
| 13 January 2004 | Speech to IPPR |
| 27 January 2004 | Speech at Westminster Forum |

The text of all major ministerial speeches can be found on the DCMS website www.culture.gov.uk

**Official Travel**

**Miss Kirkbride:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much was spent on travel by officials and Ministers in her Department in each year since 1997. [157789]

**Mr. Caborn:** The following table shows departmental expenditure on travel and subsistence. An analysis on travel only is not recorded on the Department's accounting system and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

All official travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules contained in the Department's staff handbook and all Ministerial travel is undertaken fully in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

| *Financial year* | *£* |
|---|---|
| 2003–04[1] | 735,669.48 |
| 2002–03 | 876,636.96 |
| 2001–02 | 750,593.38 |
| 2000–01 | 811,985.53 |
| 1999–2000 | 755,429.32 |
| 1998–99 | 643,283.50 |
| 1997–98 | 582,564.51 |

[1] Cost shown in 2003–04 are to the 25 February 2004

**Miss Kirkbride:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many people in her Department are entitled to travel first class by rail when travelling to perform their responsibilities. [157797]

**Mr. Caborn:** DCMS travel and subsistence rules encourage staff to use Standard Class travel wherever possible. To obtain best value for money, management of the policy is delegated to line management who are responsible for authorisation and economical management of all official travel. While first class travel is permitted for some grades many of them travel at standard class unless, for example, they need extra space or comfort to work during travel.

The number of people entitled to travel by first class rail when travelling in the UK to perform their responsibilities is 124 (including Ministers). The number of people entitled to travel by first class rail when travelling overseas to perform their responsibilities is 400 (including Ministers).

**Sports (Governing Bodies)**

**Mr. Don Foster:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what support has been offered to the national governing bodies of sport to enable them to fulfil the requirements of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority; and if she will make a statement. [156811]

**Mr. Caborn:** Governing bodies have to become, or work in partnership with, a recognised Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) Awarding Body before their qualifications can be added to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The Central Council for Physical Recreation is providing support and guidance to help governing bodies achieve this.

Sports coach UK offers technical support to Awarding Bodies to ensure that NQF submissions meet QCA requirements.

**Tourism**

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps her Department is taking to promote tourism in *(a)* the Ribble Valley, *(b)* Lancashire and *(c)* the North West. [156493]

**Mr. Caborn:** In April 2003 Regional Development Agencies took on formal strategic responsibility for promoting tourism within their regions. We are encouraging them to work towards enlarging the overall national market, in a manner consistent with the national marketing strategy. The North West Development Agency (NWDA) will receive Government funding of £713,000 per annum over 2003–06 towards implementing their tourism strategy for the region. Part of this strategy includes the creation of five new Destination Management Organisations (DMOs). Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board will be the DMO for the Lancashire sub region and its board will represent the county's tourism interests. It is anticipated that the Ribble Valley will play a significant and supporting role in the establishment of the new tourism support structures. A bid is currently with NWDA for funding for the new DMO.

In addition, the Ribble Valley is featured in VisitBritain's domestic Outdoor England campaign, launched in Autumn 2003, which encourages tourists to walk along the Ribble Way or cycle round the Lancashire Cycleway Northern Loop. A photograph of Ribble Valley is also featured prominently in the brochure. Details can be found on www.visitengland.com/outdoorengland.

**Mr. Don Foster:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimates she has made of the indirect economic effect of visitor generated revenue on *(a)* the South Kensington economy, *(b)* the London economy and *(c)* the UK economy of expenditures by the Natural History Museum; what estimates she has made of the multiplier effect of the direct expenditure of the Natural History Museum on (i) the South Kensington economy, (ii) the London economy and (iii) the UK economy; and if she will make a statement. [156892]

**Estelle Morris:** The DCMS has not made any of the estimates referred to in the question.

However, I am aware that an independent report commissioned by the Natural History Museum (NHM) "Treasurehouse and Powerhouse, an assessment of the scientific, cultural and economic value of the Museum", was published on 11 February 2004. This Report suggests that:

> Expenditure generated for the London and UK economies by visitors to the NHM is £55.7 million to £59.5 million pa; and that
>
> The multiplier effect of the Museum's direct expenditure of £52 million (for 2002–03), on the UK and London economies is £161.56 million to £189.55 million.

The report made no estimates of the impact of the NHM on the economy of South Kensington.

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans she has to reduce regulations imposed on the tourism industry. [157140]

**Mr. Caborn:** With the exception of the Licensing Act 2003, which integrates six archaic licensing regimes into a single efficient system, DCMS does not have direct responsibility for the majority of regulations that affect the tourism industry. In pursuit of the DCMS Public Spending Agreement objective to increase the productivity of the domestic tourism industry, my Department will continue to work hard with other Departments to ensure that the burden of regulation is reasonable, and that regulation is applied sympathetically and consistently.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans she has to give grants for the tourism industry in non-assisted areas. [157684]

**Mr. Caborn:** The DCMS does not give direct grants to the tourism industry.

The DCMS sponsors VisitBritain to promote Britain as a holiday destination to foreign visitors and England as a holiday destination to the British. The DCMS annual grant to VisitBritain is of the order of £50 million.

In April 2003 strategic responsibility for tourism in the regions was passed to the Regional Development Agencies. It is the Government's view that decisions on investment are better made at the regional level, rather than by central Government.

### West End Theatres

**Miss Kirkbride:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on her Department's policy towards theatres based in the West End of London. [157784]

**Estelle Morris:** The commercially owned and operated theatres which make up London's theatreland are outside the remit of this Department. I will however be meeting with the Theatres Trust and others in the near future to discuss the findings of their report, Act Now! Modernising London's West End Theatres, published last October. I hope we can have an informed debate on the report's conclusions.

## SOLICITOR-GENERAL

### CPS Direct

**Vera Baird:** To ask the Solicitor-General what plans she has for CPS Direct. [156335]

**The Solicitor-General:** A key component of the Government's criminal justice reform is to transfer responsibility for determining the charge in criminal proceedings from the police to the Crown Prosecution Service. This change is embodied in the Criminal Justice Act 2003. The early involvement of prosecutors will ensure that the right charge is put before the court and will help police officers to gather more quickly the evidence the prosecutor will need to prove the case.

To fulfil this new role the CPS will make prosecutors available to provide early advice or charging decisions at any time of the day or night. Daytime cover will generally be provided by local prosecutors based in police stations, but this is not feasible or cost-effective throughout the night. The CPS will therefore provide cover during quieter periods by means of a national telephone-based service known as CPS Direct.

In September 2003, the CPS Direct pilot was launched to provide out of hours cover for police stations in Humberside, parts of West Yorkshire and the London boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark. The pilot uses sophisticated telephony and IT links to connect police officers to prosecutors and is currently staffed by 13 experienced prosecutors working from their homes. They provide cover from 5 pm to 9 am each weekday and for 24 hours a day at the weekend and on public holidays. As at 22 February 2004, the pilot scheme had provided the police with 6,866 written decisions or advices.

Many CPS areas and police forces already have "shadow" arrangements in place ahead of the new statutory provisions and from 1 April 2004, there will be a phased migration to the full statutory scheme. As areas move to the statutory scheme CPS Direct will gradually expand to provide them with out of hours cover. Current forecasts indicate that CPS Direct will eventually require around 80 prosecutors.

## EDUCATION AND SKILLS

### Deaf-blind Children and Adults

**Diana Organ:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) whether children's trusts will be given responsibility for implementing Social Care for Deaf-blind Children and Adults Local Authority Circular (2001)8; [154640]

(2) whether children's directors will be given specific responsibilities in relation to deaf-blind children. [154643]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** The Green Paper "Every Child Matters" set out proposals for the development of children's trusts to integrate children's services and said one of the key services within trusts should be children's social services. "Every Child Matters" also set out that the Government intend to put forward legislation to require directors of children's services to be appointed, who would be accountable for education and children's

social services and for overseeing services for children delegated to the local authority by other services. We are currently considering responses to the Green Paper and will shortly set out a programme for change for children's services.

### Excellence in Cities Programme

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been spent on the Excellence in Cities programme in each year since 1998–99; what his estimate is of annual expenditure up to 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [156585]

**Mr. Miliband:** Expenditure on the Excellence in Cities programme since 1998 is as follows:

£

| | *Expenditure* |
|---|---|
| 1999/2000 | 24,344,435 |
| 2000/01 | 138,849,734 |
| 2001/02 | 245,230,101 |
| 2002/03 | 242,016,353 |
| 2003/04 (provisional) | 272,164,265 |

Estimated expenditure between 2004/05 and 2005/06 is as follows:

£

| | *Estimated expenditure* |
|---|---|
| 2004/05 | 306,240,000 |
| 2005/06 | 386,240,000 |

These figures reflect the success of this programme and its rapid expansion. They do not include expenditure on the related Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP) and the Leadership Incentive Grant (LIG) which are overseen by EiC partnerships in EiC areas. Currently the Department invests £65.9 million annually on BIP and £148.5 million annually on LIG. The figures also exclude spending on specialist and beacon schools which, although utilised as part of the EiC strategy, belong to wider national programmes.

The EiC programme now covers 57 whole authority areas as well as 51 Excellence Clusters covering smaller pockets of deprivation.

As well as continuing to expand Excellence Clusters, we are also expanding primary EiC to provide behavioural support and extended opportunities for gifted and talented children in our most deprived primary schools. This help will not be confined to EiC areas but will include all schools meeting the relevant criteria, and will provide the support they need to ensure that their most disadvantaged pupils are better able to access the national primary strategy.

The EiC programme is now paying off. GCSE exam results last year were the best yet for EiC schools. Schools in Excellence in Cities whole authority partnerships improved at more than twice the rate of schools elsewhere with average gains of 2.5 percentage points compared to 1.2 percentage points in non-EiC schools.

There was also a significant impact on behaviour and attendance—with standards again improving fastest in EiC schools.

### Higher Education Bill

**Mr. Peter Duncan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations he has received since 27 January from *(a)* the Scottish Executive and *(b)* Scottish universities on the effects of the Higher Education Bill on Scotland. [155476]

**Alan Johnson:** We have not received representations from the Scottish Executive or from Scottish universities since 27 January. However, my right hon. Friend and I are in regular contact with Ministers in all devolved Administrations and with Universities UK which represents the interests of universities in all devolved nations as well as in England.

### Lord Levy

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the purpose was of the education-related meeting attended by Lord Levy on 21 January; who the other attendees were; and if he will make a statement. [157755]

**Mr. Charles Clarke:** Lord Levy did not attend any meetings with Education Ministers on 21 January.

### New Schools

**Mr. Jon Owen Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the *(a)* value and *(b)* number of new schools built in each of the regions of England was in the last five years for which records are available. [156957]

**Mr. Miliband:** We do not hold information about the value and number of new schools that have been built. This information is held locally. We have, however, made available significant support to build new schools and to expand, replace and repair school accommodation. The majority of our support is allocated by needs-related formulae to local authorities and schools, who make individual investment decisions, based on priorities in their asset management plans. Total central Government support for school buildings capital investment over the last five years and for future years is as follows:

| | *£ billion* |
|---|---|
| 1999–2000 | 1.4 |
| 2000–01 | 2.1 |
| 2001–02 | 2.2 |
| 2002–03 | 2.8 |
| 2003–04 | 3.8 |
| 2004–05 | 4.5 |
| 2005–06 | 5.1 |

### Pupil Places (Romsey)

**Sandra Gidley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many spare places have been available at the beginning of each school year at each school in the Romsey constituency since 1997–98. [157078]

**Mr. Miliband:** The number of spare places at each school in the Romsey constituency since 1998 as collected through the annual surplus places survey is set

out in the following tables. The figures state the position at the beginning of the calendar year rather than the school year. We do not have figures for 2002 as there was no surplus places survey in that year.

*Romsey primary schools surplus places*

| *School name* | *1998* | *1999* | *2000* | *2001* | *2003* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Basset Green Primary School | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Awbridge Primary School | 43 | 50 | 37 | 50 | 4 |
| Knightwood Primary School | — | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Braishfield Primary School | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| Broughton Primary School | 29 | 28 | 21 | 26 | 26 |
| Chandler's Ford Infant School | 67 | 90 | 97 | 92 | 59 |
| Merdon Junior School | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 |
| North Baddesley Infant School | 77 | 47 | 60 | 46 | 22 |
| Fryern Junior School | 74 | 75 | 90 | 101 | 2 |
| Romsey Infant School | 2 | 18 | 24 | 44 | 60 |
| Romsey Junior School | 56 | 41 | 35 | 36 | 68 |
| Cupernham Junior School | 12 | 12 | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| Stockbridge Primary School | 8 | 19 | 12 | 16 | 0 |
| Wallop Primary School | 41 | 23 | 18 | 37 | 57 |
| Wellow School | 38 | 31 | 29 | 37 | 0 |
| Wherwell Primary School | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 4 |
| Fryern Infant School | 33 | 41 | 40 | 37 | 27 |
| Hiltingbury Infant School | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| North Baddesley Junior School | 104 | 118 | 124 | 134 | 0 |
| Hiltingbury Junior School | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Halterworth Community Primary School | 0 | 0 | 15 | 4 | 0 |
| Scantabout Primary School | 19 | 23 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cupernham Infant School | 16 | 23 | 41 | 68 | 68 |
| Ampfield Church of England Primary School | 27 | 18 | 21 | 16 | 17 |
| Barton Stacey Church of England Primary School | 65 | 49 | 48 | 56 | 30 |
| King's Somborne Church of England Primary School | 12 | 17 | 29 | 22 | 20 |
| Nursling Church of England Primary School | 17 | 2 | 10 | 11 | 1 |
| Rownhams St. John's Church of England Primary School | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| West Tytherley Church of England Primary School | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Lockerley Church of England Endowed Primary School | 0 | 0 | 8 | 2 | 7 |
| Longparish Church of England Primary School | 5 | 8 | 3 | 7 | 0 |
| Romsey Abbey Church of England Primary School | 7 | 0 | 21 | 1 | 0 |
| St. Swithun Wells Catholic Primary School | 130 | 157 | 50 | 72 | 84 |
| Bassett Green Primary School | — | 61 | 31 | 57 | 71 |
| St Francis Church of England Primary School | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 20 |
| Total | 882 | 952 | 881 | 987 | 679 |

*Romsey secondary school surplus places*

| *School name* | *1998* | *1999* | *2000* | *2001* | *2003* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Mountbatten School | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 15 |
| The Toynbee School | 33 | 0 | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| The Romsey School | 68 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 23 |
| Test Valley School | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Thornden School | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cantell School | 113 | 321 | 324 | 228 | 115 |
| St. George Catholic School for Boys | — | 0 | 0 | 0 | 86 |
| Total | 222 | 332 | 335 | 228 | 242 |

### School Buildings

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money has been spent on school buildings in the Ribble Valley and Fulwood, broken down by school, in each year since 1997. [156490]

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money was spent on school buildings in each year since 1997 in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley; and if he will list the schools in Chorley where such money was spent. [157256]

**Mr. Miliband:** The majority of capital support is allocated to schools and local education authorities (LEAs) by formula, and they decide how to invest it in line with their asset management plans. The Department does not, therefore, have complete information about all the capital investments in each school. This information should be held locally. However, the following table shows the total capital support made by this Government for school buildings in Lancashire LEA since 1997–98 (including support for a PFI project in 1999–2000).

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1997–98 | 13.3 |
| 1998–99 | 17.0 |
| 1999–2000 | 35.2 |
| 2000–01 | 38.0 |
| 2001–02 | 30.0 |
| 2002–03 | 46.5 |
| 2003–04 | 62.6 |

We have to date, also allocated indicative funding for future years worth approximately £36.5 million in 2004–05 and £17.3 million in 2005–06.

### Special Educational Needs

**Mr. Hague:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate he has made of total expenditure on the education of pupils with special needs in *(a)* mainstream schools and *(b)* special schools in the latest year for which figures are available. [156000]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** Information about expenditure on the education of pupils with special educational needs is collected from local education authorities on their Section 52 Budget Statements. Where money is delegated to mainstream schools, figures are indicative rather than actual as final decisions are made by the schools. Latest figures available are for 2003–04, as reported by LEAs at 19 February 2004.

Total estimated gross expenditure for pupils in mainstream schools is £1,717,253,601. This includes support for pupils with statements and for those with special educational needs (SEN) but without statements. This expenditure will be in addition to their normal place funding.

Total estimated gross expenditure for pupils in special schools is £1,511,349,567. This includes pupils in maintained special schools and fees for pupils in independent and non-maintained special schools.

In addition, an estimated £236,233,036 will be spent in this financial year on centrally funded SEN activities. These include the costs of educational psychology services, assessment and statementing, parent partnership services and the provision of information.

Overall, the estimated gross expenditure on pupils with special educational needs in the year 2003–04 is £3,464,836,204.

### Specialist School Status

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many schools from *(a)* rural and *(b)* urban areas applied for specialist school status in the October 2003 application round; [156881]

(2) how many schools from *(a)* rural and *(b)* urban areas were granted specialist school status in the October 2003 application round. [156882]

**Mr. Miliband:** Of the 403 schools which applied for specialist school status in the October 2003 application round, 118 (29 per cent.) were from rural areas and 285 (71 per cent.) were from urban areas. Of the 238 schools then granted specialist school status in that round, 71 (30 per cent.) were from rural areas and 167 (70 per cent.) were from urban areas. These proportions are in line with the overall national picture: 27 per cent. of the 3,126 maintained secondary schools in England are located in rural areas, and 73 per cent. are in urban areas.

### Student Drop-out Rates

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures his Department is taking to reduce student drop-out rates. [156523]

**Alan Johnson:** The UK non-completion rate has stayed broadly the same at around 17–18 per cent. since 1991–92, and in the latest figures published in December 2003 by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) it fell to just over 16 per cent. This represents one of the highest completion rates in the OECD and we are determined to maintain this level of performance.

We have asked HEFCE to bear down on non-completion and their national co-ordination team, Action on Access, is working with institutions to improve retention rates and to spread good practice from those institutions with low drop-out rates and good access figures. The £255 million which HEFCE has allocated to institutions in 2003–04 for widening access and improving retention recognises some of the additional costs of supporting students from non-traditional backgrounds and those who are less well prepared for higher education.

Research indicates that the reasons for non-completion are many and varied, but one factor is incompatibility between the student and their course or institution. It is vital that potential HE students have the right information on which to base sound decisions. We are working with the National Union of Students to develop a new guide to help students narrow down their choices and make decisions about what and where to study. The guide will be linked to the new Aimhigher portal that launched in September 2003. A new National Student Survey is planned to take place in January 2005, seeking the views of final year students on their learning experience. HEFCE will also ensure that there is a wide range of published information about the quality and standards of institutions' programmes.

Another factor which has been associated with non-completion is financial hardship. In addition to statutory student support, discretionary support is also available as a safety net for vulnerable students. For 2003–04, Hardship Loans are available for students who are in such serious financial difficulty that their access to, or continued attendance on a course may be at risk. Grants from the Hardship Fund are also available to help students access and remain in higher education.

From the academic year 2004–05, the Hardship Loans budget will be amalgamated with the Hardship Fund into the new non-repayable, Access to Learning Fund. Students who would previously have been eligible for a Hardship Loan should be able to apply for a grant rather than a loan.

From 2006–07, under proposals laid out in the Higher Education Bill, the poorest students entering higher education will receive up to £2,700 in up-front support, and we are raising the levels of maintenance loan to meet the basic living costs of the mid-range student, in response to the recent Student Income and Expenditure Survey.

Additionally, institutions will, under the terms of access agreements, be required to provide further financial help to poorer students in the form of bursaries.

### Student Finance

**Chris Grayling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many graduates are not

making repayments on their income contingent student loans; and what proportion of the total number of such loans outstanding this represents. [155452]

**Alan Johnson** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]:* The information requested is not available centrally.

Borrowers enter repayment status in the April following graduation or otherwise leaving their course. There were 1,409,000 borrowers in the United Kingdom with income contingent student loan accounts at the end of the financial year 2002–03 of whom approximately 298,000 had accounts in repayment status. Borrowers can have accounts both in repayment status and not in repayment status if, for example, they have attended a second course of higher education.

No repayments are due from borrowers who are not in repayment status, although just under 15,000 borrowers made early repayments voluntarily in 2002–03. No repayments are deducted from income-contingent borrowers in repayment status whose income falls below £10,000 per annum. Repayments of income-contingent loans are, apart from a few exceptions, collected through the tax system. Most repayments are notified to the Student Loans Company more than one year after the end of the tax year, after which time has to be allowed for reconciliation with their records. Therefore the data on the number of borrowers with income-contingent loans where repayments are not being deducted because the borrower's income is below the repayment threshold, or for some other reason, are not yet available.

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what projections he has made of *(a)* the size of official student loan debt, *(b)* the likely annual interest accruing on that debt, *(c)* the likely total repayments of (i) debt and (ii) interest on that debt and *(d)* the likely subsidy required from his Department to support the official student loan debt in (A) 2007 and (B) 2009; and on what assumptions his calculations are based. [155538]

**Alan Johnson** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* Estimates of the cost of subsidising both maintenance and fee loans in 2006–07 were set out in the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) published on 8 January alongside the Higher Education Bill. These estimates—rather than projections—are based on the different scenarios set out in the RIA. Because of the nature of a variable scheme, the costs vary greatly according to the decisions that both higher education institutions and students take, for example the number of students who decide to defer their fees, and the pattern of fee charging that emerges.

The economic cost of providing student loans is made up of the interest rate subsidy on loans together with the cost of any loans which are never repaid, for example loans written-off after 25 years or on death.

Copies of the Regulatory Impact Assessment were placed in the Library of the House; it is also available on the Department for Education and Skills website.

### Teaching Posts

**Sandra Gidley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many *(a)* teachers and *(b)* teacher full-time equivalents were employed by Hampshire county council at each key stage in each year since 1997; [157076]

(2) how many teaching posts are vacant and have been unfilled for over three months at Key Stage *(a)* 1, *(b)* 2 and *(c)* 3 in Hampshire; [157287]

(3) if he will list, by subject, teaching vacancies that have been unfilled for more than *(a)* three months and *(b)* one year at Key Stages 3 and 4 in Hampshire. [157288]

**Mr. Miliband:** Information on teacher numbers and vacancies by Key Stage and on the duration of teacher vacancies is not collected centrally. The latest available data on teacher numbers and vacancies in maintained nursery/primary, secondary and special schools by local education authority were published on 20 January in the statistical volume "The School Workforce in England 2003", a copy of which has been placed in the Library. The table is also available on the statistics section of the DfES website at: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/VOL/v000443/index.shtml

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Accession States

**David Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what evidence his Department has collated on the number of nationals from *(a)* Poland and *(b)* other accession states who have already arranged transportation to the UK following 1 May; and if he will make a statement. [157074]

**Mr. MacShane:** The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has no figures for the numbers of any EU nationals who have arranged to visit the UK after 1 May.

### Afghanistan

**Mr. Best:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what measures are in place to combat the drugs trade in Afghanistan. [157022]

**Mr. Rammell:** As lead nation for counter-narcotics activity in Afghanistan, the UK supports the Afghan National Drug Control Strategy, which was adopted by President Karzai in May 2003. The strategy proposes activities in four key areas: improved drugs law enforcement; alternative livelihoods for poppy farmers; capacity building for Afghan drugs institutions; and public awareness campaigns/treatment programmes to help reduce demand. The UK has committed £70 million over three years and additional personnel for the British Embassy in Kabul to drive forward implementation of the strategy.

On 8/9 February 2004 the UK co-hosted with the Afghan Government and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime an International Counter Narcotics Conference on Afghanistan in Kabul. Over 300 delegates attended from Afghanistan, partner countries and international organisations. The conference demonstrated the firm resolve of the Afghan Government and the international community to tackle the drugs problem in Afghanistan. It agreed action plans for future work in each of the key areas.

### Antarctica

**Jeremy Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has held with the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat concerning *(a)* increased surface level transport activities in Antarctica and *(b)* the construction of a seasonal road to the South Pole; and if he will make a statement. [157707]

**Mr. Rammell:** The UK has not had any discussions with the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat because, although agreement has been reached on the establishment of such a secretariat in Argentina, it has not yet commenced operations. It is, however, hoped that it will be possible for it to do so on a provisional basis during this year.

The United States of America has developed a Comprehensive Environmental Evaluation (CEE) on the "Development and Implementation of Surface Traverse Capabilities in Antarctica", which is available on the Internet at http://www.nsf.gov/od/opp/antarct/treaty/cees.htm. This proposes that an ice-road be developed between McMurdo Station and Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station to supplement the existing air-support for the re-supply of facilities at the South Pole.

The CEE will be examined by the Antarctic Treaty's Committee on Environmental Protection, which will then provide advice to the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting, at its meeting in Cape Town in May 2004.

### Balwant Singh

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the papers of Balwant Singh (ECR/995346/03/S) were sent to London. [151579]

**Mr. Mullin:** It is not our practice to disclose details of individual entry clearance cases in a public forum. I am withholding the information requested about the outcome of this case under exemption 5 of part 2 the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information. However. I will write to my hon. Friend.

### Burma

**Mr. Best:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on recent political developments in Burma. [156234]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** We remain deeply concerned about the political situation in Burma. Although the Burmese regime's plans for a National Convention are a step in the right direction, the process needs to be inclusive and transparent, involving all political parties and ethnic groups. Convention participants must be allowed full freedom of speech, movement and political activity. As a first step Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy (NLD) colleagues must be fully released and NLD offices re-opened.

### Documents

**Mr. Paul Marsden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which documents are held by his Department written by *(a)* P. H. Pearse, *(b)* Thomas J. Clarke, *(c)* Thomas Macdonagh, *(d)* Edward Daly, *(e)* William Pearse, *(f)* Michael O'Hanrahan, *(g)* Joseph Mary Plunkett, *(h)* John MacBride, *(i)* Sean Heuston, *(j)* Michael Mallin, *(k)* Eamonn Ceannt, *(l)* Con Colbert, *(m)* Thomas Kent, *(n)* Sean MacDiarmada, *(o)* James Connolly and *(p)* Sir Roger Casement. [156306]

**Mr. Straw:** All Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) records are normally transferred to The National Archives after 30 years. All FCO records relating to Sir Roger Casement are available to the public there. In the time available to answer this question we have not been able to trace any records withheld by this Department relating to the others named or to the Easter Rising of April-May 1916. I will write to the hon. Member to confirm the position.

### EU First Pillar (Regulations and Directives)

**Mr. Spring:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many regulations were passed and how many directives were implemented under the European Union's first pillar for each year since 1997. [157107]

**Mr. MacShane:** We assess that the number of regulations made was as follows:

1997—2,339
1998—2,852
1999—2,802
2000—2,882
2001—2,600
2002—2,125
2003—2,176

We assess that the number of EU directives issued was as follows:

1997—85
1998—109
1999—100
2000—91
2001—83
2002—159
2003—134

All the data above cover the period from December (of the preceding year) to November of that year inclusive.

The above regulations and directives were passed under the European Union's first pillar.

The data above are taken from the LexisNexis online database (a subscription service at: http://web.lexis-nexis.com/professional), which draws on the Official Journal and other documents as provided by CELEX—the computerized documentation system on Community law.

### Falkland Islands

**Mr. Ancram:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on recent negotiations between the United Kingdom and Argentina concerning flights to and from the Falkland Islands, with particular reference to the number of flights per week that will be permitted; which airline will operate the service; and what was discussed concerning the issue of sovereignty of the islands. [156864]

**Mr. Straw:** I refer the right hon. and learned Member to a written ministerial statement that the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my hon. Friend the Member for Harlow (Mr. Rammell), made today on the issue of air links between the Falkland Islands and the South American mainland. The issue of sovereignty was not discussed during Mr. Rammell's recent visit to Argentina.

**Mr. Ben Chapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on recent talks in Argentina regarding charter flight links to the Falkland Islands. [156996]

**Mr. Rammell:** I refer my hon. Friend to the Written Statement I made today on the issue of air links between the Falkland Islands and the South American mainland.

### Gallipoli

**Mr. Djanogly:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations the Government has made to the Turkish Government and relevant authorities regarding plans to charge an admission fee to Gallipoli battlefields in the Gelibolu Historic National Park; and if he will make a statement. [156963]

**Mr. MacShane:** The Turkish authorities have confirmed to the organisers of ANZAC day that there will be no entry or administration fee to enter the Gallipoli battlefields in the Gelibolu Historic National Park.

### Indonesia

**Mr. Dhanda:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Indonesian Ambassador to the Court of St. James's in connection with freedom of religion in Indonesia. [156815]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** I met with the Indonesian Ambassador on 6 October and 10 November 2003 and on both occasions we discussed a wide range of issues, including religion.

The Government are committed to working with Indonesia to encourage religious tolerance. Together with the Department for International Development, we have committed over £4 million to help establish the United Nations Development Programme Conflict Prevention and Recovery Unit in Jakarta. The Unit will build up capacity in conflict reduction and recovery in the provinces affected by religious conflict. This includes funding projects like the Maluku Reconciliation Conference, which was held in London and Brussels in January 2004 and brought together Muslim and Christians leaders from Maluku to discuss how to establish peace in the province.

**Mr. Dhanda:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the extent of freedom of religion in Indonesia. [156816]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** The many ethnic and religious communities of the Indonesian archipelago have a long history of generally peaceful co-existence. The majority of Indonesians are Muslim and most are moderate and tolerant of other religions. Religious freedom in Indonesia is enshrined in the constitution.

### Iraq

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what factors underlay the decision by coalition forces in Iraq to reject a plan by the Iraqi Census Board to take a nationwide census on 30th June and then make an electoral roll available by 1 September. [154246]

**Mr. Rammell:** There is no Iraqi Census Board. The Iraqi Central Statistical Organisation did propose a plan last year to conduct a census upon the basis of which elections could be held. The plan was rejected by the Iraqi Minister of Planning, to whom the Central Statistical Organisation reports. No decision was ever taken on this matter by any Coalition body.

**Lynne Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about control of the oil supply and revenues in Iraq. [156198]

**Mr. Rammell:** Iraqi oil and the revenue it generates are both governed by UN Security Council Resolution 1483. This stresses the right of the Iraqi people to control their own natural resources. It also states that in the interim period, 95 per cent. of the proceeds from export sales of petroleum, petroleum products and natural gas shall be deposited into the Development Fund for Iraq (DFI). The remaining 5 per cent. is deposited into the UN Compensation Fund (to meet outstanding claims for reparations against Iraq). UNSCR 1483 also makes it clear that sale of Iraqi oil is to be in line with best international practice.

The DFI balance is available on the Coalition Provisional Authority website www.cpa-iraq.org and both the DFI and the practice of selling Iraqi oil are to be audited by independent public accountants under supervision by the International Advisory and Monitoring Board. This body contains representatives from the UN, the World Bank, the IMF and the Arab Fund for Social and Economic Development.

### Libya

**Mr. Swire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Libyan authorities regarding that country's relationship with the IRA. [155650]

**Mr. Rammell:** During the visit to the United Kingdom of 9–10 February 2004 by the Libyan Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdurrahman Shalgam, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary raised Libya's past links with the Provisional IRA as part of a discussion covering a broad range of bilateral and regional issues.

### North Korea

**Mr. Best:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what role the UK is playing in assessing what nuclear threat is presented by North Korea. [157019]

**Mr. Rammell:** As a permanent member of the UN Security Council and as a Depositary State of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the UK has held discussions with the UN, the US, EU partners and regional governments so as to inform our assessment of the threat posed by North Korea's nuclear programmes. We monitor developments closely and remain in close contact with members of the international community.

### Somalia

**Mr. Robathan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answers of 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 92W, on the Somali National Reconciliation Conference, if he will list by name the attendees at the Somali National Reconciliation Conference at the Safari Park Hotel outside Nairobi; and whose attendance was supported by the British Government. [157606]

**Mr. Mullin:** The list of participants in the consultations is given as follows. A number of support staff to the leaders were also accommodated at the venue. The United Kingdom did not support the attendance of any specific leader but pooled funds with other donors.

Mr. Ahmed Sh. Mohamed Lohos;
Mr. Mohamed Osman Maye;
Mr. Osman Ali "Atto"
Mr. Mohamed Qanyare Afrah;
Mr. Abdulaziz Sheikh Yosouf;
Mr. Hassan Abshir Farah;
Col. Hassan Abdi Galad;
Col. Abdullahi Yussuf;
Mr. Abdalla Derow Isak;
Mr. Hussein Farah Aideed;
Col. Hassan Mohamed Nur;
Mr. Mow'lid Ma'ane Mohamud;
Mr. Omar Mohamoud Mohamed;
Mr. Mohamed Sayyid Aden;
Gen. Mohamed Hersi Morgan;
Mr. Mohamed Omar Habeeb "Dheere";
Mr. Hilolwe Imar Omar;
Mr. Abdullahi Sheikh Ismail;
Sheikh Adan Mohamed Nur "Madhobe";
Mr. Sharif Salah Mohamed Ali;
Mr. Mohamed Aden Weiyel;
Mr. Musa Sudi Yalahow;
Mr. Bare Aden Shire "Hirale";
Col. Abdirizak Isak Bihi;
Mr. Abdikassim Salad Hassan;
Mr. Mohamed Abdi Yusuf;
Mr. Husseun Haji Bod;
Mr. Yusuf Dheg;
Mr. Abdirahman Ibbi;
Mr. Omar Hashi Aden;
Mr. Zakeriya Haji Mohamud;
Mr. Abdikarim Ahmed Ali;
Mr. Ali Bashi Haji Mohamud;
Mr. Mustaf Mukhtar Gudow;
Mrs. Asha Haji Elmi;
Prof. Deeqa Ol-u-jog;
Mrs. Saredo Mohammed Abdalla;
Mrs. Khadija Sufi Hussein;
Mrs. Zakia Abdissalan Alin;
Mr. Jama Mohamed Galib
Col. Ahmed Omar Jess;
Mr Mohamed Ibrahim "Haabsade";
Eng. Mohamed Hussein Addow;
Mr. Farah Addow "Sindico";
Mr. Mohamed Farah Jumaleh;
Mr. Abdi Osman Farah;
Mr. Jama Ali Jama.

### Sri Lanka

**Linda Perham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the situation in Sri Lanka. [156248]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** We support the Sri Lankan peace process politically and practically and welcome the progress made since February 2002 when the ceasefire came into effect. The parliamentary election in Sri Lanka on 2 April comes at a crucial moment for the peace process. We urge all Sri Lanka's political leaders to ensure that their, and their supporters', actions and rhetoric during the election campaign do nothing to undermine the important gains made in the peace process or to make it more difficult to resume peace process talks after the election. It is also essential that the election is free of intimidation, fair and non-violent throughout Sri Lanka. We urge all political parties and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam to commit themselves to supporting the early resumption of peace negotiations after the election so that they can move forward together in building a peaceful and prosperous country. We are working closely with international partners to reinforce these messages.

### UN Security Council

**Mr. Spring:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the Government's policy is on *(a)* the size of the UN Security Council and *(b)* the limitations of its members' veto rights. [157109]

**Mr. Rammell:** The Government are long-standing supporters of enlargement of the Security Council in order to ensure that it better represents the modern world. We support an increase in the membership of the Council from 15 to 24, with five additional permanent members and four additional non-permanent members. In particular, we have supported permanent membership for Japan and Germany, and for developing countries from Africa, Asia and Latin America. In the latter two regions, we have said that we see India and Brazil as the pre-eminent candidates. It is, however, primarily for the countries and regions concerned to make their case to the wider UN membership.

The Government believe that the veto should be used with restraint and in accordance with the principles of the Charter.

### United Nations (Surveillance)

**Mr. Gerrard:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) whether staff at GCHQ complied with a request from the US National

Security Agency to assist with a surveillance operation on members of the UN Security Council in January 2003; [157402]

(2) whether a memorandum was sent to GCHQ by the US National Security Agency asking for assistance in the surveillance of UN Security Council delegations. [157403]

**Mr. Straw:** It is the well-established and long-standing practice of successive Governments not to comment on details of the intelligence relationship between the UK and US.

**Mr. Gerrard:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether *(a)* written and *(b)* oral assurances were given to staff at GCHQ that action to assist with surveillance of UN Security Council delegations would be legal. [157404]

**Mr. Straw:** It is the well-established and long-standing practice of successive governments not to respond to speculation about alleged operational activities by the UK security and intelligence services. However, I can provide reassurance that they work entirely within a legal framework which complies with the European Convention on Human Rights and are subject to very rigorous oversight both by Parliamentarians and senior members of the judiciary as provided by statute. Training in the awareness of these legalities is mandatory for all GCHQ operational staff. The Director of GCHQ and I take our responsibilities for GCHQ's compliance with its legal obligations very seriously indeed.

### Uzbekistan

**Mr. Best:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of Uzbekistan about human rights. [157017]

**Mr. Rammell:** We remain deeply concerned by the human rights situation in Uzbekistan and regularly discuss human rights with the Uzbek Government both bilaterally and with our EU partners.

Last year I discussed our concerns about the human rights situation in a meeting with the Uzbek Ambassador on 8 October, urging the Uzbek authorities to implement the UN Special Rapporteur for Torture's recommendations immediately. At the EU Uzbekistan Co-operation Council on 27 January, the EU reiterated its serious concern about the human rights situation in Uzbekistan. The Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, my hon. Friend the Member for North Warwickshire (Mr. O'Brien) raised human rights issues with the Uzbek Deputy Prime Minister on 4 February.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office frequently discusses human rights with the Uzbek Ambassador in London and raises human rights issues and individual cases with our EU partners. Our Ambassador in Tashkent continues to raise individual cases, as well as our general concerns, at ministerial level both bilaterally and in conjunction with EU colleagues.

## DEFENCE

### Private Finance Initiative

19. **Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many of his Department's Private Finance Initiative projects are currently outstanding. [156747]

**Mr. Ingram:** I take this question to refer to those projects that are in competition but have not yet been signed. There are 11 such Private Finance Initiative projects.

### Warships

21. **Mr. Crausby:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the current shipbuilding programme for the Royal Navy. [156749]

**Mr. Ingram:** The Ministry of Defence has embarked on the largest procurement programme of new ships for the Royal Navy in many years, including orders for six Type 45 destroyers, three Astute Class submarines and four Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary).

Future plans include the purchase of two new aircraft carriers, further orders of Type 45 destroyers and Astute Class submarines, the Joint Casualty Treatment Ship, and the progressive replacement of existing RFA vessels through the Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability project.

Looking further ahead, we expect to replace the capability provided by the Type 22 and 23 Frigates with the Future Surface Combatant. It is too early to say how the new capability will be met or when orders will be placed because the project is still at the concept stage.

### Defence Industrial Policy (Trade Unions)

22. **Dr. Iddon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps the Department has taken to involve trade unions in the defence industrial policy. [156750]

**Mr. Ingram:** The Ministry of Defence exchanges views with Trades Unionists on a range of defence industrial issues. The Trade Unions have welcomed the Defence Industrial Policy that we published in October 2002.

Defence Ministers meet regularly with Trade Unionists. Last Tuesday, 24 February, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence met with the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Union and separately with the General Secretary of Amicus.

### Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

23. **James Purnell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his policy is on defence procurement and its effect on small and medium-sized enterprises. [156751]

**Mr. Ingram:** Ministry of Defence procurement policy, reinforced by the Government's Defence Industrial Policy, seeks to secure best value for money for the taxpayer and a healthy and competitive defence industry at Original Equipment Manufacturer Level and at the level of Small and Medium Enterprises.

The MOD recognises the importance of Small and Medium Enterprises in driving innovation and contributing to the delivery of defence capability. Defence contract opportunities are advertised through publications such as the MOD Defence Contract Bulletin and the Official Journal of European Union. The MOD's Defence Suppliers Service and the Defence Diversification Agency provide information and assistance to smaller firms interested in becoming defence suppliers.

The MOD also works with the DTI and its Small Business Service (SBS) to maintain awareness of initiatives aimed at harnessing innovation.

In autumn 2001 a joint MOD/ Industry Code of Best Practice was published covering relationships at all levels within the supply chain including those with Small and Medium Enterprises.

### Iraq

24. **Mr. McLoughlin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the provision of full chemical and biological protection to soldiers serving in Iraq. [156752]

**Mr. Hoon:** Even though the threat from chemical and biological agents has reduced considerably since the end of hostilities, a full suite of chemical and biological protection is available for all Service personnel serving in Iraq.

This consists of a protection suit and respirator, issued as personal equipment; plus collective warning and detection devices for units, such as the Chemical Agent Monitor and the Man-portable Chemical Agent Detector. A number of medical treatments are also available. Most armoured vehicles operating in Iraq are fitted with NEC filters.

Sufficient stocks of all such protection equipment, including additional suits, are available in theatre.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether cluster bombs manufactured in Israel and packaged at the Royal Ordnance facility in Glascoed were used by British forces during the recent conflict in Iraq. [154891]

**Mr. Ingram:** The cluster artillery shells fused and packaged by BAE Systems Royal Ordnance at Glascoed, following shell manufacture by Israel Munitions Industry, were not used in Iraq during the recent conflict. They have been put into store to maintain operational stock levels.

**Dr. Cable:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the estimated replacement costs of military equipment damaged and destroyed owing to use in Iraq since the start of the war in Iraq is *(a)* in total and *(b)* for (i) tanks and other armoured vehicles, (ii) aircraft and (iii) helicopters. [154952]

**Mr. Ingram:** We expect to spend some £50 million replacing equipment damaged or destroyed during Operation Telic. The replacement of two Sea King Mk7s lost in Iraq will account for around £35 million of this total. We do not intend to replace the Tornado GR4 aircraft, the Challenger 2 tank and other armoured vehicles that were destroyed since we have sufficient numbers within our existing fleets to meet future requirements.

**Adam Price:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many medical evacuations there have been of British military personnel in Iraq since 1 May 2003; and if he will give the reasons for each evacuation. [155783]

**Mr. Ingram:** There have been 1,109 medical evacuations of British military personnel in Iraq between 1 May 2003 and February 2004. The evacuations took place for a number of reasons, ranging from trauma to routine medical complaints.

### Army Training

25. **Hugh Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on Army training. [156753]

**Mr. Ingram:** There are two types of Army training: individual training and collective training. Army individual training is undertaken within the Army Training and Recruiting Agency and is split into a number of phases. Initial training, teaches soldier recruits and officer cadets basic military skills. Phase 2, or specialist training, is special to arm training to prepare soldiers for their first appointment in the Field Army. Career training (Phase 3) is continuation and professional development training to enhance individual soldiers' and officers' career progression and to meet the Army's need for specialists.

The collective training programme is constructed to train the Army for current operations, to prepare it to contribute to Joint Rapid Reaction Force Readiness and Development, and to support Alliance commitments. The ability to deliver trained, ready forces for any contingency remains a key Army priority.

### Aircraft Carrier

**Dr. Julian Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the future aircraft carriers will each be able to operate more than 40 aircraft. [154670]

**Mr. Ingram:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1178W.

### Chinook Helicopters

**David Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what the *(a)* functional and *(b)* operational differences are between the Mark 2 Chinook helicopter, the Chinook 47-H and the Mark 3; [156221]

(2) how the FADEC system in the Mark 2 Chinook differs from that available to the *(a)* Mark 2a, *(b)* the Chinook 47-H and *(c)* the Mark 3; [156222]

(3) what problems the software changes made to FADEC on the MH47 address; what necessitated these changes; who asked for these changes to be made; what functionality they provide for the MH47 that is not available to the Mark 3 Chinook; for what reasons these changes were not incorporated in the Mark 3 FADEC; when these changes are due to be incorporated; and if he will make a statement; [156223]

(4) whether the validation process of the FADEC system fitted to the Mark 3 Chinook is the same as that used in the *(a)* Mark 2, *(b)* Mark 2a and *(c)* MH47 Chinook; what that process comprises; who was contracted to conduct this process for the (i) Mark 2, (ii) Mark 2a, (iii) MH47 and (iv) Mark 3 Chinook; to whom the contractor sub-contracted this work; and if he will make a statement; [156224]

(5) what work has been conducted on FADEC in the Mark 3 Chinook helicopter at Boscombe Down; what reports Boscombe Down has produced on the work; whether independent sub-contractors produced reports on the Mark 3 FADEC; and if he will make a statement; [156225]

(6) whether *(a)* Vosper Thornycroft (UK) Ltd., *(b)* Chandler Evans Controls Systems and *(c)* Boeing Helicopters Corp. have given undertakings to his Department about the FADEC fitted to the Mark 3; [156226]

(7) what problems the *(a)* Mark 2 Chinook, *(b)* Mark 2a Chinook and *(c)* MH47 Chinook helicopters displayed which the Mark 3 was designed to solve; [156229]

(8) what the basis was for his Department's decision to procure the Mark 3 Chinook helicopter; and if he will make a statement; [156230]

(9) what tests are required to *(a)* the aircraft as a whole and *(b)* component parts, on the Mark 3 Chinook prior to its gaining release to full operational service other than the flight trials being conducted at Boscombe Down; what tests are still to be completed; and when he expects this release to be granted; [156231]

(10) what cost-benefit analysis was conducted prior to initiating procurement of the Mark 3 Chinook helicopter; who undertook this analysis; and what the results were. [156232]

**Mr. Ingram:** I will write to the right hon. Member and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

### Defence Finance

**Angus Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total value is of assets belonging to his Department, broken down by United Kingdom region; and if he will break down the assets by *(a)* estates, *(b)* kit, *(c)* plant, machinery and vehicles, *(d)* capital spares, *(e)* information technology and communications and *(f)* assets in course of construction for the same areas for the most recent financial year. [142028]

**Mr. Ingram:** A full regional breakdown of asset values is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, a breakdown of the value of Ministry of Defence's land and buildings by Government office region may be derived from Section 7 of the National Asset Register, last published by the Treasury as Cm 5221 on 19 July 2001. This shows the position for financial year 1999–2000. The latest information on the total value of assets was published on 30 October 2003 in MOD's Annual Report and Accounts 2002–03 (HC 1125, pages 80 and 111). Both the National Asset Register and the Annual Report and Accounts have been placed in the Library of the House.

### Foreign Ship Chartering

**Mr. Carmichael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 44W, on foreign ships, whether his Department has a maximum age for ships it charters; and what the age was of the oldest ship chartered by his Department in relation to the recent conflict in Iraq. [157003]

**Mr. Ingram:** The Ministry of Defence does not stipulate a maximum age for ships it charters. As I indicated in my previous answer, age is one of several important criteria which are used to assess suitability for use.

The oldest foreign flagged freight-carrying ship chartered for the Iraq campaign was 30 years old. The oldest UK-flagged ship was 25 years old. Port State Inspections completed on the two ships prior to charter revealed no deficiencies and both ships completed their tasking to the full satisfaction of the MOD.

### Military Equipment

**Richard Burden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he discussed the supply of military and security equipment between Israel and the UK with the Israeli Defence Minister, during his recent visit to the UK. [156515]

**Mr. Hoon:** I met Mr. Shaul Mofaz, Israeli Minister for Defence, on 12 February 2004. We discussed a wide range of issues, including opportunities for the supply of defence and security equipment.

### Mr. Jafar Dhia Jafar

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department was consulted on the application by Mr. Jafar Dhia Jafar for a visa to attend a meeting of the Royal Society in London. [154980]

**Mr. Ingram:** No.

### Procurement Contracts

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which foreign contractors after winning a defence contract have refused to supply the goods in the last five years; and what the reasons given for doing so were in each case. [154941]

**Mr. Ingram:** The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost (Exemption 9 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information).

### Sea King Crash (Board of Inquiry)

**Mr. Gale:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library a copy of the report of the Board of Inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the air collision of two Sea King helicopters embarked on HMS Ark Royal on 22 March 2003; what action he proposes to take as a result of the findings of the Board of Inquiry; and if he will make a statement. [157073]

**Mr. Ingram:** It is not our practice or that of previous Governments to place copies of the reports from Service Board of Inquiry in the Library of the House.

A Service Board of Inquiry is an internal fact finding investigation undertaken by the Services for their own use, into the circumstances surrounding a particular accident or incident. There is a principle of confidentiality associated with BOI proceedings, which is intended to encourage the provision of forthright evidence. Accordingly, external distribution of BOI reports is usually limited to the next of kin of service personnel killed in in-service accidents, HM Coroners to assist in their preparations for Inquests, and other bodies with statutory duties to investigate incidents.

We will, when the investigation by the RN Flight Safety and Accident Investigation Centre is complete, place copies of the Military Aircraft Accident Summary in the Library of the House.

I shall place information on the implementation of the Board of Inquiry's recommendations in the Library of the House shortly.

### Typhoon

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many Typhoon aircraft have been ordered from outside the partner countries; [155131]

(2) how many countries have expressed interest in ordering Typhoon aircraft. [155132]

**Mr. Ingram:** Eighteen Typhoon aircraft have been ordered from outside the partner countries. In addition, three countries have expressed an interest in ordering Typhoon; this figure does not include countries that have shown only a preliminary interest, for example by requesting information about the aircraft.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether RAF Typhoon aircraft will operate in *(a)* the Falklands, *(b)* Gibraltar, *(c)* Germany and *(d)* other countries. [155133]

**Mr. Ingram:** Typhoon will have the capacity to operate from bases outside the United Kingdom when this is appropriate to fulfil training and operational needs.

**Mr. Gordon Prentice:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Government is committed to proceeding with the second tranche of Typhoons for the RAF; and if he will make a statement. [155243]

**Mr. Ingram:** The Government are committed to proceeding with the second tranche of Typhoon for the RAF, and negotiations with Industry involving the four partner nations are in progress.

### Work Standards

**Mr. Keith Simpson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 5 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1045W, on work strands, what the aspects of *(a)* military capability and *(b)* associated overheads in each of the 16 work strands are; and what the overall financial saving targets for the 16 work strands are. [156792]

**Mr. Ingram** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]:* The work strands are looking at a range of areas relating to how our armed forces are organised and equipped in line with the policy set out in the Defence White Paper. They will look for opportunities to bear down on all associated overheads. An overall financial savings target has not been set for the work strands. As the Secretary of State for Defence said to the House on 11 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 1209, our aim is to direct resources at those capabilities that are best able to deliver the range of military effects required.

### Afghanistan

**Tom Brake:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on UK troop levels in Afghanistan. [156737]

**Mr. Hoon:** We currently have around 490 members of the armed forces deployed in Afghanistan, mostly serving with either the International Security Assistance Force in Kabul, or with our Provincial Reconstruction Team in Mazar-e Sharif.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Accident and Emergency Departments

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients were waiting for more than two hours on trolleys in accident and emergency departments of hospitals in Northern Ireland in each year since 1997. [156581]

**Angela Smith:** The number of hospital trolley waits waiting two hours or more is reported to the Department by Trusts on a quarterly basis.

*Number of hospital trolley waits waiting two hours or more recorded in Northern Ireland 1997–98 to 2002–03*

| *Financial year* | *Trolley waits waiting more than two hours* |
|---|---|
| 1997–98 | 2,335 |
| 1998–99 | 3,943 |
| 1999–2000 | 6,040 |
| 2000–01 | 10,346 |
| 2001–02 | 15,041 |
| 2002–03 | 25,131 |

*Note:*
In a small number of cases Trusts have returned data for a representative sample of trolley waits.
*Source:*
Departmental Information Return CH10

### After-school Clubs

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what criteria are applied in relation to access by children with special needs to after-school clubs in Northern Ireland. [156584]

**Jane Kennedy:** It is a matter for schools to determine the range of activities to be offered, having regard to the needs and abilities of their pupils, and to decide whether individual pupils will take benefit from these activities.

### Automated Credit Transfer

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the implementation of automated credit transfer for benefit and pension payments in Northern Ireland. [156582]

**Mr. Spellar:** At 13 February 2004, the Social Security Agency has invited 536,234 benefits and pensions customers to convert to Direct Payment. Of these, 273,045, or 50.9 per cent. have already provided their account details.

### Benefit Fraud

**Mr. Webb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many staff in his Department have been *(a)* suspended, *(b)* dismissed, *(c)* prosecuted and *(d)* convicted for involvement in benefit fraud in each of the last six years; and what the amounts involved were in each of the cases listed. [154544]

**Mr. Pearson:** The information on staff members involved in benefit fraud is as follows:

| | *Suspended* | *Cases* | *Dismissed* | *Cases* | *Prosecuted* | *Cases* | *Convicted* | *Cases* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1998 | 3 | A, B, C | 3 | C, E,G | — | — | — | — |
| 1999 | — | — | 1 | B | 2 | B, C | 2 | B, C |
| 2000 | 2 | F, H | 2 | D, I | 1 | F | 1 | F |
| 2001 | — | — | — | — | 1 | D | 1 | D |
| 2002 | — | — | 2 | A, K | — | — | — | — |
| 2003 | 1 | J | — | — | 1 | E | 1 | E |

Information on the amounts of benefit fraud in each case is as follows:

£

| *Case* | *Amount Involved* |
|---|---|
| A | n/a |
| B | 9,000 |
| C | 32,000 |
| D | 190,000 |
| E | 147,000 |
| F | 700 |
| G | 12,000 |
| H | n/a |
| I | 851 |
| J | 6,000 |
| K | 1,231 |

### Budget (Northern Ireland) Order

**Andrew Mackinlay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the sums are which are referred to under the reference Consultants and Other Fees in the Budget (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 in schedule 1 under the heading Department of Regional Development, broken down by contract. [156470]

**Mr. Spellar:** I have agreed to place the information requested in the House of Commons Library.

### Carers (Equal Opportunities) Bill

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the merits of extending the provisions of the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Bill to Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [156938]

**Angela Smith:** The Carers and Direct Payments Act (Northern Ireland) 2002 introduces provisions broadly in line with this Bill in relation to the provision of information, provision of services to carers and the right of a carer to an assessment in his/her own right.

Additionally carers were identified as a priority group under the former Executive's Promoting Social Inclusion (PSI) programme. An inter-Departmental group has been established to address the range of issues affecting carers, including training, education and employment. That group will report in April 2004.

### Civil Servants (Salaries)

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made in relation to the dispute over salaries of civil servants in Northern Ireland. [156118]

**Mr. Pearson:** Extensive negotiations over several months did not result in an agreed pay deal for the 11 Departments of the Northern Ireland Administration this year. Management Side presented an offer worth 3.67 per cent. on 5 November. As this could not be agreed, and Trade Union Side declined to negotiate within the 3.67 per cent. envelope, we took the decision to proceed to pay the award and communicated this to staff and Trade Union Side on 27 November. I have made clear to Trade Union Side that the 3.67 per cent. deal is the maximum that can be paid. We are however open to exploring other reasonable means of resolving the dispute. The latest meeting of the Central Whitley Council between Trade Union and Management Sides took place on Thursday, 19 February, and we have agreed to hold further negotiations as a matter of urgency.

Members of the NI Civil Service working in the Northern Ireland Office are subject to separate pay negotiations involving three unions: NIPS A, PCS and the PDA. A formal offer of 3 per cent. was made to the Unions but was rejected. NIO are proceeding with payment of the award in March.

### Coroners

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on progress towards setting up an inquiry into coroners' matters; and when he expects the inquiry to commence. [154623]

**Mr. Leslie:** I have been asked to reply.

A fundamental review of Death Certification and Investigation in England, Wales and Northern Ireland was established by the Home Secretary in July 2001 and reported in June 2003.

The Northern Ireland Court Service issued a consultation paper on proposals for administrative redesign of the Coroners Service in Northern Ireland on 13 February 2004 inviting comments on a range of proposals to improve and modernise the coroners service.

### Enriched Curriculum Programme

**Mr. McGrady:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much of the extra £1.6 million given to education in the Budget will go to the Enriched Curriculum programme. [156166]

**Jane Kennedy:** The £1.6 million allocated to the Department of Education in Budget 2003 will be used to take forward on-going work to support implementation of revised post-primary arrangements. Pilot work on the Enriched Curriculum Programme continues with the support of mainstream budgets.

### Health Services

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost of procedures contracted out by the NHS to the private sector was in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [156320]

**Angela Smith:** The information requested is not available centrally.

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what statistics his Department collects regarding requests for *(a)* radiological and *(b)* radiography investigations in Northern Ireland. [156323]

**Angela Smith:** My Department collects the number of requests received for radiological and isotope procedures in radiology, nuclear medicine and medical physics departments in each hospital on a quarterly basis.

Information on the request category is also collected and is derived from data concerning the type of request, the category of patient and the type of location from which the request emanates.

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many nurses are employed in Northern Ireland, broken down by age group. [156325]

**Angela Smith:** Figures for nurses employed within HPSS organisations as at 31 December 2003 are given in the following table.

| | *Qualified nurses*[1] | | *Unqualified nurses* | | *Bank nurses*[2] | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Age group* | *Headcount* | *WTE*[3] | *Headcount* | *WTE* | *Headcount* | *WTE* |
| < 25 | 823 | 792.7 | 401 | 379.8 | 373 | n/a |
| 25–29 | 1,684 | 1,603.6 | 422 | 368.3 | 471 | n/a |
| 30–34 | 2,188 | 1,900.4 | 603 | 523.7 | 527 | n/a |
| 35–39 | 2,689 | 2,184.5 | 728 | 607.4 | 670 | n/a |
| 40–44 | 3,109 | 2,541.2 | 747 | 637.7 | 678 | n/a |
| 45–49 | 2,301 | 1,925.8 | 652 | 559.3 | 422 | n/a |
| 50–54 | 1,436 | 1,212.1 | 460 | 394.7 | 235 | n/a |
| 55–59 | 866 | 713.8 | 384 | 321.0 | 140 | n/a |
| 60–64 | 214 | 170.4 | 143 | 114.3 | 84 | n/a |
| 65+ | 11 | 8.1 | 1 | 0.7 | 12 | n/a |
| Total | 15,321 | 13,052.5 | 4,541 | 3,906.9 | 3,612 | n/a |

[1] Figures for qualified nurses include health visitors, district nurses, midwives, school nurses, community psychiatric nurses, student health visitors, student midwives and other qualified nurses

[2] Bank nurses maintain service delivery by covering staffing shortfalls and fluctuating workloads. Due to the variable nature of their employment it is not possible to obtain accurate whole time equivalent data with which to measure their input to the service. Some nurses, midwives and health visitors employed in HPSS organisations may also work in nurse banks—there could therefore be some double counting.

[3] Whole Time Equivalent

*Source:*
Human Resource Management System

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the cost of medical negligence in Northern Ireland in 2003–04. [156326]

**Angela Smith:** The 2003–04 budget for Health and Personal Social Services includes £11 million towards the settlement of medical negligence claims.

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many vacancies there are for speech therapists in Northern Ireland. [156381]

**Angela Smith:** The information requested is in the table.

*Number of speech therapy vacancies (including long-term vacancies) within all trusts as at 30 September 2003*

| *Trust* | *Headcount* | *WTE*[1] |
|---|---|---|
| Altnagelvin Group HSS Trust | 0 | 0.0 |
| Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust | 0 | 0.0 |
| Belfast City Hospital HSS Trust | 0 | 0.0 |
| Causeway HSS Trust | 1 | 1.0 |
| Craigavon and Banbridge Community HSS Trust | 0 | 0.0 |
| Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust | 0 | 0.0 |
| Down Lisburn HSS Trust | 1 | 1.0 |
| Foyle Community HSS Trust | 3 | 3.0 |
| Greenpark Healthcare HSS Trust | 0 | 0.0 |
| Homefirst Community HSS Trust | 6 | N/A |
| Mater Infirmorum Hospital HSS Trust | 0 | 0.0 |
| Newry and Mourne HSS Trust | 0 | 0.0 |
| North and West Belfast HSS Trust | 6 | 4.0 |
| Royal Group of Hospitals HSS Trust | 0 | 0.0 |
| South and East Belfast HSS Trust | 0 | 0.0 |
| Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust | 2 | 2.0 |

*Number of speech therapy vacancies (including long-term vacancies) within all trusts as at 30 September 2003*

| *Trust* | *Headcount* | *WTE*[1] |
|---|---|---|
| Ulster Community and Hospital Group HSS Trust | 1 | 1.0 |
| United Hospitals Group HSS Trust | 0 | 0.0 |
| Total | 20 | [2]12.0 |

[1] Whole time equivalent.
[2] Figure does not include Homefirst Community HSS Trust.

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what funding was provided in each of the last three years for people in Northern Ireland with *(a)* severe and *(b)* moderate learning disabilities. [156383]

**Angela Smith:** Funding for Learning Disability services in each of the last three years is detailed as follows.

*Learning Disability Programme of Care*

| | £ |
|---|---|
| 2000–01 | 100,514,349 |
| 2001–02 | 102,507,948 |
| 2002–3 | 136,357,436 |

It is not possible to disaggregate expenditure for people with severe or moderate learning disabilities.

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much funding was provided in each of the last three years for people in Northern Ireland with autistic spectrum disorders. [156384]

**Angela Smith:** It is not possible to provide the information in the format requested. Funding for autistic spectrum disorders falls within the learning disability programme of care.

Funding for the last three years is detailed in the table.

*Learning disability programme of care*

| | £ |
|---|---|
| 2000–01 | 100,514,349 |
| 2001–02 | 102,507,948 |
| 2002–03 | 136,357,436 |

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 4 February, *Official Report*, column 944W, on the new maternity hospital, what factors underlie the slippage in the expected dates for *(a)* presentation of a business case and *(b)* commencement of building of the new regional maternity hospital. [156440]

**Angela Smith:** The original project was a stand alone maternity hospital on the Royal Group of Hospitals site. Since the original announcement, in order to ensure the delivery of the best possible facilities, work has been undertaken to explore opportunities for the development of an integrated mother and child hospital with a single entrance. The development of this integrated model has resulted in an extension of the initial planning time required.

The new regional maternity hospital remains to be completed by 2010. The delay in initiating construction is due to this additional planning, including the need for a complex series of construction, decant, and demolition projects across the entire strategic redevelopment programme which is designed to ensure that disruption to services across the Trust is kept to a minimum.

## Housing

**Andrew Mackinlay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many units in the ownership of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive are *(a)* void and *(b)* empty due to their state of disrepair; and how many are deemed unfit for human habitation; and if he will make a statement. [156217]

**Mr. Spellar:** The information is not available in the precise format requested as the Northern Ireland Housing Executive does not draw a distinction between void and empty property. Instead the Housing Executive categorises vacant properties as:

*Lettable*

Generally short-term vacancies usually in the process of being reallocated.

*Operational voids*

Generally dwellings which are deliberately being held vacant to facilitate planned improvements or open market sale.

*Long term voids*

Generally dwellings which are difficult to let due to lack of demand and includes properties blocked up to prevent vandalism, blocked up as a result of vandalism and fire damaged dwellings.

*Pending demolition*

Houses to be demolished either because they are designated surplus to requirement or to facilitate redevelopment.

The information as at January 2004 was as follows:

| | *Number of units* |
|---|---|
| Lettable | 55 |
| Operational | 2,650 |
| Long term | 1,280 |
| Pending demolition | 1,782 |
| Total | 5,767 |

The 2001 House Condition Survey identified an estimated 3,000 Housing Executive properties which were deemed unfit for human habitation.

The Housing Executive endeavours to balance the need for letting stock as quickly as possible against operational requirements and, under the common housing selection scheme, providing its tenants with a choice in where they wish to live.

**Andrew Mackinlay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many houses in the ownership of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive were *(a)* void and *(b)* empty in each of the past 12 months; what the average time was that the properties remained unallocated to tenants; and if he will make a statement. [156218]

**Mr. Spellar:** The Housing Executive does not draw a distinction between void and empty property. The following table sets out the number of vacant Housing Executive dwellings for the 12 month period February 2003 to January 2004.

| Month | Lettable[1] | Operational[2] | Long term[3] | Undergoing redevelopment/ pending demolition[4] | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| February 2003 | 65 | 2,674 | 1,280 | 2,233 | 6,252 |
| March 2003 | 63 | 2,667 | 1,232 | 2,306 | 6,268 |
| April 2003 | 116 | 2,701 | 1,331 | 2,309 | 6,457 |
| May 2003 | 96 | 2,689 | 1,295 | 2,326 | 6,406 |
| June 2003 | 95 | 2,659 | 1,316 | 2,345 | 6,415 |
| July 2003 | 98 | 2,685 | 1,305 | 2,315 | 6,403 |
| August 2003 | 90 | 2,747 | 1,277 | 2,246 | 6,360 |
| September 2003 | 56 | 2,678 | 1,200 | 2,107 | 6,041 |
| October 2003 | 91 | 2,807 | 1,251 | 2,079 | 6,228 |
| November 2003 | 76 | 2,714 | 1,231 | 1,863 | 5,884 |
| December 2003 | 102 | 2,691 | 1,286 | 1,841 | 5,920 |
| January 2004 | 55 | 2,650 | 1,280 | 1,782 | 5,767 |

[1] Lettable—generally short-term vacancies usually in the process of being re-allocated.
[2] Operational voids—generally dwellings which are deliberately being held vacant to facilitate planned improvements or open market sale.
[3] Long term voids—generally dwellings which are difficult to let due to lack of demand and includes properties blocked up to prevent vandalism, blocked up as a result of vandalism and fire damaged dwellings.
[4] Pending demolition—houses to be demolished either because they are designated surplus to requirement or to facilitate redevelopment.

The information for the last 12 months regarding the time these properties remain unoccupied is not routinely kept but is complied from time to time for special exercises. This information was last complied for the 2001–02 financial year and shows the times as follows:

Lettable voids—10.8 days (95 per cent. of all lettable stock are allocated in two weeks).

Operational voids—89.7 days.

Long term voids—111.7 days.

As part of the management of its housing stock the Housing Executive must balance the need for letting stock as quickly as possible against operational requirements and, under the common housing selection scheme, providing its tenants with a choice in where they wish to live.

### Local Management of Schools

**Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to revise the formula for funding Local Management of Schools. [156968]

**Jane Kennedy:** The current arrangements for the funding of schools are being reviewed in the context of developing a Common Funding Scheme.

### New Hospitals

**Mr. Jon Owen Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the *(a)* value and *(b)* number of new hospitals built in Northern Ireland is in the last five years for which records are available. [156958]

**Angela Smith:** One new hospital, the Causeway Hospital, has been built in the past five years. The Causeway Hospital was completed in 2001 at a cost of some £52 million, including equipment.

### Obesity

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the percentage of *(a)* adults and *(b)* children in Northern Ireland that were obese in each of the last three years. [156117]

**Angela Smith:** The 1997 Northern Ireland Health and Social Wellbeing Survey provides the most recent estimate of obesity in adults aged 16+. This survey found that 17 per cent. of men and 20 per cent. of women (19 per cent. overall) were obese.

There is no estimate available on obesity levels in children.

### Organs Inquiry Line

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the *(a)* Organs Inquiry Line and *(b)* Relatives Reference Group will close in November 2004. [154624]

**Angela Smith:** The Department's Human Organs Inquiry Line was launched in November 2002 in compliance with the recommendations of the Human Organs Inquiry, which the then Minister had accepted in full. In a leaflet issued to all householders last year the public were asked to note

"that this telephone enquiry line and your opportunity to reclaim organs and tissue samples currently in storage will no longer be available after November 2004."

This remains the position.

The Relatives' Reference Group was established by the then Minister in March 2001 at the same time as the Human Organs Inquiry. Its Terms of Reference were reviewed in July 2002 and its life extended for two years to assist with the implementation of the recommendations of the Human Organs Inquiry. In order to ensure that this role, which includes support for relatives who use the Enquiry Line, is maintained, it is anticipated that the work of the Group will also conclude at the end of 2004.

### Royal Group of Hospitals and Queens University

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the disclosure of uncollated retentions on 23 January by the Royal Group of Hospitals and Queens University. [154622]

**Angela Smith:** In May 2003 the Department's Chief Medical Officer issued guidance to all hospitals and universities on the use of human organs and tissue, which gave specific instructions about record keeping

and archives. It has since been brought to the attention of the Department that the details of tissue blocks and slides relating to 310 cases at Queen's University and the Royal Hospitals had not been included on their main reference lists, although their existence had been disclosed. These lists are used to advise relatives whether any material has been retained from post mortem examinations.

This matter has been investigated very thoroughly and it is clear that no whole organs are involved and that no new blocks and slides have come to light that were not known about before. The problem was due to administrative error rather than any attempt to conceal information.

Details of the 310 cases have been checked against all inquiries received by both the institutions involved and the departmental telephone inquiry line. In only two cases did blocks and slides relate to families that had previously made inquiries. Both families have been advised of the additional information. The error is deeply regretted and both institutions have apologised to the families concerned for any distress caused.

New procedures have been, and continue to be, developed and the Human Tissue Bill now before Parliament includes a rigorous system of inspection and regulation. It is considered that this is an isolated episode which should not recur, but the Department has written to all hospital trusts and universities to draw their attention to this matter.

### Special Needs Education

**Mr. McGrady:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the Department of Education's policy is on support and funding for the special needs education of young people who have been statemented. [156167]

**Jane Kennedy:** The Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs, issued by the Department in 1998, gives detailed practical guidance to schools and Education and Library Boards (ELBs) on how to identify, assess and, where appropriate, statement children with special educational needs.

Each Education and Library Board is responsible for Statements of Special Educational Needs for pupils resident in its area. The Board will meet the costs associated with the educational provision in Statements for pupils in maintained and controlled (including controlled integrated) schools. The cost of educational provision outlined in Statements for children in grant—maintained integrated (GMI) schools and voluntary grammar schools is met by the Department, because it has direct funding responsibility for these schools.

### State Benefits

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were in receipt of state benefits in Northern Ireland at 1 February, broken down by benefit. [156941]

**Mr. Spellar:** The information requested for 1 February 2004 is not available. The most up to date information is shown in the following table.

*Benefit statistics*

| *Benefit type* | *Date* | *Number of recipients* |
|---|---|---|
| Income Support | August 2003 | 181,580 |
| Job Seeker's Allowance | August 2003 | 33,795 |
| Incapacity Benefit | August 2003 | 72,208 |
| Attendance Allowance | November 2003 | 65,404 |
| Disability Living Allowance | November 2003 | 155,295 |
| Carers Allowance | November 2003 | 38,967 |
| Carers Allowance | November 2003 | 38,967 |
| Housing Benefit | August 2003 | 126,814 |
| Retirement Pension | March 2003 | 248,564 |
| Widow's Benefit | March 2003 | 6,003 |
| Bereavement Benefit | March 2003 | 1,350 |

### Vehicle Certificates

**Andrew Mackinlay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many and what proportion of vehicles being used on roads in Northern Ireland do not have a valid test certificate; and if he will make a statement. [156524]

**Angela Smith:** The Driver and Vehicle Testing Agency carried out a survey in May 2003 using data from the 2002 analysis of vehicle excise duty evasion. The survey indicated that 28.4 per cent. of eligible vehicles did not have valid MOT certificates at the date of sighting. It was estimated that this equated to 150,000 vehicles.

The Agency is developing a range of measures to increase MOT compliance. These include the implementation in January 2004 of a new telephone booking service, to make it easier for customers to book and pay for tests; the introduction from March 2004 of MOT reminders; the introduction of internet booking by December 2004; and the use of MOT discs, which are now being issued to motorists for display on car windscreens and which will become mandatory in 2005.

### Vehicle Testing

**Andrew Mackinlay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost of the vehicle testing service in Northern Ireland was in the last year for which figures are available; and how much of the cost was offset by the receipt of fees. [156530]

**Angela Smith:** The cost of providing the vehicle testing service in Northern Ireland in the 2002–03 financial year was £13.4 million. These costs were offset in full from test fee income.

**Andrew Mackinlay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average waiting time for an appointment for a vehicle test in Northern Ireland was in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [156531]

**Angela Smith:** The average waiting time for an appointment in 2002–03, the last full year for which figures are available, was 20 days against a target of 21 days.

The average waiting time is currently 18 days, against the same target. However, the average waiting time for the current year to date is 30 days. This reflects the fact that the Driver and Vehicle Testing Agency experienced a period of high demand earlier in the year, caused

partly by measures aimed at reducing the level of motor tax evasion, at a time when it was undergoing a rolling programme of test centre closures for the installation of new equipment.

It is unlikely that that waiting time target for the year as a whole will be met. However, waiting times are now well within target and I expect this positive position to be maintained.

**Andrew Mackinlay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will privatise vehicle testing in Northern Ireland in line with the practice elsewhere in the United Kingdom. [156532]

**Angela Smith:** Vehicle tests are carried out exclusively in Northern Ireland by the Driver and Vehicle Testing Agency of the Department of the Environment. There are no arrangements to allow private garages in Northern Ireland to carry out MOT tests on private cars, as is the practice in Great Britain.

Following the recent programme to refurbish and re-equip the Agency's 15 test centres, under a private finance initiative contract, and completion of a project to introduce telephone booking, the Agency has restored its previously high levels of performance and customer service.

I believe these arrangements best suit the circumstances in Northern Ireland and at present I have no plans to review them.

### Waste Paper Recycling

**Mr. McGrady:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether all Government Departments in Northern Ireland are contributing to the waste paper recycling contract with SCL Waste Services Ltd.; and how much paper was recycled under this contract in *(a)* 2001–02 and *(b)* 2002–03. [156164]

**Mr. Pearson:** All Government Departments utilise the current waste paper disposal contract with SCL Waste Services Ltd. The term "waste paper" covers all paper products including newspapers, magazines, pamphlets and file covers. The volumes of waste paper recycled under this contract were:

| | *Tonnes* |
|---|---|
| 2001–02 | 1,076 |
| 2002–03 | 1,143 |

## TREASURY

### Compliance Performance Targets

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 26 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 110W, on compliance performance targets, how much of the £4.25 billion to £4.75 billion compliance forecast for the Inland Revenue for 1998–99 referred to in the Inland Revenue Annual Report for that year was founded upon the anticipated performance of *(a)* the Large Business Office and *(b)* International Division; and what the equivalent planning figures were for each year since 1997–98. [156617]

**Dawn Primarolo:** The information requested is not available.

### Cancer

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many cancer deaths there were *(a)* in 2003 and *(b)* in 1974 from (i) breast cancer, (ii) testicular cancer, (iii) bowel cancer, (iv) Hodgkin's disease and (v) all cancers. [157383]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Mrs. Iris Robinson, dated 1 March 2004:*

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many cancer deaths there were in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 1974 from (i) breast cancer, (ii) testicular cancer, (iii) bowel cancer, (iv) Hodgkin's disease and (v) all cancers. (157383)

The latest year for which data are available is 2002. The figures requested are shown in the table below for 1974 and 2002.

*Number of deaths from various cancers[1], England and Wales, 1974 and 2002[2]*

| | *1974* | *2002* |
|---|---|---|
| Breast cancer | 11,319 | 11,557 |
| Testicular cancer | 239 | 60 |
| Bowel cancer | 16,678 | 14,544 |
| Hodgkin's disease | 748 | 251 |
| All cancer | 121,397 | 136,777 |

[1] Cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Eighth Revision (ICD-8) for 1974, and the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) for 2002. The codes used are listed below:
Breast cancer: ICD-8 174; ICD-10 C50
Testicular cancer: ICD-8 186; ICD-10 C62
Bowel cancer: ICD-8 152–154; ICD-10 C17-C21
Hodgkin's disease: ICD-8 201; ICD-10 C81
All cancer—ICD-8 140–207; ICD-10 C00-C97.
Figures coded to different revisions of the ICD are not completely comparable.
[2] Figures are based on deaths registered in 1974 and deaths occurring in 2002.

Cancer trends in Northern Ireland are monitored by the Northern Ireland Cancer Registry whose website address is: http://www.qub.ac.uk/nicr/intro.htm

### Counterfeiting

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people have been arrested for producing counterfeit £1 coins. [156985]

**Ruth Kelly:** This is a matter for the law enforcement agencies and not for the Treasury or the Royal Mint. However, the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) has recently informed us that 63 persons were arrested for counterfeit coin possession and production in England and Wales since 1997.

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what additional security measures are being considered for new batches of £1 coins to tackle problems of counterfeit coins. [156986]

**Ruth Kelly:** The only effective option would be to introduce a new £1 coin. However, at present, given the very low incidence of counterfeit £1 coins by international monetary standards, it would not present a good value for money case to replace the existing coin.

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his Department has identified the source or sources of counterfeit £1 coins. [156987]

**Ruth Kelly:** This is a matter for the law enforcement agencies and not for the Treasury or the Royal Mint.

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what advice he has given to businesses to help them identify counterfeit £1 coins. [156988]

**Ruth Kelly:** As far as HM Treasury and the Royal Mint are aware, there is no evidence to suggest that businesses would benefit from Government advice on how to identify counterfeits.

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps are being taken to reduce the number of counterfeit £1 coins in circulation. [156989]

**Ruth Kelly:** The only effective action HM Treasury and the Royal Mint could take is to replace the £1 coin. Any level of counterfeiting must be a matter of concern but, given the Royal Mint's recent estimate of the incidence of £1 counterfeit coins to be less than 1 per cent. and anecdotal evidence from cash handlers suggesting a figure even less than this, this is considered to be well within the level generally tolerated by monetary authorities across the world and does not provide a value for money case for replacing the £1 coin.

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his latest estimate is of the number of counterfeit £1 coins in circulation in the UK. [156990]

**Ruth Kelly:** The Royal Mint conducts annual surveys to establish the incidence of £1 counterfeit coins. The most recent survey in December 2003 indicated a counterfeit rate of just under 1 per cent.—almost identical to the previous year's results. Anecdotal evidence from cash handlers suggests that the real level of counterfeits may be substantially lower.

### Employment (Lancashire)

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people are *(a)* employed and *(b)* self employed in (i) Lancashire and (ii) Chorley; and what percentage are sole traders. [157091]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Lindsay Hoyle, dated 1 March 2004:*

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about employment and self-employment. (157091)

The attached table gives estimates of the number of people employed and self- employed and the percentage of self-employed people who are sole traders in Lancashire and Chorley. Estimates are taken from the ONS Labour Force Survey (LFS), for the three month period ending November 2003.

As with any statistical sample survey, estimates for the LFS are subject to sampling variability.

*Number of employed and self employed people[1], and percentages of self-employed people who are sole traders[2] in Lancashire and Chorley: September to November 2003*

| | *Lancashire* | *Chorley* |
|---|---|---|
| All people in employment[3] | 564,000 | 47,000 |
| *Of these, number who are:* | | |
| Employees | 491,000 | 39,000 |
| Self employed | 69,000 | [4] |
| Sole traders[2] | 45,000 | [4] |
| Sole traders as a percentage of self-employed | 64.7 | [4] |

[1] People aged 16 and over
[2] Self employed with no employees.
[3] Includes employees, the self employed, unpaid family workers and people on Government employment and training programmes
[4] Sample size too small for reliable estimate
*Source:*
ONS-Labour Force Survey (Estimates are not seasonally adjusted and have not been interim-adjusted to reflect 2001 Census results)

### Environmental Taxation

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will ensure that *(a)* financial and *(b)* fiscal (i) incentives and (ii) disincentives for waste management encourage delivery of the Government's waste hierarchy. [156344]

**John Healey:** Through the use of the landfill tax, spending programmes, regulation and other economic instruments such as the landfill allowance trading scheme, the Government incentivises efforts to minimise the amount of waste generated and encourage sustainable waste disposal and waste management techniques.

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent assessment he has made of the environmental benefits that would be derived from a tax on incineration; and if he will make a statement. [156345]

**John Healey:** The Government have commissioned a review of the evidence of health and environmental effects of different waste management options, and the case for economic instruments for waste management will be considered in light of this review.

### European Constitution (UK Budget Abatement)

**Mr. Spring:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer under what procedure in Article I-53(4) of the draft Constitution for Europe the UK budget abatement would be determined. [157100]

**Ruth Kelly:** Article I-53(4) of the draft Constitution covers the modalities of the Own Resources system that determines how the European Union budget is to be financed. The draft text provides for any new Own Resources Decision to be determined by qualified majority voting in the Council and consent of the European Parliament. The Government made clear in the White Paper on the Constitutional Treaty [Cm 5934] that it will insist on preserving arrangements which ensure that revenues remain a matter for member states, and decisions on them subject to unanimity and national ratification.

### Excise Revenue

**Mr. Chope:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the yield in excise revenue from ready-to-drink products was in *(a)* 2001–02 and *(b)* 2002–03; and what the estimated yield is for (i) 2003–04 and (ii) 2004–05. [157602]

**John Healey:** Excise revenue from wine-based ready-to-drink products can be found in the HM Customs and Excise Annual Report and Accounts 2002–03 (HC52), and is shown in the following table.

*Excise revenue from wine based ready-to-drink (RTD) products*

*£ million*

| | *Wine-based RTDs* | *Spirits-based RTDs* |
|---|---|---|
| 2001–02 | 236 | |
| 2002–03 | 67 | not available |

Until 27 April 2002 duty was levied on ready-to-drink products at the 'made wine coolers' rate. Since 28 April 2002 most ready-to-drink products have been taxed at the spirits (per litre of alcohol) rate. Revenue data are not separately available and are incorporated within the total for 'other spirits'. Information on the estimated yield for 2003–04 and 2004–05 ready-to-drink products is not available. The estimated yield for ready-to-drink products is incorporated in forecasts for wine and spirits that are published annually in the pre-Budget Report and the Financial Statement and Budget Report.

### International Finance Facility

**Tony Baldry:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the countries which have indicated support for the International Finance Facility; and which of these countries he expects to attend the Paris Conference in April. [157561]

**Stephen Hesford:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent discussions he has had with international finance ministers on the International Finance Facility. [158128]

**John Healey:** At the Dubai Annual Meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in September 2003, the International Finance Facility (IFF) proposal received wide support from the international community. The World Bank and IMF were mandated to work on aid effectiveness, aid absorption and financing mechanisms including the IFF, and to report back at the Spring and Annual meetings this year.

At the meeting of G7 Finance Ministers at Boca Raton, Florida last month, Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to help countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals through work on aid effectiveness, aid absorption and financing mechanisms including the International Finance Facility (IFF). This meeting built on the Annual Meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Dubai in September 2003, where the World Bank and the IMF were mandated to do work on the IFF proposal, and to report back at the Spring and Annual meetings this year. In the same month the Commonwealth Finance Ministers welcomed further work on the IFF initiative.

The Dubai meetings also called for consultation of emerging markets and developing countries on the IFF proposal. As part of this consultation process, Francis Mer, the French Finance Minister, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer will jointly host a Ministerial Conference on Financing for Development in Paris on 8 April. This conference will bring together Finance and International Development Ministers from over 60 emerging market, developing and donor countries to discuss the case for increased aid and the IFF. Invitations have been issued to members of OECD/DAC, the G20, the IMF Committee and World Bank Development Committee, as well as countries acceding to the ED and representatives from Africa and the Asia-Europe meeting (ASEM). Representatives from multilateral agencies, NGOs and academics have also been invited.

Discussion of the IFF proposal will continue at the Spring Meetings of the World Bank and the IMF, where the Chancellor will chair the IMF Committee.

### Large Business Office

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1556W on the Large Business Office, when *(a)* Sir Nicholas Montagu KCB, *(b)* Mr. David Hartnett CB, *(c)* Mr. Steve Heminsley and *(d)* Mr. John Yard were informed of the audit performed by the Inland Revenue's internal auditors upon the accuracy of the reported compliance data of the Large Business Office for 2001–02. [156616]

**Dawn Primarolo:** The normal procedures for informing IR senior management of issues were followed.

The Deputy Chairman responsible for the Large Business Office was informed at the commissioning of the audit in April 2002. She was advised over progress in her monthly meetings with the Director and in the relevant quarterly narratives made by the Director during 2002.

### Liquefied Petroleum Gas

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the grounds were for changing his policy on the level of support for liquefied petroleum gas; and if he will make a statement; [157165]

(2) what taxation policies he plans to bridge the time gap between the current subsidy of green road fuels and future development of compressed natural gas and hydrogen; [157166]

(3) what policies he is considering to address fuel poverty *(a)* in remote and rural areas and *(b)* for disabled drivers who use liquefied petroleum gas; [157167]

(4) if he will make it his policy to compensate people who have converted their vehicles to run on liquefied petroleum gas for the removal of taxation support for liquefied petroleum gas. [157451]

**John Healey:** In the last pre-Budget report (Cm6042) the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced an Alternative Fuels Framework, which sets out the rationale for Government support for alternative fuels, and places environmental benefits at its core. In recognition of the importance to investors of providing

long-term certainty in the market, the framework includes an unprecedented commitment to a three-year rolling guarantee on the fuel duty differentials for all alternative fuels.

The UK offers the biggest duty incentive for road fuel gases, including liquefied petroleum gas, in Europe. This incentive cost the Exchequer £75 million in duty forgone in 2002–03 alone. The Government also give valuable support to this sector through grants for vehicle conversions (the Powershift scheme), reduced rates of vehicle excise duty for gas powered vehicles, and company car tax reliefs.

Fuel duty rates are being considered as part of the Budget process, taking account of all relevant economic, social and environmental factors including the likely impacts on different population groups.

### Lung Cancer

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the five year survival rate for lung cancer was *(a)* in each year between 1993 and 1996 and *(b)* in the most recent period for which figures are available. [156380]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Mrs. Iris Robinson, dated 1 March 2004:*

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning five years survival rate for lung cancer *(a)* in each year between 1993 and 1996 and *(b)* in the most recent period for which figures are available. (156380)

Figures for the UK as a whole are not available. Figures are available for each of the component countries of the UK, but these are not directly comparable because of differences in coverage and other reasons.

The latest available lung cancer survival figures for adult patients in England and Wales, diagnosed during 1991–99 and followed up to 31 December 2001, are given in the table below. Survival figures are not published by single year of diagnosis.

*Five-year age-standardised relative survival rates (percentage) for adult patients (aged 15 to 99 years) diagnosed with lung cancer during 1991–95 and 1996–99, England and Wales*

| | *1991–95* | | *1996–99*[1] | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Number of patients*[2] | *Survival (percentage)* | *Number of patients*[2] | *Survival (percentage)* |
| Men | 95,903 | 5.2 | 67,862 | 5.8 |
| Women | 48,151 | 5.4 | 39,455 | 6.4 |

[1] Five years' potential follow-up was only available for those diagnosed in 1996, but the most up-to-date estimates for shorter-term survival probabilities were used for patients diagnosed in later years (complete analysis).

[2] Eligible patients included in the survival analysis; criteria for excluding records, for example where the registration is of a second (different) primary cancer, are given in Health Statistics Quarterly 2000; 6: 71–80. http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_health/HSQ6Book.pdf

*Source:*
Office for National Statistics.

Figures for Northern Ireland are published in 'Fitzpatrick DA, Gavin AT. Survival of Cancer Patients in Northern Ireland 1993–1996. Belfast: Northern Ireland Cancer Registry, 2001' and are available on the Northern Ireland Cancer Registry website: http://www.qub.ac.uk/nicr/intro.htm

### N2 + 2 Consultation Document

**Mr. Tyrie:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he intends to publish his consultative document on N2 + 2. [157398]

**Ruth Kelly:** My written statement to Parliament of 4 November 2003 on the two year review of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 said that the Treasury would consult publicly on proposals for legislative change. We have issued two public consultation documents: on 26 January 2004 "Informal capital raising and high net worth and sophisticated investors: a consultation document on proposed changes to the Financial Promotion Order", and on 27 February 2004 "Financial Services and Markets Act two year review: changes to secondary legislation".

### Office for National Statistics

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the buildings owned by the Office for National Statistics, broken down by *(a)* purpose and *(b)* value; and if he will make a statement. [156762]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Mr. David Laws, dated 1 March 2004:*

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning the buildings owned by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), broken down by *(a)* purpose and *(b)* value.

The value and purpose of Office for National Statistics (ONS) buildings are as follows:

*£ million*

| *Site* | *Purpose* | *Building value* | *Land value* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Southport, Merseyside | Office | 3.166 | 1.071 |
| Christchurch, Dorset | Store | 1.323 | 0.811 |
| Titchfield, Hampshire | Office | 5.658 | 1.946 |
| Newport, South Wales | Office | 7.408 | 3.268 |

*Note:*
These building were valued in 2000 by GVA Grimly, a firm providing estates and valuation services, in accordance with established professional standards. These valuations are adjusted annually using Treasury indices, and are shown for the Financial Year 2002–04.

Data for the buildings occupied in London by ONS at Drummond Gate and Bessborough Tower, Pimlico and the Family Records Centre, Islington are not included in this table as they are leased, and not owned by the ONS.

Refurbishment works carried out by ONS on its leased properties in Pimlico were capitalised, and their written-down value at 31 March 2003 was £22.946 million. The value of these works is not shown in the above table, but was included in an estimate of the total value of ONS buildings given in answers to a previous Written Question on this subject (*Official Report*, 22 January 2003, column 417W).

The General Register Office (GRO) is part of ONS, and is responsible for the registration of births, marriages and deaths in England and Wales. It operates from the ONS sites in Southport, Merseyside and Islington, London.

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his estimate is of spending on the Office for National Statistics for each year from 1997–98 to 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [156763]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. David Laws, dated 1 March 2004:*

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning spending on the Office for National Statistics for each year from 1997–98 to 2005–06. I am replying in his absence.

The requested information is shown in the attached table. The figures shown include expenditure on the General Register Office, part of the Office for National Statistics, which is responsible for administering the system for registering births, marriages and deaths in England and Wales.

*Expenditure on the Office for National Statistics, 1997–98 to 2005–06*

| *Financial year* | *Expenditure (£ million)* |
|---|---|
| 1997–98 | 97.8 |
| 1998–99 | 101.6 |
| 1999–2000 | 108.4 |
| 2000–01 | 154.7 |
| 2001–02 | 209.9 |
| 2002–03 | 147.5 |
| 2003–04[1] | 155.0 |
| 2004–05[1] | 177.0 |
| 2005–06[1] | 191.0 |

[1] Figures for 2003–04 onwards are for planned expenditure, as published in Table 1 of the ONS Spring 2003 Departmental Report (Cm 5931)

*Notes:*

1. Expenditure is calculated as the total of the net resource budget and the capital budget.
2. Figures from 1998–99 to 2002–03 include additional provision for planning, fieldwork and initial processing of the 2001 Census of Population in England and Wales. The period of peak expenditure on the Census occurred between 2000 and 2002.
3. Figures from 2003–04 onwards include additional provision from the government Spending Review settlement of 2002, for ONS to invest in a programme of modernisation to enhance our systems and processes. A total of £75 million has been provided for this purpose over the three years from 2003–04.

### Primates

**Mark Tami:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many primates were imported illegally and seized by customs in each of the last five years. [156552]

**John Healey:** The table lists seizures of live primates for the calendar years 1998–2002, the last five complete years for which figures are available.

| | *Number seized* |
|---|---|
| 1998 | 1 |
| 1999 | 12 |
| 2000 | 3 |
| 2001 | 0 |
| 2002 | 0 |

### Private Finance Initiative

**Mr. Jon Owen Jones:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the *(a)* value and *(b)* number of all Private Finance Initiative and Public Private Partnership projects for which contracts have been signed is in (i) each of the regions of England, (ii) Scotland, (iii) Northern Ireland and (iv) Wales. [156964]

**Mr. Boateng:** A full list of PFI projects signed up to July 2003 is available from the PFI statistics section of the HM Treasury website at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/documents/public_private_partnerships/ppp_pfi_stats.cfm.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* public finance initiative and *(b)* public private partnership projects have been rejected in each of the last three years, broken down by *(c)* value and *(d)* project type. [157694]

**Mr. Boateng:** Information on potential PFI and PPP projects that have been rejected by public bodies is not held centrally. Information on the value and type of PFI and PPP projects rejected by public bodies in each of the last three years could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

### Profitability

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many businesses are sampled to calculate figures for The Profitability of UK Companies; and what proportion of these have a turnover of *(a)* less than £1 million, *(b)* £1–20 million, *(c)* £20–50 million, *(d)* £50–100 million and *(e)* more than £100 million. [157219]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Stephen O'Brien, dated 1 March 2004:*

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question on how many businesses are sampled to calculate figures for The Profitability of UK Companies; and what proportion of these have a turnover of: *(a)* less than £1 million; *(b)* £1–20 million; *(c)* £20–50 million; *(d)* £50–100 million and *(e)* more than £100 million. I am replying in his absence. (157219)

The data published in the First Release 'Profitability of UK Companies' is from annual benchmark data based on tax returns provided by the Inland Revenue two years in arrears. Growth rates derived from the Quarterly Profit Inquiry are then applied to this data with the results reported in the above release.

The number of companies sampled for the Quarterly Profits Inquiry for the fourth quarter of 2003 was 1,607. Of these for the year 2002:

5.8 per cent. had a turnover of less than £1 million;

35.5 per cent. had a turnover of between £1 million and £19,999,999;

11.3 per cent. had a turnover of between £20 million and £49,999,999;

8.9 per cent. had a turnover of between £50 million and £99,999,999;

38.5 per cent. had a turnover of over £100 million.

The sample selection for the Quarterly Profit Inquiry is based on number of employees and normally consists of between sixteen hundred and seventeen hundred companies. Respondents are not asked to supply data on turnover for the Quarterly Profits Inquiry but information on this can be obtained from the Inter Departmental Business Register.

### Rebated Fuel Use Fraud

**Adam Price:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the estimated cost was to the Treasury of fraudulent rebated fuel use in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002 and *(c)* 2003. [156997]

**John Healey:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Hancock) on 13 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 635W.

### Retirement Age

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the cost savings to public funds from increasing the normal retirement age to 65 for all recipients of public sector pensions; and if he will make a statement. [156578]

**Mr. Boateng:** It is too early to provide an estimate of the overall effects of work to review and modernise the benefit structure of public service pension schemes, of which the pension age is one strand.

### Small/Medium Sized Businesses

**Mrs. Humble:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of those in employment work in small and medium sized businesses. [157502]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Mrs. Joan Humble, dated 1 March 2004:*

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning what percentage of those in employment work in small and medium sized businesses. (157502)

The latest available information is published in the National Statistics bulletin "Small and Medium Enterprise Statistics in the UK for 2002" which shows that 47.6% of those in employment work in small and medium businesses. A small business is one with fewer than 50 employees and a medium business has 50–249 employees.

The bulletin is available free of change on the following website: http://www.sbs.gov.uk/content/statistics/tablessmestats.pdf

### Stamp Duty

**Mr. Redwood:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost to public funds would be of abolishing stamp duty on share transactions. [157574]

**Ruth Kelly:** The 2003 pre-Budget forecast of revenue from duty on transactions in shares, and hence the direct yield cost of abolition, is £3.3 billion for 2004–05. This estimate makes no allowance for the effect on other taxes arising from the wider impact abolition may have on the economy.

### Tax Credits

**Mr. Webb:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the letter of 2 December 2003 from the Paymaster General to the hon. Member for Northavon, on tax credits compensation, if he will list the *(a)* compensation claims submitted and *(b)* compensation payments made. [147990]

**Dawn Primarolo:** At 27 February, approximately 7,200 claims for compensation had been upheld. This represents about one twelfth of a per cent. of all claims received for tax credit awards. Approximately 255 claims had been considered and not upheld by that date.

### Whisky Industry

**John Thurso:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what meetings he had with representatives of the Scottish whisky industry in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002, *(c)* 2003 and *(d)* 2004; and what plans he has to meet them in the future. [156770]

**John Healey:** Treasury Ministers meet a wide range of organisations, companies and individuals, including representatives of the Scottish whisky industry, as part of the process of policy development and analysis. As with previous Administrations, it is not the Government's practice to provide details of all such meetings. All such contacts are conducted in accordance with the Ministerial Code.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### Age Discrimination

**Linda Perham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he plans to take to reduce age discrimination in the workplace in the next two years. [156080]

**Malcolm Wicks:** The Government are committed to tackling age discrimination in employment, extending opportunities for older workers and to introducing age discrimination legislation in 2006. The Government are assessing the responses to the consultation last year on proposals for the age legislation and will consult from this spring on draft age regulations covering employment and vocational training. The legislation will be in place, but not implemented, by the end of 2004, to give employers and individuals about two years to prepare before the legislation comes into force on 1 October 2006. Over the coming year, we will prepare further practical guidance for employers on adopting age positive practices and flexible approaches to retirement.

In the meantime our Age Positive campaign is encouraging employers to adopt non-ageist employment practices now. Through Age Positive, we are promoting the business benefits of an age diverse workforce by encouraging employers to adopt the voluntary Code of Practice: 'Age' Diversity at Work, A Practical Guide For Business, which was first developed in 1998 and updated in 2002. Over 750,000 copies of the Age Positive Code have been issued to employers and individuals and it is available on the Age Positive website www.agepositive.gov.uk, which has 75,000 visits per month.

The Age Positive campaign is widely promoted to employers and individuals through advertising, the website and press features in national, local and specialist publications and at exhibitions and workshops for employers. Age Positive awards help to further publicise the achievements of businesses and individuals who conquer age prejudice.

Age Positive also works closely with organisations such the Federation of Small Businesses, Employers Forum on Age, Institute of Directors, TUC, CBI and Age Concern.

### Department Branding

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much his Department and its predecessors spent on branding the Department between 1997–98 and 2003–04, broken down by *(a)* consultancy fees, *(b)* design and orders for new stationery, *(c)* website design and *(d)* other material featuring new logos. [154074]

**Maria Eagle:** Between the years 1997–98 and 2003–04, the predominant expenditure was the introduction of the new Department for Work and Pensions brand in 2001. The cost relating to this has been:

(a) consultancy: £244,792

(b) design of new stationery: £10,369[1]

(c) costs of generating web elements: £52,643

(d) other items featuring the new logo (such as the design of signage) was: £11,663[2]

[1] The new brand was added to most other items, such as forms and stationery, during their normal updating process with existing stocks used up prior to issue.

[2] Signage changes for offices were made in accordance with the expectations of a machinery of government change.

### Pension Funds

**Mr. Miller:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) if he will list the pension funds that have been wound-up leaving inadequate resources to cover pension liabilities since Royal Assent to the Pensions Act 1996; [157839]

(2) which pension fund for which he has records was the first to go into wind-up with inadequate funds to meet its liabilities. [157840]

**Malcolm Wicks:** We are unable to provide this information. The only source of information on winding up schemes is the Pensions Schemes Registry which is administered by the Occupational Pension Schemes Regulatory Authority (OPRA). The information on windups on this database is limited and does not contain data on schemes assets and liabilities.

### Poverty

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many children in each London borough were reported to be living in poverty in each year since 1995. [157280]

**Mr. Pond:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for City of York (Hugh Bayley) on 8 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 462W.

## HEALTH

### Allergy

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health which NHS hospitals have special allergy units to deal with more severe cases of allergy. [156247]

**Dr. Ladyman:** The British Society for Allergy and Clinical Immunology (BSACI) and the British Allergy Foundation (BAF) compiled a list of National Health Service allergy clinics in 2000 which are NHS consultant-led and based at NHS hospitals throughout the United Kingdom. The subsequent BSACI handbook, "National Health Service Allergy Clinics", published in 2001, lists 86 such clinics. There were an additional 15 clinics run by NHS consultants, who were non BSACI members, identified by the BAF.

Six of these 101 clinics offer services led by a whole-time specialist allergist. These are based in London (Guy's hospital, Royal Brompton hospital and St. Mary's hospital), Cambridge, Southampton and Leicester. These centres have expertise in all types of allergic disease, including the complex problems, and provide a comprehensive high-quality allergy service with a multidisciplinary approach.

### Asbestos (Drinking Water)

**Mr. Ben Chapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the health impact of asbestos in drinking water. [155787]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality published in 1993 by the World Health Organization (the WHO Guidelines) concluded that:

> "There is . . . no consistent evidence that ingested asbestos is hazardous to health and thus it was concluded that there was no need to establish a health-based guideline value for asbestos in drinking-water."

Asbestos released from drinking-water to air does not appear to contribute significantly to exposure to inhaled asbestos, and the WHO Guidelines noted that the fibres which are released are of a form which is considered to pose little health risk.

### Benzodiazepines

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what quantity of each *(a)* benzodiazepine and *(b)* antidepressant was prescribed by doctors in England in each of the last five years. [155156]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Information on the number of prescription items of benzodiazepines and antidepressants that were dispensed in the community in England since 1998 has been placed in the Library.

**Mr. Grogan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on his policy on the prescription of benzodiazepines. [155788]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Decisions about prescribing are the responsibility of the doctor, taking account of the patient's symptoms, the evidence base and national guidance.

Guidance based on the advice issued by the Committee on Safety of Medicines in 1988 has been made available to all health authorities in the "Guidelines for the Prevention and Treatment of Benzodiazepine Dependence" (Mental Health Foundation, 1994). Further guidance for prescribers is incorporated in the "Drug Misuse and Dependence—Guidelines on Clinical Management" (1999) and the "British National Formulary" (biannual).

The Department is planning to introduce instalment dispensing of benzodiazepines to minimise access to excessive doses.

### Cosmetic Surgery

**Mr. Yeo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans his Department has to conduct a review of cosmetic surgery practice across England. [152572]

**Dr. John Reid:** Ministers announced in early 2002 that there would be a review of the effectiveness of the national minimum standards for the qualifications of cosmetic surgeons in England who were not on the specialist register of the General Medical Council and had been in practice before 1 April 2002.

In July 2003 the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) submitted to the Chief Medical Officer an anonymised report on the inspections of 22 small cosmetic surgery practices in Inner London, and is in the process of preparing a more comprehensive report on all inspections carried out of cosmetic surgery practices in England. On receipt of this report the Department will consider, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, whether the standards are robust enough to ensure the quality of treatment.

The London report can be found on the NCSC website at www.carestandards.org.uk.

### Dementia

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of dementia sufferers were diagnosed before the age of 65. [156378]

**Dr. Ladyman:** There is no routine collection of information on the numbers of people diagnosed with dementia. The research quoted by the older people's national service framework in 2001 estimated that approximately 600,000 people in the United Kingdom have dementia, of whom there are about 17,000 people under the age of 65.

### Dentists

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will collect information on the proportion of newly qualified dentists who go into *(a)* NHS and *(b)* private practice after training. [152440]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Newly qualified dentists intending to work in National Health Service general dental practice have first to undergo one year's vocational training. The great majority of dentists wish to take advantage of vocational training to enhance their clinical and administrative competence. Of the remainder, some dentists take posts in hospital dental departments, some decide to postpone or abandon a career in dentistry and others go directly into dental practices which only accept private patients. We monitor the proportion of newly qualified dentists who do not undertake vocational training.

### Departmental Buildings

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the buildings owned by his Department; what the latest estimated value of each building is; and if he will make a statement. [156700]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The estimated current value of the Department's administrative estate is approximately £65 million. The estate comprises the following freehold properties as shown in the table.

*£ million*

| *Building* | *Valuation* | |
|---|---|---|
| | *Land* | *Buildings* |
| 85 Whitehall | 0.99 | 1.75 |
| 79 Whitehall | 14.47 | 25.21 |
| Wellington House, London | 7.23 | 15.10 |
| Premier Mill, Nelson | 0.00 | 0.05 |
| Total | 22.69 | 42.11 |

### Glenfield Hospital

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many in-patient beds have been available in England for patients with *(a)* mental health conditions and *(b)* learning disabilities in each year since 1997, broken down by (i) NHS region and (ii) strategic health authority. [154006]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The number of in-patient beds for patients with mental health conditions or with a learning disability are collected annually from each national health service trust and published at http://www.performance.doh.gov.uk/hospitalactivity/. Prior to 2000–01 this information was also published in "Bed Availability and Occupancy", copies of which are available in the Library.

Aggregations are included relevant to the NHS organisational structures in place at the time. It is not possible to aggregate these statistics to organisational structures that did not exist at the time. For the period 1997–98 to 2001–02 figures for available beds in the mental health and learning disabilities sectors for each NHS region are shown in table 1 and table 2. For 2002–03 figures for each strategic health authority are shown in table 3.

*Table 1: Average daily number of available beds, mental health sector, 1997–98 to 2001–02*

| | *England* | *Northern and Yorkshire* | *Trent* | *West Midland* | *North West* | *Eastern* | *London* | *South East* | *South West* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1997–98 | 36,601 | 5,222 | 3,780 | 3,243 | 5,030 | 3,460 | 7,300 | 5,160 | 3,406 |
| 1998–99 | 35,692 | 5,120 | 3,697 | 3,216 | 4,748 | 3,510 | 7,008 | 5,014 | 3,378 |
| 1999–2000 | 34,173 | 4,985 | 3,592 | 3,181 | 4,636 | 3,461 | 6,155 | 4,938 | 3,225 |
| 2000–01 | 34,214 | 4,887 | 3,754 | 3,191 | 4,499 | 3,471 | 6,401 | 4,849 | 3,163 |
| 2001–02 | 32,783 | 4,805 | 3,561 | 3,066 | 4,565 | 3,457 | 6,149 | 4,218 | 2,962 |

*Source:*

Department of Health form KH03

*Status:*

Published data

*Table 2: Average daily number of available beds, learning disability sector, 1997–98 to 2001–02*

| | England | Northern and Yorkshire | Trent | West Midland | North West | Eastern | London | South East | South West |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1997–98 | 8,197 | 1,419 | 676 | 987 | 644 | 1,375 | 569 | 1,527 | 1,000 |
| 1998–99 | 7,491 | 1,306 | 666 | 901 | 572 | 1,264 | 554 | 1,415 | 813 |
| 1999–00 | 6,834 | 1,228 | 653 | 641 | 492 | 1,175 | 554 | 1,385 | 707 |
| 2000–01 | 6,316 | 1,207 | 730 | 718 | 414 | 974 | 488 | 1,207 | 578 |
| 2001–02 | 5,694 | 1,180 | 692 | 674 | 402 | 794 | 461 | 1,144 | 347 |

*Source:*
Department of Health form KH03
*Status:*
Published data

*Table 3: Average daily number of available beds, Strategic Health Authorities in England, 2002–03*

| | Org. ID | Name | Mental illness | Learning disability |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2002–03 | | | 32,753 | 5,038 |
| 2002–03 | Q01 | Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire HA | 1,433 | 350 |
| 2002–03 | Q02 | Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire HA | 982 | 166 |
| 2002–03 | Q03 | Essex HA | 998 | 242 |
| 2002–03 | Q04 | North West London HA | 1,624 | 20 |
| 2002–03 | Q05 | North Central London HA | 1,180 | 28 |
| 2002–03 | Q06 | North East London HA | 1,285 | 87 |
| 2002–03 | Q07 | South East London HA | 1,385 | 23 |
| 2002–03 | Q08 | South West London HA | 846 | 0 |
| 2002–03 | Q09 | Northumberland, Tyne and Wear HA | 1,421 | 437 |
| 2002–03 | Q10 | County Durham and Tees Valley HA | 951 | 234 |
| 2002–03 | Q11 | North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire HA | 676 | 130 |
| 2002–03 | Q12 | West Yorkshire HA | 1,535 | 263 |
| 2002 | Q13 | Cumbria and Lancashire HA | 1,444 | 255 |
| 2002 | Q14 | Greater Manchester HA | 1,644 | 17 |
| 2002–03 | Q15 | Cheshire and Merseyside HA | 1,482 | 113 |
| 2002–03 | Q16 | Thames Valley HA | 1,061 | 98 |
| 2002–03 | Q17 | Hampshire and Isle of Wight HA | 894 | 164 |
| 2002–03 | Q18 | Kent and Medway HA | 758 | 95 |
| 2002–03 | Q19 | Surrey and Sussex HA | 1,630 | 537 |
| 2002–03 | Q20 | Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire HA | 1,448 | 93 |
| 2002–03 | Q21 | South West Peninsula HA | 558 | 59 |
| 2002–03 | Q22 | Somerset and Dorset HA | 800 | 225 |
| 2002–03 | Q23 | South Yorkshire HA | 981 | 133 |
| 2002–03 | Q24 | Trent HA | 1,743 | 281 |
| 2002–03 | Q25 | Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland HA | 1,002 | 428 |
| 2002–03 | Q26 | Shropshire and Staffordshire HA | 828 | 106 |
| 2002–03 | Q27 | Birmingham and the Black Country HA | 1,446 | 255 |
| 2002–03 | Q28 | Coventry, Warwickshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire HA | 717 | 198 |

*Source:*
Department of Health form KH03
*Status:*
Published

### Flexible Working (Costs)

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment has been made of the cost to NHS trusts of changes to *(a)* maternity leave, *(b)* paid paternity and adoption leave and *(c)* the right of parents of young children to apply to work flexibly which took effect in April 2003. [156061]

**Mr. Hutton** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]:* This information is not held centrally.

### Group B Streptococcus

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to ensure that the Green Top Guidelines, from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists *(a)* reach all parts of maternity care services and *(b)* will be used to inform each hospital's protocol for preventing group B streptococcus infection in newborn babies; what resources have been allocated to dissemination and education; and if he will make a statement. [156557]

**Dr. Ladyman:** The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) published its clinical guidelines on the Prevention of Early Onset Neonatal Group B Streptococcal Disease in November 2003. The RCOG clinical guidelines are recommendations for good practice and exist to help patients and their healthcare team make the right decisions about health care. The guidelines are developed by teams of healthcare professionals, patients and scientists who look at the best evidence about care for a particular condition.

The Government supports the publication of the guidelines as they will inform local protocol and assist clinicians and patients in making decisions about the appropriate treatment for preventing group B streptococcus infection in newborn babies.

Resources for dissemination and education are not provided centrally.

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures he uses to ensure that high quality information about group B streptococcus is given to all pregnant women as a routine part of their antenatal care. [156558]

**Dr. Ladyman:** "The Pregnancy Book", which is given to all first time mothers in the antenatal period is currently being revised to include information about group B streptococcus and contact details of the Group B Strep Support Group.

We also encourage all women who have any questions or concerns during their pregnancy to speak with their midwife or other health care professionals responsible for their care.

### Health Ombudsman's Report (Long-term Care)

**Mr. Burns:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when he expects all the cases of people suspected of wrongly paying for their long-term care following the Health Ombudsman's report on the subject will be *(a)* reviewed and *(b)* resolved; and if he will make a statement; [156337]

(2) how many cases have been reviewed so far following the Health Ombudsman's report suggesting that a number of elderly and disabled people may have wrongly paid for their long-term care; of these, how many wrong assessments have been discovered; what action *(a)* has been and *(b)* is to be taken to rectify the wrong assessment cases; and if he will make a statement; [156338]

(3) what deadlines have been set for the review of long-term care following the Health Ombudsman's report suggesting that a number of elderly and disabled people may have wrongly paid for their long-term care; and if he will make a statement on the progress of the review. [156339]

**Dr. Ladyman:** The deadline for the completion of investigations into care wrongly denied is the end of March 2004. Strategic health authorities are expected to have completed their investigations by then. Figures detailing the number of investigations completed and the number of cases granted recompense will be available after the deadline, once the data has been validated.

### Hospital Readmissions

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the level of readmission to hospital following discharge was for each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [157163]

**Dr. Ladyman:** Readmission rates for the last three years, using the indicator definition for the 2003 performance ratings, are shown in the table. Earlier information is not available.

*Readmission rates in Acute Trusts, England 2000–02: Emergency readmission to hospital following discharge (adults aged 16 or over)*

| | *Readmission rate (standardised percentage)* |
|---|---|
| 2000 | 5.38 |
| 2001 | 5.49 |
| 2002 | 5.53 |

### Lupus

**Sarah Teather:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the number of people in England who have lupus (SLE). [156105]

**Dr. Ladyman:** This information is not held centrally. However, Lupus UK estimates there may be around 40,000 people with lupus in the United Kingdom.

### Malcolm Pointon

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 10 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1410W, on free personal care, what the basis is for the statement that the impact of the Health Service Ombudsman decision in the case of Malcolm Pointon is included in the estimates of the cost of free personal care which were calculated in advance of the Ombudsman's decision. [156693]

**Dr. Ladyman:** The answer of 10 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1410W, stated that the decision in the case of Malcolm Pointon is a decision on an individual case and as such has no bearing on national estimates of the cost of free personal care. Therefore, there would be no impact on the estimated costs.

### Mental Health

**Mr. Denham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many carers of people with mental illness have received *(a)* a written assessment and *(b)* a written copy of the care plan of the person they care for, broken down by mental health trust; [154825]

(2) what steps he has taken to *(a)* publicise the rights of mental health carers to an assessment of their own needs and *(b)* inform local carers' groups of the allocation of the carers grant; and if he will make a statement. [154826]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The national service framework (NSF) for mental health provides rationale and evidence base for a national standard for mental health services relating to carers of people with mental health problems.

In accordance with the NSF for mental health standard six, all individuals who provide regular and substantial care for a person on the care programme approach should have an assessment of their caring, physical and mental health needs repeated on at least an annual basis. People who provide regular and substantial care for a person on the care programme approach are also entitled to have their own written care plan which is given to them and implemented in discussion with them.

The importance of support for carers was further emphasised in the "NHS Plan (2000)" and in the "Priorities and Planning Framework 2003–06" issued to local services.

Information about the number of carers with a written assessment and the number of carers with a copy of the care plan of the person they care for is not collected centrally.

The care co-ordinator under the care programme approach should inform users and carers of the carer's right to request an assessment and ensure co-ordination of users' and carers' assessment plans. The Department and the mental health charity Rethink also published a booklet entitled "A Commitment to Carers" which highlights the right to a carer's assessment.

Local councils are notified annually of their allocations of the carers grant in the local authority social services letter. Details are also published on the Department of Health carers website at www.carers.gov.uk.

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether staff working in mental institutions in NHS hospitals *(a)* complete diversity training before they start their employment and *(b)* undergo regular diversity training. [155602]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 makes it clear that local services must deliver appropriate training to staff. We reinforce this message in our consultation document "Delivering Race Equality: A Framework for Action."

The National Institute of Mental Health in England's national workforce programme is developing a set of shared capabilities that all staff should possess as part of their education and training. One of these is to respect diversity and to provide care and interventions in ways that respect and value diversities including age, race, culture, disability, spirituality, gender and sexuality.

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance has been issued by his Department to mental health trusts regarding control and restraint policies towards patients; and which mental health trusts have adopted these new procedures. [155629]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** To assist trusts, in February 2004, the National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE) issued "Developing Positive Practice to Support the Safe and Therapeutic Management of Aggression and Violence in Mental Health In-patient Settings".

The NIMHE will be developing proposals for a national accreditation and regulation scheme for trainers and programmes of education and training.

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence will also be publishing guidance later this year relating to management of violence.

For those detained under section of the Mental Health Act 1983, trusts should follow the guidance laid out in the Mental Health Act 1983 Code of Practice.

Section 19.12 of the Code of Practice states that:

"Any restraint used should:

be reasonable in the circumstance;

apply the minimum force necessary to prevent harm to the patient or others;

be used for only as long as is necessary;

be sensitive to gender and race issues."

Trusts should regularly audit their control and restraint procedures consistent with the framework of clinical governance. The management of trust performance is the responsibility of strategic health authorities. Information is not captured centrally about this. However, the Mental Health Act Commission reviews the operations of the Mental Health Act and copies of the commission's biennial report are available from the Stationery Office.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans his Department has to reorganise mental health trusts; and if he will make a statement. [154444]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The Department has no plans to reorganise mental health trusts.

### Organ Donors

**Mr. Carmichael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate the Government have made of the proportion of people who *(a)* carried organ donor cards and *(b)* were on the organ donor register in each of the last five years. [156619]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** A public attitude research study, commissioned in 2003 by UK Transplant, found that 36 per cent., of people had, or thought they had, an organ donor card. The research was limited to England.

Not all donor card holders register on the National Health Service organ donor register. Of the total United Kingdom population, the proportion registered at year end over the last five years is as shown in the table.

| *Year end* | *Percentage of population* |
|---|---|
| 1999 | 11.9 |
| 2000 | 14.0 |
| 2001 | 15.3 |
| 2002 | 17.1 |
| 2003 | 18.6 |

### Personal Care Costs

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the administration costs to *(a)* primary care trusts and *(b)* local authorities were of operating systems for (A) establishing eligibility for free nursing care and (B) means testing for personal care in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will estimate what savings could be made in these costs if personal care was made free for the elderly. [156290]

**Dr. Ladyman:** This information is not available centrally. Administrative cost savings resulting from the introduction of a system of free personal care for the elderly would be marginal, as primary care trusts and local councils would still need to assess the needs of

individuals and make payments to care providers. Where accommodation is provided, residents of care homes would still require a test of their means.

### Restructuring/Change Programme

**Mr. David Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the current resources allocations are for *(a)* social care, *(b)* preventive health and education and *(c)* public health; and how they will change as a result of the departmental reorganisation. [153685]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Before the departmental reorganisation, there were 652 whole-time equivalent (WTE) staff working in the social care field (including children, older people, mental health and prison health services) within the Department. Post re-organisation, there will be 140 WTE staff representing the target number of posts planned for the new care services directorate within the Department. The figure also takes into account work transferring to other Government departments or agencies and an expected reduction of 94 WTE posts.

The departmental reorganisation will see 418 WTE posts associated with social care transfer to the National Health Service, the National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE), the Department for Constitutional Affairs (in respect to the Mental Health Tribunal and the Care Standards Tribunal), the Commission for Social Care Inspection and the Department for Education and Skills (in respect to services for children).

Before the departmental reorganisation, there were 314 WTE staff working in the public health field (including preventative health and education services) within the Department. Post re-organisation, there will be 250 WTE staff, who will work both within the newly created health improvement directorate in the Department and in public health posts planned in each of the nine regional public health areas. The post re-organisation staffing figure already takes into account the planned transfer of nine WTE posts to the Department for Education and Skills (in respect to teenage pregnancy services), and an expected reduction of 64 WTE posts.

### Sexual Health

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many teenagers were treated for sexually transmitted diseases in England in each of the last 10 years, broken down by *(a)* NHS region and *(b)* strategic health authority. [154144]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The number of teenagers treated for sexually transmitted diseases in genitourinary medicine (GUM) clinics in England from 1995 to 2002 inclusive, by National Health Service region and strategic health authority are shown in the table.

Data refer to attenders at genitourinary medicine clinics aged less than 20 years with one or more of the following diagnoses: infectious syphilis, uncomplicated gonorrhoea, uncomplicated chlamydial infection, genital herpes (first attack) and genital warts (first attack).

| | *1995* | *1996* | *1997* | *1998* | *1999* | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Strategic health authority* | | | | | | | | |
| Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire | 175 | 188 | 214 | 215 | 233 | 243 | 245 | 236 |
| Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire | 143 | 139 | 164 | 170 | 169 | 186 | 179 | 181 |
| Birmingham and the Black Country | 211 | 217 | 211 | 203 | 216 | 201 | 255 | 248 |
| Cheshire and Merseyside | 202 | 229 | 248 | 261 | 281 | 280 | 290 | 288 |
| County Durham and Tees Valley | 114 | 122 | 136 | 148 | 158 | 172 | 160 | 165 |
| Coventry, Warwickshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire | 175 | 172 | 182 | 186 | 192 | 198 | 226 | 190 |
| Cumbria and Lancashire | 213 | 205 | 229 | 217 | 267 | 239 | 258 | 290 |
| Dorset and Somerset | 104 | 102 | 110 | 110 | 111 | 128 | 117 | 115 |
| Essex | 124 | 127 | 136 | 157 | 172 | 155 | 172 | 163 |
| Greater Manchester | 306 | 342 | 374 | 372 | 410 | 403 | 428 | 428 |
| Hampshire and Isle of Wight | 126 | 146 | 142 | 147 | 161 | 182 | 191 | 176 |
| Kent and Medway | 160 | 203 | 176 | 209 | 212 | 215 | 202 | 221 |
| Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland | 134 | 111 | 132 | 143 | 140 | 154 | 133 | 139 |
| Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire | 190 | 194 | 201 | 210 | 225 | 244 | 231 | 242 |
| North and East Yorkshire and Northern | 164 | 175 | 176 | 188 | 175 | 191 | 204 | 256 |
| North Central London | 149 | 151 | 163 | 182 | 181 | 187 | 217 | 251 |
| North East London | 199 | 194 | 196 | 203 | 216 | 207 | 220 | 254 |
| North West London | 252 | 242 | 254 | 269 | 286 | 327 | 315 | 319 |
| Northumberland, Tyne and Wear | 115 | 118 | 127 | 115 | 131 | 139 | 137 | 148 |
| Shropshire and Staffordshire | 173 | 153 | 178 | 192 | 194 | 194 | 237 | 228 |
| South East London | 208 | 177 | 181 | 202 | 211 | 222 | 219 | 207 |
| South West London | 107 | 147 | 140 | 146 | 175 | 180 | 181 | 197 |
| South West Peninsula | 123 | 143 | 155 | 162 | 170 | 181 | 173 | 193 |
| South Yorkshire | 156 | 156 | 168 | 158 | 170 | 181 | 178 | 169 |
| Surrey and Sussex | 200 | 236 | 236 | 245 | 258 | 270 | 286 | 309 |
| Thames Valley | 190 | 196 | 190 | 210 | 210 | 225 | 248 | 241 |
| Trent | 255 | 256 | 280 | 295 | 270 | 284 | 292 | 302 |
| West Yorkshire | 195 | 186 | 220 | 210 | 228 | 249 | 235 | 265 |
| *Region* | | | | | | | | |
| East Midlands | 1,974 | 2,098 | 2,589 | 2,562 | 2,589 | 2,992 | 2,852 | 3,162 |
| Eastern | 1,562 | 1,668 | 2,034 | 2,260 | 2,679 | 2,811 | 3,086 | 3,270 |
| London | 3,489 | 4,211 | 4,554 | 5,282 | 5,719 | 7,045 | 7,747 | 8,306 |
| North East | 1,070 | 1,212 | 1,432 | 1,482 | 1,701 | 1,722 | 1,692 | 1,927 |
| North West | 2,565 | 2,947 | 3,565 | 3,838 | 4,663 | 5,121 | 5,629 | 6,331 |
| South East | 2,165 | 2,736 | 3,078 | 3,549 | 4,095 | 4,527 | 4,510 | 5,072 |
| South West | 1,678 | 1,827 | 2,197 | 2,418 | 2,582 | 2,928 | 2,979 | 3,233 |
| West Midlands | 1,879 | 2,151 | 2,477 | 2,623 | 2,922 | 3,327 | 3,974 | 4,116 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 2,391 | 2,712 | 3,217 | 3,495 | 3,836 | 3,868 | 4,571 | 5,404 |

*Source:*
KC60 statutory returns from GUM clinics

## Winter Deaths

**Dr. Murrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made in reducing avoidable winter deaths in the elderly. [153821]

**Dr. Ladyman:** There are four main strands to the efforts nationally to reduce avoidable winter deaths:

Immunisation of older people against influenza and pneumococcal disease

Increasing awareness among older people of the risks of cold weather, and the benefits and other help available to keep homes warm

The national Fuel Poverty Strategy

Improving our ability to link the forecasting of cold weather with measures designed to prevent people from becoming ill, as well as to improve the ability of the health service to plan for surges in demand, especially for hospital admission.

A target for flu vaccination in those aged 65 and over has been set since the change in policy in 2000–01.

In 2000–01 the target was 60 per cent., in 2001–02 65 per cent, and in 2002–03 and 2003–04 70 per cent. Uptake achieved has been 65 per cent., 68 per cent., 69 per cent, and 71 per cent, respectively.

This year's result is an excellent achievement and exceeds our target of 70 per cent, set at the start of the campaign.

The number of people aged 65 and over receiving their flu immunisation this year was 5,781,440—over 295,000 more people than last year.

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has recommended extending pneumococcal immunisation to all aged 65 years and over.

The new policy is to offer immunisation with pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine to all people aged 65 years and over. However, we are introducing the policy in stages. To start with, people aged 80 and over, who are most at risk from pneumococcal disease, will be offered the vaccine in 2003–04. They will be followed by all those aged 75 and over in 2004–05. By 2005–06 all those aged 65 and over should routinely be offered pneumococcal vaccine.

People under these ages who are at higher risk from pneumococcal disease are already recommended to receive the vaccine. This includes people who have a heart condition, chronic lung disease, diabetes mellitus, a weakened immune system due to disease or treatment, a damaged spleen or no spleen.

We will be collecting data on the number of people receiving their pneumococcal vaccination, but this will not be available until after April 2004.

A Keep Warm, Keep Well campaign operates in England each winter. This provides free booklets for the public and special literature for health professionals; a telephone helpline, and advice on how those most in need may apply for grants (such as the Warm Front grant—a scheme providing grant for comprehensive packages of insulation and heating improvements for those on low incomes most vulnerable to cold-related ill health); advice on benefit payments; as well as the health benefits of keeping warm.

The relationship between indoor temperatures and ill health is complex, with other factors such as outside exposure and behavioural factors involved. However, the likelihood of ill health is increased by cold damp homes. Illnesses such as influenza, heart disease and strokes are all exacerbated by the cold and older people are especially vulnerable.

The Department of Health is working together with other Government Departments to reduce the number of households in fuel poverty. Good progress has already been made with the number of fuel poor households falling from approximately 5.5 million in 1996 to about 3 million in 2001 with predictions of a further reduction of 0.5 million for 2002.

Health professionals within the National Health Service have been made fully aware of fuel poverty as a potential health determinant and widely encouraged to identify and advise patients for whom cold, damp home conditions might be a health risk.

At the local level, fuel poverty is on the agenda of many health professionals in delivering fuel poverty initiatives and fuel poverty has been identified as a key priority within the Health Inequalities Programme for Action.

Her Majesty's Treasury funding was made available up to April 2003 to allow some exploratory work, led by the Met Office, to develop models to forecast workload for primary and secondary care, built in part on weather forecasting. The evaluation of this exploratory work was inconclusive. Preliminary discussions are currently underway between the NHS, the Department and the Met Office to determine next steps, and in particular whether it is possible to

refine the approaches taken to preventative interventions, targeted in time and place so as to gain maximum benefit for patients before they fall ill, and

manage NHS workload more proactively than at present, so that services, including hospitals, are better placed to manage surges in demand, particularly for hospital admission.

## CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

### Fines (Magistrates Courts)

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much was collected in fines at magistrates courts in the last year for which figures are available; and what proportion was allocated to *(a)* central Treasury funds and *(b)* local crime prevention schemes. [155953]

**Mr. Leslie:** Information on fines imposed and collected is provided by the 42 Magistrates Courts Committees in England and Wales.

In 2002–03 fines income from Magistrates Courts amounted to £121,202,780 of which £43,679,000 was used to fund enforcement activity. The balance of £77,523,780 was allocated to central Treasury funds.

In 2002–03, the Home Office provided funding direct to local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in England and Wales as follows:

Communities Against Drugs—£50 million (plus a special one-off uplift of £20 million in 2002–03 as part of the street crime initiative)

The Safer Communities Initiative—£20 million.

### Judiciary (Northern Ireland)

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many members of judicial offices in Northern Ireland are *(a)* female and *(b)* from an ethnic minority. [156976]

**Mr. Leslie:** Taking both full-time and deputy judicial posts there are 19 female members of the judiciary. This represents 16 per cent. of the overall total.

There are no members of the full-time and deputy judiciary in Northern Ireland from a minority ethnic background.

### Legal Aid

**Mr. Garnier:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much has been paid to the Community Law Partnership of Birmingham by the Legal Services Commission and the Legal Aid Board in each of the last five accounting years for which figures are available; how many cases there were; what proportion of the sum in each year was paid to the Community Law Partnership for cases brought by or against *(a)* travellers or traveller families and *(b)* local and public authorities, broken down by authority; how many cases there were in each year; and how many of the cases funded in each year resulted in (i) a satisfied order for costs being made in favour of the client represented by the Community Law Partnership and (ii) an irrecoverable financial loss to the Legal Aid Board or the Legal Services Commission. [156529]

**Mr. Lammy:** The Community Law Partnership of Birmingham registered with the then Legal Aid Board in December 1998. Total payments made to the organisation for each full financial year since 1999–2000 were as follows.

| | £ |
|---|---|
| 1999–2000 | 233,059 |
| 2000–01 | 432,229 |
| 2001–02 | 412,452 |
| 2002–03 | 802,849 |

The number of Legal Help matters started by the Community Law Partnership of Birmingham since 2000–01, the first full year of the Legal Services Commission's contracting system, were as follows:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 2000–01 | 1,340 |
| 2001–02 | 932 |
| 2002–03 | 929 |

Certificates issued to the Community Law Partnership:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1998–99 | 49 |
| 1999–2000 | 252 |
| 2000–01 | 264 |
| 2001–02 | 326 |
| 2002–03 | 331 |
| 2003–04 (to 31 December 2003) | 248 |
| Total (1998 to December 2004) | 1,470 |

For Legal Help cases, the Legal Services Commission does not record any client details which identify the client's background, or any information on the identity of whom the case was brought against.

For the number of cases funded in each year which resulted in (i) a satisfied order for costs being made in favour of the client represented by the Community Law Partnership and (ii) an irrecoverable financial loss to the Legal Aid Board or the Legal Services Commission, please refer to the following table.

| | *Cases settled at no cost to the Fund* | | *Cases closed with no recovery of costs or damages* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Number* | *Face value (£)* | *Number* | *Net cost (£)* |
| 1998–99 | 0 | — | 1 | 2,400 |
| 1999–2000 | 27 | 108,300 | 73 | 65,300 |
| 2000–01 | 57 | 210,000 | 147 | 195,500 |
| 2001–02 | 60 | 237,300 | 152 | 227,500 |
| 2002–03 | 48 | 222,500 | 170 | 280,700 |
| 2003–04 (to December 2004) | 49 | 218,200 | 159 | 296,700 |
| Total (1998 December 2004) | 241 | 996,300 | 702 | 1,068,100 |

**Ian Lucas:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the average

cost is per case for magistrates courts criminal cases in England and Wales of payments under the legal aid scheme to solicitors in private practice. [156756]

**Mr. Lammy:** I refer the hon. Member to the written answer I gave to his question on 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1671W.

### Parliamentary Questions

**Mr. Brady:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many days on average his Department took in Session 2002–03 to give a substantive answer to a parliamentary Question for Ordinary Written Answer; and what the greatest number of days taken to answer such a Question was. [155916]

**Mr. Leslie:** On average, my Department took 6.6 sitting days to give a substantive answer to a Parliamentary Question for Ordinary Written Answer. The greatest number of days taken to answer an Ordinary Written Question was 55 sitting days.

### Recruitment Advertising

**Pete Wishart:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what his Department's expenditure on recruitment advertising was in each of the last three years, broken down by publication; and what proportion of such expenditure was *(a)* to advertise vacant posts and *(b)* in the form of other general recruitment advertising. [155521]

**Mr. Lammy:** Information about recruitment advertising costs is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate costs.

### Voting

**Mr. Keetch:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans he has to introduce all-postal voting in trial constituencies for the next general election; and if he will make a statement. [157304]

**Mr. Leslie:** None. A Bill proposing the conduct of all-postal pilots in selected electoral regions in this year's European parliamentary elections in June is currently under parliamentary consideration. Subject to the Bill's successful passage, the independent Electoral Commission will assess those schemes which are conducted. We will consider carefully the Commission's assessment and any recommendations before considering any extension of pilot schemes to parliamentary elections.

**Mark Tami:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment the Department has made of *(a)* incentive schemes and *(b)* payments to encourage voter participation. [156535]

**Mr. Leslie:** None. Any gift or promise of a gift of money, or any other 'Valuable consideration', to an elector is regarded under electoral legislation as a bribe even if the gift is made simply to encourage the elector to vote or refrain from voting. This is a basic feature of any democratic electoral system which purports to be open and fair to all electors. Paying electors or offering gifts to turn out to vote would be likely to increase the likelihood of electoral abuse and fraud.

**Mark Tami:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what research the Department has collated into the propensity to vote of different social-economic groups. [156536]

**Mr. Leslie:** None. The Government are able to draw from research undertaken by the independent Electoral Commission on the voting intentions of electors for the European parliamentary and London's Mayoral and Assembly elections in 2004 in its report, 'Public Opinion and the 2004 Elections'. The Commission has also published the reports 'Voter Engagement and Young People' and 'Voter engagement among Black and Minority Ethnic Communities' on those groups in society widely recognised as less likely to vote.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Cheadle Royal Hospital

**Mrs. Calton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the Answers of 12 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 502W and 10 February, 2004 *Official Report*, column 1423W, on Cheadle Royal Hospital, (1) what assessment he has made of the full market value at the time of its transfer to AMEC in 1994 of charity land at Cheadle Royal Hospital which has become a 67 acre business park; [155606]

(2) pursuant to the Answers of 12 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 502W and 10 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1423W, on Cheadle Royal Hospital, what assessment he has made of the full market value of Cheadle Royal Hospital grounds and associated buildings at the time of its management buy-out in 1997; [155607]

(3) pursuant to the Answers of 12 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 502W and 10 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1423W, on Cheadle Royal Hospital, which documents he has assessed to reach his conclusions. [155609]

**Fiona Mactaggart:** These are matters for the Charity Commission as the Government Department responsible for the regulation of charities in England and Wales. The Director of Operations will write to the hon. Member and a copy of my reply will be placed in the Library.

**Mrs. Calton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answers of 12 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 502W and 10 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1423W, on Cheadle Royal Hospital, what assessment he has made of the scrutiny arrangements with respect to the work of the Charity Commission. [155608]

**Fiona Mactaggart:** The Commission must report annually to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State who lays the report before Parliament. The Commission is audited by the National Audit Office, answers to the courts for its legal decisions and falls within the remit of the Public Accounts Committee. It has introduced administrative arrangements for challenge and review of

formal decisions, and complaints systems including an independent reviewer. In respect of its administrative actions it comes within the investigative powers of the Parliamentary Ombudsman.

The Cabinet Office Strategy Unit's review of charity law and regulation recommended that it should continue to operate at arms' length from Ministers, with a modernised statement of purpose and accountability framework. The Government accepted these recommendations ("Charities and Not-for-Profits: A Modern Legal Framework", July 2003) and they will be reflected in the draft Charities Bill that will be published in the current Session.

### Child Poverty

**Mrs. Roche:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps his Department is taking to achieve the Government's targets of *(a)* ending child poverty by 2020, *(b)* halving it by 2010 and *(c)* reducing it by a quarter by 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [154385]

**Paul Goggins:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on 12 February, *Official Report*, column 1590W.

### Child Trafficking

**Mr. Chaytor:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what resources are available under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 to promote best practice in service provision for child victims of trafficking; [152342]

(2) what resources will be made available under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 to provide centrally funded care for child victims of trafficking in the UK; and if he will make a statement. [152343]

**Paul Goggins** *[holding answer 26 February 2004]*: The Sexual Offences Act 2003 introduces offences covering trafficking for sexual exploitation, and will come into force in May 2004. No resources are available explicitly to promote best practice in service provision for child victims of trafficking. However, the Home Office has published a best practice toolkit for those who deal with illegal immigrants and the victims of trafficking. The toolkit will help those who come into contact with victims of child trafficking to identify and deal with them appropriately. The Immigration Service is also starting specialist training for around 600 operational members of staff nation-wide, which will have a positive impact on their ability to identify and assist trafficked children.

### Correctional Service

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Prison Service will be meeting the Correctional Service Accreditation Panel to obtain advice on the extension of the FOR resettlement programme. [155344]

**Paul Goggins:** The Prison Service will be meeting with the Correctional Service Accreditation Panel from 15 to 19 March 2004. Decisions about the extension of the FOR (Focus on Resettlement) programme will be taken in the light of the advice provided and resourcing available.

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his oral statement of 6 January, *Official Report*, columns 170–87, on Correctional Services, what definition he uses of contestability. [147353]

**Paul Goggins:** Contestability is the principle that best quality and best value for money in the supervision, punishment and care of offenders will be achieved through ensuring that all services are opened up to competition.

We aim to encourage the public, private, voluntary and 'not for profit' sectors to compete to provide services to offenders, both in prison and in the community, that are the most effective and efficient that can be provided. At the same time we want to encourage partnerships between different sectors to make sure that we make best use of the different strengths and qualities each can bring.

We intend to build on the successful experience of the Prison Service's market testing programme, which has demonstrated that public services can compete successfully with the private sector. We also want to maintain the impetus created by the Performance Improvement Programme which has led to dramatic improvements in regimes and cost at some of the most challenging public sector prisons.

### Crime Victims

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the suitability of trusts as a means for victims to retain their eligibility for benefits after a compensation pay-out. [155347]

**Paul Goggins:** No such assessment has been made. I would refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to her on 26 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 202W.

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the evidential basis was for his decisions on the amounts to be levied on those guilty of victimless crimes to be used for compensation for victims of other crimes. [150779]

**Paul Goggins:** Few, if any crimes, are truly victimless. Many crimes perceived by some as victimless, such as drug dealing, fraud, vandalism and damage can blight the lives of people, create an unpleasant environment and impose a cost to society.

The proposed surcharge, ranging from £5 to £30, on criminal convictions and on fixed penalty notices for criminal offences is one of a series of proposals set out in the consultation paper 'Compensation and Support for Victims of Crime', published on 12 January 2004. The surcharge has been proposed at a level intended to encourage the maximum number of offenders to pay, and to be proportionate taken alongside the penalty imposed by the courts, or the fixed penalty notice.

Estimates for the rates of payment with and without enforcement are based on existing data on collection of fixed penalty notices and financial penalties imposed by the courts, and calculations that informed the Courts Act 2003.

In the consultation paper, among other questions, we specifically invited views as to whether the suggested levels of the surcharge were right.

No decisions about the surcharge proposal, or any of the other proposals, will be taken until all the responses to the consultation exercise have been carefully analysed.

### Crime/Disorder (Seaside Towns)

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the overall crime and disorder rates were for each ward in each principal seaside town of England and Wales in the latest month for which figures are available, listed in descending order according to level of crime and with figures for Welsh seaside towns disaggregated; and if he will make a statement. [154963]

**Ms Blears** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* Recorded crime statistics are collected centrally at Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) level. CDRPs were set up under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and are broadly Local Authority Areas. They include representatives from police, health, probation and other local agencies and provide strategies for reducing crime in the area. Figures for six key offence groups are collected at CDRP level. They are violence against the person, sexual offences, robbery, burglary in a dwelling, theft of a motor vehicle, and theft from a vehicle. There are currently 376 CDRPs in England and Wales.

Financial year figures for 2001–02 and 2002–03 for all CDRP areas, for six key offence groups are, available in Excel format on the Home Office Research Development Statistics website: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/hosb703sup1.xls

CDRP figures are not available on a monthly basis.

### Detention and Training Orders

**Dr. Stoate:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in what circumstances magistrates can impose a detention and training order on an offender aged 12 to 14 years who has been convicted of breaching an anti-social behaviour order. [150993]

**Paul Goggins** *[pursuant to his reply, 9 February 2004, Official Report, c. 1256W]:* It has come to my attention that the answer to the above question was not printed in full. I apologise for this and provide the full answer as follows.

A court sentencing an offender aged 12–14 for breach of an anti-social behaviour order can make a Detention and Training Order in the same circumstances as for other criminal offences attracting custody: That is, where:

it decides that the effect of the breach either in itself or in combination with associated offences, is so serious that only a custodial sentence can be justified; or

the anti-social behaviour involves a violent or sexual offence and only a custodial sentence would be adequate to protect the public from serious harm from the offender; or

the offender refuses to agree to a requirement in a proposed non-custodial order: a supervision order, a drug treatment and testing order or an order to provide a sample for drug-testing.

In addition, the court must have reached the view that the young person is a persistent offender.

### Driving Offences

**Mr. Laxton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the laws governing the sentencing of unlicensed drivers whose driving results in a fatality; and what plans he has to change the present laws. [156317]

**Paul Goggins:** Where a fatality results from a driving incident where the driver is believed to be at fault, the CPS will charge an appropriate offence such as causing death by dangerous driving or manslaughter. On 27 February the Government increased the penalty for three fatality offences—causing death by dangerous driving; causing death by careless driving when under influence of drink or drugs; aggravated vehicle-taking where, owing to the driving, a death results—from 10 to 14 years; and the maximum for manslaughter is life.

### Elderly Prisoners

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what strategies are in place to deal with *(a)* accommodation, *(b)* healthcare and *(c)* activity for elderly prisoners. [155253]

**Paul Goggins:** The Prison Service does recognise its duty to care for older prisoners and seeks to meet all their needs, including, medical and any special accommodation requirements, according to individual circumstances. Establishments that are holding older prisoners have developed local strategies and there are a number of excellent initiatives being adopted across the estate.

### Voting Irregularities

**Mark Tami:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many convictions for abuse of postal votes in United Kingdom elections there were in each of the last five years; [156546]

(2) how many people were prosecuted for failing to comply with electoral registration requirements in each of the last five years. [156543]

**Mr. Blunkett:** Information collected centrally by the Home Office on court proceedings under the Representation of the People Act 1983 does not enable these offences to be separately identified.

### Electronic Evidence

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what assessment he has made of the reliability of electronic evidence; [154018]

(2) what assessment he has made of systems for the sealing of electronic evidence; and what trials have taken place. [154020]

**Paul Goggins:** Assessing the reliability of evidence in whatever form is a matter for the courts. However, the Government are concerned that the public should have full confidence in the integrity of all evidence, including electronic evidence, and are determined to ensure that appropriate guidance and procedures are in place to support it. In March 2002, the Police Scientific Development Branch of the Home Office, in conjunction with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), published the guidance document, Digital Imaging Procedure. This is now in use across the criminal justice system in England and Wales.

The document sets out detailed guidance for operational, administrative, and judicial staff on the procedures that should be followed to ensure that digitally captured images can be accepted as evidence throughout the Criminal Justice System. Among other matters, the document includes guidance for audit trails to ensure the authenticity and integrity of the evidence, and how to protect the 'Master' image. The procedure does not rely on 'electronic' protection but neither does it preclude its use: as the guidance points out, there are several methods for 'electronically' authenticating an image file.

However, in the case of digital images captured by unattended roadside traffic enforcement cameras, the use of electronic protection is made mandatory by non-statutory guidance in the form of a document issued by the Police Scientific Development Branch entitled "The Speedmeter Handbook". This is because the image is the only evidence of an offence having taken place. The method of protection used is one that is based on techniques used to secure banking transactions.

ACPO have also produced a good practice guide on electronic evidence to provide advice and principles for police forces in dealing with all electronic evidence.

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to introduce electronic evidence sealing technology into *(a)* investigation of relevant crimes and *(b)* his Department's electronic communications. [154019]

**Paul Goggins:** The Government are concerned that the public should have full confidence in the integrity of all evidence adduced in criminal proceedings, including evidence in an electronic form. Unattended roadside traffic enforcement cameras are required to be of a type approved by the Secretary of State, and the digital images they capture are protected electronically. A method based on techniques used to secure banking transactions is used for this purpose.

The 'Digital Imaging Procedure', which sets out best practice guidelines for ensuring the acceptability in court of all other digital images as evidence, does not rely on electronic protection of images but neither does it preclude its use. The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) has also produced a good practice guide on electronic evidence to provide advice and principles for police forces in dealing with all electronic evidence. We are determined that appropriate and effective procedures and guidance should be available to ensure the admissibility in court of other kinds of electronic evidence, and are satisfied that this is currently the case. These matters are, however, kept under constant review.

The Home Office currently has no plans to introduce electronic evidence sealing technology into its electronic communications.

### Home Detention Curfew

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what problems have been experienced with home detention curfew; and what adjustments will be made to the programme to combat them. [155343]

**Paul Goggins:** My reply of 22 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1438W, provides details of the success of the Home Detention Curfew (HDC) scheme, which is monitored on a continual basis. I am satisfied that the scheme continues to work well.

The Government are committed to the HDC scheme but it is important to keep it under review, extending it where sensible and appropriate while keeping a proper balance in terms of public safety and confidence. On 14 January 2004 I introduced a further safeguard to ensure that public confidence in the scheme is maintained. Prisoners who have been involved in notorious crimes will not be released on HDC unless the chief executive of National Offender Management Service is satisfied that their release will not undermine public confidence in the scheme.

### Magistrates Courts

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to *(a)* revise and *(b)* reissue guidance on reporting restrictions in the magistrates' court. [153105]

**Paul Goggins:** Guidance on reporting restrictions in the Youth Court is contained in the Youth Court 2001 The Changing Culture of the Youth Court Good Practice Guide which was published jointly by the Lord Chancellors Department and the Home Office in 2001 While there are no current plans to revise or reissue this guidance it will be kept under review.

### Munby Judgment

**Mr. Dawson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has held following the Munby Judgment with *(a)* the Minister for Children, *(b)* local authority associations and *(c)* local authorities about the application of the Children Act 1989 to young people in custody. [154427]

**Paul Goggins** *[holding answer 11 February 2004]:* My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary and I met the Minister for Children on 27 October 2003 to discuss the report of an official working group on the application of the Children Act 1989 to young people in custody.

The working group comprised representatives of the Youth Justice Board, the Local Government Association and the Association of Directors of Social Services. The Home Office and the Department for Education and Skills had observer status. The group

met a number of times between February and August 2003 and produced its report in September. I am placing a copy in the Library.

Following the meeting on 27 October, it was agreed that the Youth Justice Board would provide an additional £1 million to fund extra social worker places at Young Offender Institutions. The new staff will be responsible for ensuring that the duties placed on local authorities by the Children Act are fulfilled.

### Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representations he has received regarding section 55 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002; and if he will make a statement. [147073]

**Beverley Hughes:** Between 1 October 2003 and 18 February 2004 60 representations have been received from hon. Members since the end of September 2003 and 21 letters from members of the public about section 55. The Refugee Council also made representations in meetings with Ministers.

Section 55 of the 2002 Act, which came into force on 8 January 2003, is one of a range of measures designed to reduce the number of asylum applications. It is reasonable to expect asylum seekers to make their claim on arrival or very shortly afterwards. Section 55 prevents the provision of support (including emergency accommodation) where the claim is not made as soon as reasonably practicable after arrival in the United Kingdom. In practice, claiming

"as soon as reasonably practicable"

normally means doing so on arrival at the port of entry or within three days of arrival, providing the story given about arrival is otherwise credible.

### Police Cells

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police cells are being brought up to Government standards in Lancashire; how many are sub-standard but are being used; how many cells are not used by Lancashire Police; and how many are mothballed. [153506]

**Ms Blears:** The Chief Constable of Lancashire has informed me that :

One hundred and twelve cells are being brought up to Government standards;

Eighty two cells are categorised as sub-standard, not having fully met the recommendations of the Police Buildings Design Guide 1994, these are being brought up to standard but are in use;

Thirteen cells are not in use;

and thirty six cells have been mothballed.

### Prisons

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how the work of prison anti-bullying co-ordinators is monitored. [155345]

**Paul Goggins:** The designated duties of anti-bullying co-ordinators are overseen through:

Normal line management monitoring;

Monitoring by the senior management team monitoring (usually monthly and minuted) and by the anti-bullying management and/or safer prisons team;

Testing of systems by area performance co-ordinators;

The Prison Service's Standards Audit Unit vigorous testing of systems every two years; and

Self-audit testing of systems at least once every two years (often annually).

In 2002, a national review of anti-bullying work in prisons indicated that establishments had generally implemented local strategies with innovative and monitored actions being taken in many establishments.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to make it compulsory for prisoners to take part in educational activities; and if he will make a statement. [155643]

**Paul Goggins** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* The Prison Service needs to be able to respond to and address a range of factors which contribute to offending behaviour, according to individual need. It therefore has no plans to introduce a compulsion for all prisoners to take part in learning activities. However, the majority of offenders have very poor skills which are a serious obstacle to their rehabilitation and chances of employment on release. Through increased investment, increased partnership working, and the appointment of new Heads of Learning and Skills across the prison estate, we are working towards a new service which will embed learning and skills across the range of prison activities, drive up quality and enhance continuity between opportunities in custodial and community settings.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to use secure online examinations to assist prisoners in gaining qualifications. [155644]

**Paul Goggins** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* The Prison Service is currently piloting a secure approach to offering prisoners examinations on demand. Future rollout will be informed by the success of this pilot.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of the prison population has access to the internet; and what proportion of the prison population regularly uses it. [155645]

**Paul Goggins** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* Because of security considerations only a very small number of prisoners have limited internet access. The prison population on 13 February 2004 was 74,420. Of these, 31 prisoners have regular but restricted access to the internet as part of their employment.

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action he has taken to ensure that overcrowding in prisons does not negatively affect the healthcare available to prisoners. [155247]

**Paul Goggins:** Since 1997, 15,000 new prison places have been provided. In addition, our programme of reform of health services for prisoners will see spending on health services increase by more than £40 million a year in the three years to March 2006.

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners have mental health problems; and what proportion of these are from ethnic minorities. [155632]

**Paul Goggins:** In 1997, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) undertook a survey of "Psychiatric morbidity amongst prisoners in England and Wales", which reported that around 90 per cent. of prisoners sampled showed evidence of at least one of the five disorders, personality disorder, psychosis, neurosis, alcohol misuse and drug dependence. The report included a range of information on the prevalence of specific mental health problems in black and minority ethnic prisoners. A copy of the ONS study is in the Library.

Prisons and their NHS Primary Care Trust partners are responsible for assessing the health needs of their populations and developing services to meet those needs.

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners are being prescribed more than one type of psychotropic drug for treatment of mental illness; and what proportion of those being prescribed one or more psychotropic drug are from ethnic minorities. [155633]

**Paul Goggins:** This information is not available.

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to introduce competition into prisons through the use of private and voluntary providers. [147369]

**Paul Goggins:** We want the most cost effective custodial and community sentences possible, no matter who delivers them. We also want to encourage partnerships between public and private sector providers and the voluntary and community sectors which can harness their respective strengths.

An implementation team has been established to consider the specific details of how this will be realised. We are also seeking views on how to improve contestability and value for money within the new structure of the National Offender Management Service.

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many foreign nationals were held in prisons in England and Wales on 30 June 2003, broken down by nationality; and how many foreign nationals are held in each prison in England and Wales. [156032]

**Paul Goggins:** The numbers of foreign nationals who were held in prisons in England and Wales on 30 June 2003, broken down by *(a)* nationality and *(b)* establishment, are given in the tables.

*Population of Prison Service establishments in England and Wales, by 30 June 2003*

| | |
|---|---|
| UK Nationals | 63,678 |
| *Africa* | |
| Algeria | 140 |
| Angola | 41 |
| Botswana | 1 |
| Burundi | 7 |
| Cameroon, United Republic | 16 |
| Central African Republic | 8 |
| Chad | 3 |
| Congo | 54 |
| Cote D'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) | 14 |
| Democratic Republic of Congo | 43 |
| Djibouti | 1 |
| Egypt | 14 |
| Ethiopia | 19 |
| French Guiana | 2 |
| Gambia | 26 |
| Ghana | 111 |
| Guinea | 5 |
| Kenya | 61 |
| Liberia | 13 |
| Libya | 18 |
| Malawi | 5 |
| Mali | 1 |
| Mauritania | 2 |
| Mauritius | 11 |
| Morocco | 35 |
| Mozambique | 1 |
| Namibia | 2 |
| Nigeria | 336 |
| Rwanda | 4 |
| Sao Tome and Principe | 1 |
| Senegal | 2 |
| Seychelles | 1 |
| Sierre Leone | 56 |
| Somalia | 167 |
| South Africa | 135 |
| Sudan | 19 |
| Tanzania | 10 |
| Togo | 8 |
| Tunisia | 11 |
| Uganda | 47 |
| Zambia | 16 |
| Zimbabwe | 44 |
| *Asia* | |
| Bangladesh | 141 |
| Bhutan | 1 |
| Brunei | 1 |
| Cambodia | 1 |
| China | 85 |
| Hong Kong | 5 |
| India | 234 |
| Indonesia | 5 |
| Japan | 2 |
| Korea Republic of (Sth) | 6 |
| Malaysia | 13 |
| Maldives | 1 |
| Mongolia | 3 |
| Myanmar, Union of (Burma) | 2 |
| Nepal | 2 |
| Pakistan | 381 |
| Phillipines | 14 |
| Singapore | 3 |
| Sri Lanka | 114 |
| Surinam | 2 |
| Thailand | 5 |
| Vietnam | 41 |
| *Central/South America* | |
| Argentina | 7 |
| Bolivia | 4 |

*Population of Prison Service establishments in England and Wales, by 30 June 2003*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brazil | 30 |
| Chile | 14 |
| Colombia | 123 |
| Costa Rica | 1 |
| Ecuador | 9 |
| Guatemala | 2 |
| Mexico | 8 |
| Nicaragua | 1 |
| Panama | 2 |
| Peru | 5 |
| Venezuela | 40 |
| *Europe* | |
| Albania | 66 |
| Andorra | 1 |
| Armenia | 4 |
| Austria | 4 |
| Azerbijan | 1 |
| Belgium | 46 |
| Bosnia-Hercegovina | 5 |
| Bulgaria | 5 |
| Croatia | 6 |
| Cyprus | 64 |
| Czech Republic | 21 |
| Denmark | 12 |
| Estonia | 1 |
| Finland | 3 |
| France | 104 |
| Georgia | 2 |
| Germany | 109 |
| Gibraltar | 2 |
| Greece | 28 |
| Hungary | 20 |
| Irish Republic | 681 |
| Italy | 110 |
| Kazakhstan | 1 |
| Kyrgystan | 1 |
| Latvia | 11 |
| Lithuania | 33 |
| Luxembourg | 1 |
| Macedonia | 3 |
| Malta | 13 |
| Moldova | 20 |
| Netherlands | 232 |
| Norway | 2 |
| Poland | 47 |
| Portugal | 103 |
| Romania | 76 |
| Russian Federation | 78 |
| Serbia and Montenegro | 114 |
| Slovakia | 6 |
| Slovenia | 3 |
| Spain | 109 |
| Sweden | 6 |
| Switzerland | 7 |
| Turkey | 250 |
| Turkmenistan | 2 |
| Uzbekistan | 3 |
| *Middle East* | |
| Afghanistan | 114 |
| Bahrain | 1 |
| Iran | 76 |
| Iraq | 139 |
| Israel | 14 |
| Jordan | 6 |
| Kuwait | 2 |
| Lebanon | 17 |
| Saudi Arabia | 8 |
| Syrian Arab Republic | 6 |
| United Arab Emirates | 5 |
| Yemen, Republic of | 8 |
| *North America* | |
| Canada | 23 |
| United States of America | 96 |
| *Oceania* | |
| Australia | 27 |
| Fiji | 4 |
| French Southern Territories | 3 |
| Guam | 1 |
| Kiribati | 1 |
| New Zealand | 6 |
| Papua New Guinea | 1 |
| *West Indies* | |
| Anguilla | 1 |
| Aruba | 2 |
| Bahamas | 6 |
| Barbados | 29 |
| Bermuda | 2 |
| Cuba | 4 |
| Dominica | 7 |
| Dominican Republic | 6 |
| Grenada | 13 |
| Guyana | 19 |
| Haiti | 2 |
| Jamaica | 2,770 |
| Montserrat | 10 |
| Netherlands Antilles | 14 |
| St Christopher and Nevis | 2 |
| St Kitts and Nevis | 4 |
| St Lucia | 18 |
| St Vincent and The Grenadines | 5 |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 85 |
| Virgin Islands | 1 |
| Other | 16 |
| Total Foreign Nationals | 8,799 |
| Not recorded | 1,180 |
| Total | 73,657 |

*Population of foreign nationals in Prison Service 30 June 2003*

| | |
|---|---|
| Altcourse | 42 |
| Askham Grange | 5 |
| Acklington | 21 |
| Albany | 21 |
| Ashfield | 9 |
| Ashwell | 32 |
| Aylesbury | 45 |
| Belmarsh | 251 |
| Buckley Hall | 37 |
| Blundeston | 145 |
| Bedford | 57 |
| Blantyre House | 6 |
| Brockhill | 4 |
| Bristol | 56 |
| Birmingham | 104 |
| Bullingdon | 122 |
| Brinsford | 15 |
| Blakenhurst | 82 |
| Bullwood Hall | 26 |
| Brixton | 228 |
| Chelmsford | 70 |
| Cardiff | 30 |
| Camp Hill | 152 |
| Cookham Wood | 41 |
| Coldingly | 85 |
| Castington | 3 |
| Channings Wood | 29 |
| Canterbury | 43 |
| Dartmoor | 34 |
| Dovegate | 136 |
| Drake Hall | 77 |
| Durham | 28 |
| Doncaster | 35 |
| Dorchester | 23 |

*Population of foreign nationals in Prison Service 30 June 2003*

| | |
|---|---|
| Deerbolt | 3 |
| Dover | 304 |
| Downview | 65 |
| Erlestoke | 36 |
| Standford Hill | 95 |
| East Sutton Park | 10 |
| Everthorpe | 18 |
| Eastwood Park | 32 |
| Exeter | 15 |
| Elmley | 177 |
| Forest Bank | 52 |
| Ford | 67 |
| Foston Hall | 34 |
| Frankland | 40 |
| Feltham | 149 |
| Full Sutton | 49 |
| Featherstone | 42 |
| Garth | 42 |
| Gloucester | 10 |
| Guys Marsh | 103 |
| Grendon (Spring Hill) | 52 |
| Glen Parva | 39 |
| Gartree | 21 |
| Hollesley Bay | 47 |
| Huntercombe | 23 |
| Moorland Open | 8 |
| Hewell Grange | 18 |
| Holme House | 27 |
| Hindley | 19 |
| Hull | 26 |
| Highdown | 142 |
| Highpoint | 195 |
| Haslar | 153 |
| Haverigg | 8 |
| Holloway | 123 |
| Kirkham | 15 |
| Kirklevington | 6 |
| Lancaster | 3 |
| Leicester | 25 |
| Leeds | 56 |
| Lancaster Farms | 14 |
| Lowdham Grange | 115 |
| Lindholme | 29 |
| Lincoln | 13 |
| Long Lartin | 64 |
| Latchmere House | 23 |
| Low Newton | 4 |
| Liverpool | 48 |
| Littlehey | 71 |
| Lewes | 54 |
| Leyhill | 46 |
| Moorland | 22 |
| Morton Hall | 225 |
| Manchester | 111 |
| Maidstone | 93 |
| Mount | 219 |
| Edmunds Hill | 51 |
| New Hall | 14 |
| Nottingham | 34 |
| Northallerton | 3 |
| North Sea Camp | 15 |
| Norwich | 77 |
| Onley | 54 |
| Portland | 82 |
| Parkhurst | 75 |
| Preston | 15 |
| Parc | 29 |
| Kingston (Portsmouth) | 14 |
| Pentonville | 315 |
| Rochester | 19 |
| Reading | 15 |
| Rye Hill | 132 |

*Population of foreign nationals in Prison Service 30 June 2003*

| | |
|---|---|
| Ranby | 20 |
| Risley | 52 |
| Send | 73 |
| Stafford | 26 |
| Stoke Heath | 10 |
| Stocken | 48 |
| Swaleside | 197 |
| Shepton Mallet | 11 |
| Swinfen Hall | 13 |
| Styal | 37 |
| Sudbury | 34 |
| Swansea | 9 |
| Shrewsbury | 13 |
| Thorn Cross | 2 |
| Usk (Prescoed) | 16 |
| Verne | 280 |
| Weare | 37 |
| Wellingborough | 52 |
| Winchester | 61 |
| Wakefield | 26 |
| Wealstun | 18 |
| Woodhill | 75 |
| Warren Hill | 25 |
| Wayland | 170 |
| Wymott | 25 |
| Werrington | 1 |
| Wolds | 11 |
| Whitemoor | 68 |
| Wormwood Scrubs | 482 |
| Whatton | 17 |
| Wandsworth | 356 |
| Wetherby | 9 |
| Total | 8,799 |

**Linda Perham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish a demographic breakdown of the prison population. [156081]

**Paul Goggins:** The publication Prison Statistics England and Wales 2002 provides a demographic breakdown of the prison population. A copy of this publication is available in the House of Commons Library.

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the size of the United Kingdom's prison population as compared to other European countries. [148887]

**Paul Goggins:** Information on comparative prison populations is contained in World Prison Population List (fifth edition), Home Office Findings No. 23, published in February 2004.

The United Kingdom's prison population rate places it above the mid-point in the world list and the highest among the countries of the European Union.

**Mr. Todd:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what provision is made for women's clothes by the Prison Service. [154864]

**Paul Goggins:** Women are generally permitted to wear their own clothes, but if there are any difficulties in obtaining them, clothing will be supplied by the Service from existing stocks or outside suppliers. In certain situations, for example outdoor work, suitable clothing will be automatically provided for the women.

**Mr. Todd:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to ensure that vulnerable women discharged from prison have appropriate accommodation. [154865]

**Paul Goggins:** Housing is the major resettlement priority for women leaving prison and considerable investment has been made in housing advice projects through the custody to work programme, Prison Service Plus and other funding streams. Much of the investment has gone into local prisons so that housing needs can be assessed and acted on when women first enter custody as well as prior to their release. In addition, the Home Office is leading cross-Government work on the Women's Offending Reduction Programme to address the complex criminogenic factors that affect women's offending. The Correctional Services are also jointly contributing to the development of a National Accommodation Strategy for all offenders as part of a wider rehabilitation strategy.

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to increase the availability of *(a)* therapeutic, *(b)* counselling and *(c)* support provision for prisoners identified as being vulnerable or at risk. [155246]

**Paul Goggins:** The prison population contains a substantial number of people who have experienced negative life events, all of which are identified as significant risk factors for suicide and self-harm. These include family background and relationship problems, social disadvantage or isolation, previous sexual or physical abuse, and mental health problems. Self-harming and suicidal behaviour often pre-date custody, and may have started early in life. Studies show that 27 per cent. of men and 44 per cent. of women on remand report having attempted suicide in their lifetime; and that 90 per cent. of all prisoners have shown evidence of at least one of the following: personality disorder, psychosis, neurosis, and alcohol misuse and drug dependence.

Intervention strategies have been introduced for people who self-harm. These include counselling, support groups, and specialised psychological interventions. A network of establishments has been set up to develop interventions, facilitate evaluation and share good practice, and guidance to staff on managing people who self-harm has been circulated to establishments. A video is also being produced.

*(a) Therapeutic provision:*

A number of prisons, particularly women's, provide a range of therapeutic interventions for prisoners who self-harm. These include Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT), an innovative programme developed in the USA for women diagnosed with 'borderline personality disorder' (BPD) who also self-harm or who are suicidal. The Prison Service has introduced DBT to the women's estate, starting with an initial development programme at three sites: Durham, Bullwood Hall and Holloway.

*(b) Counselling provision:*

A number of prison establishments have introduced counselling for vulnerable prisoners. At both Bullwood Hall and Holloway prisons, all prisoners who have been identified as at risk of suicide/self-harm are offered individual crisis counselling. If appropriate, they are also referred to other agencies such as the general counselling service or CRUSE, a charity working with people who are suffering from bereavement, or the prison's art therapist, Counselling, Assessment, Referral and Throughcare (CARAT) services or Chaplaincy.

*(c) Support provision:*

The F2052SH self-harm warning system identifies and reviews the particular needs of prisoners experiencing periods of distress or crisis. The pilot of a replacement system began in January 2004 at five establishments. It aims to build on the successful aspects of the existing system, but build in a greater focus on care with teams of specially trained staff assessing the level of risk that at-risk prisoners present.

Further avenues of support available across the prison estate include help with substance misuse issues, the input of healthcare professionals and/or mental health in-reach teams, helping maintain contact with family and friends, and the encouragement of self-help, for example, through education, IT or sport. There are numerous agencies and support mechanisms available to prisoners identified as at-risk, including Samaritans.

Several prisons have set up support groups for prisoners who self-harm, or are at risk of self-harming. These are usually run by staff such as Suicide Prevention Co-ordinators or Occupational Therapists. These may either be informal 'drop-in' groups, that prisoners can choose to attend for as many or few sessions as they wish, or groups which run for a specific period of time with the same set of participants.

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans the Prison Service has to introduce *(a)* a policy, *(b)* a programme and *(c)* a target for alcohol reduction. [155249]

**Paul Goggins:** The Prison Service is currently preparing an alcohol strategy, which will be finalised in spring 2004.

A range of anti-alcohol interventions are available. Detoxification for alcohol is available on reception in all local and remand prisons; some prisons run alcohol awareness courses; Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) run services in around 50 per cent. of prisons and more intensive courses are run in nine prisons. Some offending behaviour programmes address the underlying criminogenic factors, which occur in alcohol related violent crime. Further expansion of interventions will depend on the availability of additional resources. There are no plans to introduce a target for alcohol reduction.

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make an assessment of the extent of inter-prisoner violence. [155346]

**Paul Goggins:** The extent of violence in prisons is measured each year as a key performance indicator.

In April 2003, a new high level measure of violence was introduced, based on the number of reported serious assaults. This replaced the previous measure, which was based on positive adjudications for assault. All establishments are currently developing a violence reduction strategy and action plan for personal safety.

## Prisoners (Foreign Nationals)

**Mr. Stinchcombe:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many foreign nationals committed suicide whilst in custody in England and Wales in each of the last five years. [155386]

**Paul Goggins:** The information requested with respect to prisons and immigration removal centres is provided in the following table.

| | *Number of self-inflicted deaths[1] of foreign nationals in prison custody* | *Number of self- inflicted deaths of foreign nationals in immigration removal centres* |
|---|---|---|
| 1999 | 7 | 0 |
| 2000 | 5 | 1 |
| 2001 | 5 | 0 |
| 2002 | 10 | 0 |
| 2003 | 8 | [2]1 |

[1] The Prison Service employs the term 'self-inflicted death' rather than suicide. This includes all those deaths where it appears the prisoner has acted intentionally to take his/her own life.
[2] This death occurred at HM Immigration Removal Centre Haslar, a Prison Service managed centre.

The police do not collate data centrally on the number of foreign nationals who commit suicide in their custody.

Reducing the number of self-inflicted deaths in prison establishments is an essential part of the Prison Service's decency agenda and a priority for Ministers. A three-year strategy to develop policies and practices to prevent prisoner suicide and manage self-harm started in April 2001. This is currently under review, taking into account learning from the various projects initiated over the last three years, emerging research findings and a wide consultation process. The main principles of the strategy apply across all types of prisons and to all prisoners, regardless of nationality.

All immigration removal centres are required to comply with an Operating Standard on suicide and self-harm prevention, and a range of measures is in place to address the issue. These measures include: suicide awareness and emergency first aid training for staff, active Suicide Prevention Committees operating in all centres, and systems for paying particular attention to detainees on their first night in detention or immediately prior to their removal.

The police have also undertaken a number of initiatives to prevent self-inflicted deaths in their custody. These include: custody officer training in risk assessment and management, improvements in police practice in relation to the mentally ill, an increase in the range of custody healthcare professionals, improvements in procedures to assess and document specific risks presented by those coming into custody, the use of closed circuit television in cells, and the use in some forces of life signs monitoring systems.

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures are in place to help foreign national prisoners maintain links with their families. [155250]

**Paul Goggins:** The Prison Service places considerable importance on encouraging and assisting all prisoners to maintain meaningful contact with family and friends. All convicted prisoners have a statutory entitlement to send one letter, and unconvicted prisoners, two letters per week, at public expense. In addition to this, prisoners may send a letter at public expense in lieu of a statutory domestic visit. In addition, there are several measures which are advantageous to foreign national prisoners:

It is Prison Service policy for foreign national prisoners, or those prisoners with close family abroad, who have not received a domestic visit during the preceding month to be given credit to make a telephone call.

Such prisoners are also exempt from the limits on access to private cash for the purposes of making telephone calls.

The Prison Service has recently negotiated a contract to provide the facility for prisoners to make international calls at significantly reduced rates.

Where suitable arrangements are in place, foreign national prisoners can also apply to serve their sentences in their home countries close to their families and friends.

It is Prison Service policy, wherever possible, to make information available in different languages in order that foreign nationals are aware of entitlements.

The Prison Service has developed partnerships with voluntary organisations which provide specialist services for foreign national prisoners and their families in the UK and abroad.

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how he monitors the number of foreign national prisoners who are liable to deportation. [155251]

**Beverley Hughes:** Her Majesty's prisons are instructed to notify the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) of all foreign nationals sentenced to a term of imprisonment, together with their release dates once calculated.

The Prison Service is currently conducting an audit to identify all foreign nationals who are serving a term of imprisonment.

## Probation

**John McDonnell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many vacancies there are in the 42 probation areas in England and Wales, broken down by grade; and how many probation officers have left the service in each financial year since 2000–01. [147663]

**Paul Goggins:** The latest published information requested is as follows: The total number of vacant posts within the National Probation Service as at 30 June 2003 broken down by grade is as follows:

| *England and Wales* | *Number of vacancies (full time equivalent)* |
|---|---|
| Senior Probation Officer | 37.1 |
| Senior Practitioner | 24.3 |
| Probation Officer | 345.0 |
| Trainee Probation Officer | 58.2 |
| Probation Services Officers | 329.6 |
| Psychologists | 0.5 |
| Other Operational Staff | 20.7 |
| Total Operational Staff | 815.4 |
| Deputy Chief Officers/Directors | 2.0 |
| AGO and equivalent | 7.7 |
| Area/District Managers or equivalent | 0.6 |
| Managers—Section or Function Heads | 10.9 |
| Support Staff—Administration | 203.9 |
| Support Staff Others | 14.7 |

| England and Wales | Number of vacancies (full time equivalent) |
|---|---|
| Other Specialist Workers | 4.7 |
| Total Support Staff | 244.5 |
| Total | 1,059.9 |

I will write to my hon. Friend shortly with more up to date figures when these are available.

The number of Probation Officers who have left the service in each financial year since 2000–01 is as follows:

| | Number of leavers[1] | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| England and Wales | 2000 | 2001–02[1] | 2002–03 |
| Deputy Chief Officers | 9 | [5]7 | 3 |
| Assistant Chief Officers[2] | 17 | [5]75 | 13 |
| Senior Probation Officers | 313 | [5]148 | 78 |
| Probation Officers[3] | 593 | [5]967 | 642 |
| Probation Service Officers[4] | 290 | see note 4 below | see note 4 below |
| All other staff | 429 | [5]1,916 | 1,670 |
| Total | 1,651 | [5]3,113 | 2,406 |

[1] Figures shown in Headcount and were collected for calendar years only 1997–2000 inclusive.

[2] Includes area managers

[3] Includes senior practitioners, trainee probation officers, temporary probation officers

[4] PSOs included in other staff 2001–02 onwards

[5] Includes proportion of service that moved to Family Court Welfare in April 2001; approximately 1,200 leavers

## Public Bodies

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who the members of the *(a)* Police Discipline Appeals Tribunal, *(b)* Police Complaints Authority; *(c)* Police Information Technology Organisation, *(d)* Prisons Board to the Prison Service and *(e)* Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs were on 1 January; what their term of office is in each case; and whether they are remunerated. [151813]

**Paul Goggins:** For the bodies requested the following is a list of the members on 1 January 2004; their term of office, and whether they are remunerated.

A member of a Police Authority also sits on a Police Discipline Appeals Tribunal considering an appeal under the Police (Conduct) Regulations 1999. Police Authorities are responsible for appointing such members, a list which is not held centrally. The Police Complaints Authority will be abolished on 31 March 2004 and all terms of appointment end on that date.

When announcing the creation of the National Offender Management Service in his speech to the House of Commons on 6 January 2004, my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary also announced the establishment of the National Offender Management Board. This will replace the Correctional Services Board. The Board includes a number of senior officials representing the Home Office, Department for Constitutional Affairs, Her Majesty's Treasury and No. 10. It has four non-executive members who are the only formal appointees. The Director General of the Prison Service is supported in his day to day responsibilities by the Prison Service Management Board which comprises the executive directors, the Prison Service Race Relations Adviser, the head of Prison Service Media Relations and the Board Secretary.

*Police Discipline Appeals Tribunal*

| | Term of office | Remunerated |
|---|---|---|
| Mr. Richard Merz | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. Simon Russell Flint QG | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. Michael Caplan QC | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. Gary Flather Obe QC | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. Robin Grey QC | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. Dorian Lovell-Pank QC | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. Victor Temple QC | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. Harendra De Silva | 5 years | Yes |
| Ms Joanna Greenberg QC | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. Mukhtar Hussain QC | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. John Perry QC | 5 years | Yes |
| Sir Anthony Thomas Burden | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. David Shattock QPM | 5 years | Yes |
| Sir Edward Crew | 5 years | Yes |
| Sir Dan Crompton | 5 years | Yes |
| Ms Pauline Clare | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. Peter Joslin Qpm DI BA (Hons) Cimgt | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. Desmond Flanders QPM | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. Barry Moss | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. Ian Quinn | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. Walter Boreham QBE, O.Stj, Qpm, D.Univ | 5 years | Yes |
| Sir David Joseph O'Dowd | 5 years | Yes |
| Sir John Evans O.St.J Qpm DI Lib | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. George Ernest Hedges Qpm DI | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. Michael Sample | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. Leonard Cantliffe | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. Michael Bird | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. Christopher Hudson | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. Raymond Hughes | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. Michael Mckenzie | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. David Arthur Pearce | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. Ian Westwood | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. Paul O'brien | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. Alec Edward Alexander | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. Anthony Judge | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. Anthony Kevin Mason | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. Robin Hobbs | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. John Harrison | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. Patrick Butler | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. Jeffery Mosely | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. David John French | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. David Gilbert Jones | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. Allen Stanley | 5 years | Yes |
| Mr. Joseph Tildesley | 5 years | Yes |

*Police Complaints Authority*

| | Term of office | Remunerated |
|---|---|---|
| Sir Alistair Graham | 3 years | Yes |
| Ian Bynoe | 3 years | Yes |
| Wendy Towers | 3 years | Yes |
| Ann Barker | 3 years | Yes |
| Anne Boustred | 3 years | Yes |
| Duncan Gear | 3 years | Yes |
| Deborah Glass | 3 years | Yes |
| Sally Hawkins | 3 years | Yes |
| Alison MacDougall | 3 years | Yes |
| Mehmuda Mian Prichard | 3 years | Yes |
| David Petch | 3 years | Yes |
| Leo Pilkington | 3 years | Yes |
| Elaine Rassaby | 3 years | Yes |
| Marcu Williams | 3 years | Yes |
| Nicoja Williams | 3 years | Yes |
| Arthur Price-Jones | 3 years | Yes |
| Katherine Reid | 3 years | Yes |
| Dianne Hayle | 3 years | Yes |

*Police Information Technology Organisation*

| | *Term of office* | *Remunerated* |
|---|---|---|
| Chair (to be appointed) | 3 years | Yes |
| Dr. Louise Bennett | 3 years | Yes |
| Mr. Martin Taylor | 3 years | Yes |
| Ms Alisa Beaton | 3 years | Yes |
| Mr. Thomas Lloyd | 3 years | Yes |
| Mr. Paul Gavin | 3 years | Yes |
| Mr. Peter Wilson | 3 years | Yes |
| Mr. Peter Holland | 3 years | Yes |
| Mr. Stephen Murphy | 3 years | Yes |
| To be appointed | 3 years | Yes |
| Cllr Guroudeo Saluja | 3 years | Yes |
| Mr. Mark Gladwyn | 3 years | Yes |
| Dr. Linda Derrick | 3 years | Yes |
| Christie Smith | 3 years | Yes |
| Mr. Roy Toner | 3 years | Yes |
| Mr. Peter Winship | 3 years | Yes |

*Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs*

| | *Term of office* | *Remunerated* |
|---|---|---|
| Sir Michael Rawlins | 3 years | No |
| Dr. Dima Abdulrahim | 3 years | No |
| Lord Victor Adebowale | 3 years | No |
| Mr. Norman Bettison | 3 years | No |
| Dr. Margaret Birtwhistle | 3 years | No |
| Reverend Martin Blakeborough | 3 years | No |
| Dr. Cecilia Bottomley | 3 years | No |
| Mr. Raj Boyjoonauth | 3 years | No |
| Ms Carmel Clancy | 3 years | No |
| Professor Llana Crome | 3 years | No |
| Ms Robyn Doran | 3 years | No |
| Mr. Robert Eschle | 3 years | No |
| Professor Hugh Edmondson | 3 years | No |
| Ms Vivienne Evans | 3 years | No |
| Professor C. Robin Ganellin FRS | 3 years | No |
| Dr. Laurence Gruer | 3 years | No |
| Mr. Paul Hayes | 3 years | No |
| Mr. Andrew Hayman | 3 years | No |
| Mr. Russell Hayton | 3 years | No |
| Mr. Peter Housden | 3 years | No |
| Mr. Roger Howard | 3 years | No |
| Mr. Alan Hunter | 3 years | No |
| His Honour Judge Thomas Joseph | 3 years | No |
| Dr. John Marsden | 3 years | No |
| Mr. Peter Martin | 3 years | No |
| Professsor Savid Nutt | 3 years | No |
| Mr. Richard Pates | 3 years | No |
| Mr. Trevor Pearce | 3 years | No |
| Mr. Arthur Preddy | 3 years | No |
| Dr. Mary Rowlands | 3 years | No |
| Mrs. Kay Roberts | 3 years | No |
| Mrs. Patricia Roberts | 3 years | No |
| Dr. Roy Robertson | 3 years | No |
| Dr. Polly Taylor | 3 years | No |
| Ms Monique Tomlinson | 3 years | No |

*Correctional Services Board*

| | *Term of office* | *Remunerated* |
|---|---|---|
| Sir Duncan Nichol | 3 years | Yes |
| David Henshaw | 3 years | Yes |
| Richard Rosser | 3 years | Yes |
| Angela Sarkis | 3 years | Yes |

## Re-offending

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on levels of re-offending among prisoners with mental illness. [155908]

**Paul Goggins:** There is no central record of re-offending by prisoners with mental illness.

We do know that 6 per cent. of restricted patients under the Mental Health Act 1983 discharged in 1999 were reconvicted of a standard list offence within two years of discharge, and 1 per cent. of a grave offence.

Restricted patients make up about a quarter of offenders dealt with by way of a hospital disposal in lieu of a prison sentence.

Figures are not kept centrally for re-offending by unrestricted patients with hospital orders.

## Sentencing

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to monitor differences in the sentencing of offenders from different ethnic groups in *(a)* England and Wales and *(b)* London. [155955]

**Paul Goggins:** Section 95 Criminal Justice Act 1991 requires the Home Office to publish statistics annually to help those involved in the administration of justice avoid discrimination against any persons on the grounds of race or sex or any improper grounds. The first edition of what has become a series of publications on Race and the Criminal Justice System was published in 1992 including demographic data and prison statistics.

The Home Office is monitoring sentences handed down by the Crown court in terms of the ethnicity of the person prosecuted. A similar programme of monitoring is being developed for magistrates courts. This data will be broken down into the 42 Local Criminal Justice areas (including London) and will also be available for England and Wales as a whole. It has already been published for a number of areas and will be published for other areas once it is of sufficient quality to be statistically acceptable as showing an accurate picture.

The "Ethnic Minorities in the Criminal Courts: Perceptions of Fairness and Equality of Treatment" study published by the Department of Constitutional Affairs (Hood, Shute and Seemungal 2003) concludes that although perceptions have improved since previous studies, more work is needed to eliminate perceived discrimination. The report reveals that although there is no hard research to prove this one way or another, around two thirds of the complaints about racial bias concerned perceived inequitable sentencing, with Black and Minority Ethnic defendants believing they had received a harsher sentence than would have been handed down to a similarly placed white defendant—CJS professionals e.g. lawyers had a stronger perception still. This is likely to be a contributory factor to low BME confidence in respecting the rights of defendants.

The CJS Race Unit will now work to establish whether there is any quantitative evidence of different sentencing between people in different BME and white populations while controlling for type of offence and other contributing or mitigating factors. If there is such evidence the Unit will consider actions to counter it, if not they will address the perception that there is

differential sentencing. The Unit envisages awarding the research contract in April 2004. First results are then expected Spring 2005 with completion Spring 2006.

### Sex Offenders

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what programmes are in place to rehabilitate high risk sexual offenders; and what the reconviction rate is of offenders who have completed the programmes. [155339]

**Paul Goggins:** Both Her Majesty's Prison Service and the National Probation Service provide treatment programmes to challenge attitudes and beliefs which offenders use to justify their crimes and increase their understanding of the harm caused to victims. In addition new skills are acquired by offenders to enable them to recognise and deal more appropriately with high risk situations and high risk mood states on release. Details of all the programmes are contained in the Home Office publication "The Treatment and Risk Management of Sexual Offenders in Custody and in the Community", copies of which have been placed in the Library.

This document also contains reconviction data on offenders who have completed the Prison Service programmes. Insufficient time has elapsed to collect similar data on the accredited community-based programmes.

### Shopworkers

**Helen Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent discussions he has had on protecting shopworkers from violence; and if he will make a statement. [154658]

**Ms Blears** *[holding answer 12 February 2004]*: Any form of violence is totally unacceptable and must be dealt with accordingly. I fully understand the detrimental and damaging effect that crime against business has on the community.

My right hon. Friend, the Home Secretary attended the "National Respect for Shop Workers Day" organised by the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers' (USDAW) in September. The key aims were to demonstrate to the public that the Government, the retail industry and the retail trade union are campaigning together to tackle crime. The Government welcome the work USDAW has undertaken through its Freedom From Fear campaign to raise awareness of violence against shopworkers. The Government are tackling this issue, for example by:

Providing funding for training seminars for small retailers as part of the 15 million Small Retailers in Deprived Areas Scheme.

Holding a Business Crime forum for Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SME's) which was well represented by retailers.

Encouraging employers to manage work-related violence in the same way as any health and safety issue. The Health and Safety Executive has published general guidance to help employers tackle work-related violence, including specific guidance for the retail sector. This can be accessed via their website www.hse.gov.uk.

Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) can also be used to protect shopworkers from violence. The orders can prohibit persons entering specified areas such as shopping centres, or prohibit persons engaging in specified anti-social acts eg shoplifting, verbally abusing shopworkers, writing graffiti on a shop, or prohibit persons approaching specified persons. Breach of an ABSO is a criminal offence attracting a maximum sentence of five years imprisonment.

The number of people experiencing violence at work has actually fallen by 27 per cent. since 1999 according to the most recent British Crime Survey published on 27 January 2004.

## DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

### Better Buildings Task Force

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his policy is on the appointment of representatives of the energy efficiency industry to his Better Buildings Task Force. [157025]

**Phil Hope:** Industry representation is essential for the successful delivery of the objectives of the Sustainable Buildings Task Group. That is why the Group contains representatives from the energy efficiency sector, as well as the volume house building, developer, water industry, and waste and timber sectors.

### Building Land (Havering)

**John Cryer:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much Brownfield land is available for building in the London borough of Havering. [157327]

**Keith Hill:** The 2002 National Land Use Database of Previously Developed Land shows a total of 159 hectares of previously developed land that may be available for development in Havering. This includes 74 hectares of vacant or derelict land and buildings, and 85 hectares currently in use with the potential for development.

### Area-based Initiatives

**Mr. Edward Davey:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list for each area-based initiative for which his Department is responsible the amount *(a)* originally budgeted for 2002–03, *(b)* not spent in 2002–03, *(c)* carried forward to 2003–04 and *(d)* budgeted for 2003–04. [152794]

**Yvette Cooper:** The information is as follows.

*£ million*

| *Programme* | *Original budget 2002–03* | *Not spent in 2002–03* | *C/F to 2003–04* | *Budgeted for 2003–04* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Coalfields | 15 | 0 | 0 | 22 |
| Community Chest | 14.98 | 0.6 | [1]— | 25 |
| European Regional Development Fund Areas | 210.1 | 25.2 | 25.2 | [2]230.5 |
| Liveability Fund | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 |

£ million

| Programme | Original budget 2002–03 | Not spent in 2002–03 | C/F to 2003–04 | Budgeted for 2003–04 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Market Renewal Pathfinders | 25 | 21.1 | 21.1 | [3]61.1 |
| Neighbourhood Management | 11 | 0.3 | [1]— | 23 |
| Neighbourhood Renewal Fund | 300 | [4]— | [4]— | 400 |
| Neighbourhood Wardens/Street Wardens | 17.25 | 0.4 | [1]— | 10 |
| New Deal for Communities | 186 | 1.9 | [1]— | 265 |

[1] Allocations for both years in question are worked out annually on the basis of delivery plans from grant recipients. Where individual projects span two or more years across delivery plans these will be covered by the allocations given.
[2] This is the budget after the spring supplementary adjustments and includes EYF drawn down from prior years.
[3] This is inclusive of funds carried forward from 2002–03.
[4] There are no confirmed figures for Neighbourhood Renewal Fund expenditure in 2002–03. NRF Statements of Use are being analysed at present.

## Census (2001)

**Mr. Dismore:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations have been made to *(a)* him and *(b)* the Office for National Statistics concerning the accuracy of the 2001 Census by (i) the London borough of Barnet, (ii) Westminster city council and (iii) Manchester city council; and if he will make a statement. [156489]

**Keith Hill:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has received a number of letters from Westminster city council and Manchester city council with regard to the population estimates based on the 2001 Census and has met with Manchester city council. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has received previous correspondence from my hon. Friend concerning the accuracy of the 2001 Census.

The Office for National Statistics has received a number of letters from Westminster city council, Manchester city council and the London borough of Barnet with regard to results of the 2001 Census, and population estimates based on these.

The Office for National Statistics are involved in studies with Westminster city council and Manchester city council, comparing the 2001 Census address lists with administrative records. These studies are not yet complete, but a provisional adjustment to the 2001 population estimate for Manchester, based on the results of the address matching project, was released in November.

## Community Projects

**Mr. Edward Davey:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list projects funded by *(a)* Community Cohesion pathfinders, *(b)* Community Chest, *(c)* the Community Empowerment Fund and *(d)* the Community Champions Fund in each year from 2001–02 to 2005–06; what the budget was for each project in each year; how much funding his Department provided for each project in each year; and in which Government office of the region each project is located. [152914]

**Yvette Cooper:** The information is as follows.

*Community Cohesion Pathfinders (CCPs)*

The Community Cohesion Pathfinder areas (CCPs) are a joint initiative between the Home Office and the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

They are intended to pioneer programmes to break down barriers between the different community groups in given geographical areas. These groups may be arranged along social, ethnic, religious or even work-related lines.

CCPs are managed by the Home Office's Community Cohesion Unit. The programme is under way in the following 14 areas:

1. Bury metropolitan borough council
2. Charnwood borough council
3. East Lancashire Partnership (Lancashire county council, together with Burnley, Hyndburn, Pendle and Rossendale borough councils)
4. Kirklees metropolitan council
5. Leicester city council
6. Mansfield district council
7. Middlesbrough council
8. Peterborough city council
9. Plymouth city council
10. Rochdale metropolitan borough council
11. Sandwell metropolitan borough council
12. Stoke-on-Trent city council
13. London borough of Southwark
14. West London Alliance (London boroughs of Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon and Hounslow).

CCP funding runs from February 2003 to September 2004. The first 13 of the above areas receive £285,000 over this 17-month period. The West London Alliance receives £570,000, which reflects its coverage of a much larger area covered than any of the other Pathfinders.

*Community Chest (CC)*

Community Chest (CC) grants are intended to support projects that encourage greater community involvement in local activities within the 88 neighbourhood renewal areas of England. Locally appointed intermediary VCS bodies promote and deliver the programme at a local level.

As information on individual projects is held at area level, a detailed list cannot be collated within the time available. Following are tables of CC funding paid by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to Government Offices in each of the English regions for the 2001–06 period, along with the number of projects funded.

| Region | ODPM Community Chest funding (£) | Number of Community Chest awards made |
|---|---|---|
| *Financial year 1: 2001–02* | | |
| East | 149,057 | 16 |
| East Midlands | 709,181 | 126 |
| London | 2,145,350 | 613 |
| North East | 1,513,672 | 389 |
| North West | 2,567,739 | 585 |
| South East | 264,003 | 60 |
| South West | 313,894 | 52 |
| West Midlands | 1,107,346 | 180 |
| Yorks and Humber | 1,300,516 | 203 |
| *Financial year 2: 2002–03* | | |
| East | 223,586 | 81 |
| East Midlands | 1,063,770 | 441 |
| London | 3,218,024 | 1,189 |
| North East | 2,164,318 | 947 |
| North West | 3,851,661 | 1,075 |
| South East | 396,004 | 282 |
| South West | 470,842 | 204 |
| West Midlands | 1,661,023 | 612 |
| Yorks and Humber | 1,950,773 | 1,004 |
| *Financial year 3: 2003–04—Based on financial returns to the end of the third quarter of the financial year* | | |
| East | 341,916 | 81 |
| East Midlands | 1,739,056 | 467 |
| London | 5,313,331 | 1,293 |
| North East | 3,549,043 | 1,356 |
| North West | 6,490,702 | 1,695 |
| South East | 585,151 | 172 |
| South West | 729,480 | 230 |
| West Midlands | 2,890,901 | 567 |
| Yorks and Humber | 3,360,419 | 916 |
| *Financial year 4: 2004–05—Projected number of awards* | | |
| East | 341,916 | 81 |
| East Midlands | 1,739,056 | 470 |
| London | 5,313,331 | 1,063 |
| North East | 3,549,043 | 1,200 |
| North West | 6,490,702 | 1,695 |
| South East | 585,151 | 172 |
| South West | 729,480 | 230 |
| West Midlands | 2,890,901 | 600 |
| Yorks and Humber | 3,360,419 | 920 |
| *Financial year 5: 2005–06—Projected number of awards* | | |
| East | 341,916 | 81 |
| East Midlands | 1,739,056 | 470 |
| London | 5,313,331 | 1,063 |
| North East | 3,549,043 | 1,200 |
| North East | 6,490,702 | 1,695 |
| South East | 585,151 | 172 |
| South West | 729,480 | 230 |
| West Midlands | 2,890,901 | 600 |
| Yorks and Humber | 3,360,419 | 920 |

*Note:*
Figures for 2001–03 are annual baselines, as funding was allowed to roll over to the next year during this period. All funding figures include administration costs, which are limited to no more than 10 per cent.

*Community Empowerment Fund (CEF)*

CEF is not a project-based initiative. It funds the establishment and development of an effective community and voluntary sector infrastructure, the Community Empowerment Network (CEN), in each of the 88 neighbourhood renewal areas of England. CENs allow the VCS to play an active part in LSPs. Annual budgets for each English region are provided as follows.

£

| Region | Community Empowerment Fund Budget 2001–02 | 2002–03 | 2003–04 | 2004–05 | 2005–06 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| East | 228,033 | 228,033 | 228,033 | 228,033 | 228,033 |
| East Midlands | 905,245 | 905,245 | 905,245 | 905,245 | 905,245 |
| London | 2,654,485 | 2,654,485 | 2,654,485 | 2,654,485 | 2,654,485 |
| North East | 1,824,502 | 1,824,502 | 1,824,502 | 1,824,502 | 1,824,502 |
| North West | 2,967,301 | 2,967,301 | 2,967,301 | 2,967,301 | 2,967,301 |
| South East | 436,573 | 436,573 | 436,573 | 436,573 | 436,573 |
| South West | 465,082 | 465,082 | 465,082 | 465,082 | 465,082 |
| West Midlands | 1,132,771 | 1,132,771 | 1,132,771 | 1,132,771 | 1,132,771 |
| Yorks and Humber | 1,386,008 | 1,386,008 | 1,386,008 | 1,386,008 | 1,386,008 |

*Community Champions Fund (CCF)*

CCF is an initiative of the Department for Education and Skills. It provides grants to individuals nationwide, which focus on the development of learning and skills. It helps to deliver this through its two main objectives:

1. Developing the skills levels of individuals to enable them to act as leaders, animateurs and inspirational figures within the community;

2. Encouraging these individuals to improve the involvement of communities in regeneration and learning activity.

GOs deliver CCF through a number of intermediary organisations from the voluntary and community sector. The intermediaries promote and deliver the programme at a local level. As information on individual projects is held at area level, a detailed list cannot be collated within the time available. Overleaf are tables of CCF funding allocated by the DfES to Government Offices in each of the English regions for the 2001–04 period, along with the number of projects funded.

| Government office | Budget for region (£000) | Number of grants awarded |
|---|---|---|
| *Financial year 2001–02* | | |
| East of England | 246 | 135 |
| West Midlands | 347 | 215 |
| East Midlands | 261 | 158 |
| North West | 364 | 350 |
| North East | 277 | 170 |

| Government office | Budget for region (£000) | Number of grants awarded |
|---|---|---|
| Yorks and Humber | 317 | 163 |
| South West | 235 | 175 |
| South East | 267 | 137 |
| London | 486 | 189 |
| Total | 2,800,000 | 1,692 |
| *Financial year 2002–03* | | |
| East of England | 230 | 131 |
| West Midlands | 324 | 185 |
| East Midlands | 248 | 142 |
| North West | 344 | 197 |
| North East | 254 | 145 |
| Yorks and Humber | 297 | 170 |
| South West | 222 | 127 |
| South East | 242 | 138 |
| London | 464 | 265 |
| Total[1] | [1]2,625,000 | [1]1,500 |
| *Financial year 2003–04: Only mid-year figures available* | | |
| East of England | 227 | 80 |
| West Midlands | 302 | Late award panel |
| East Midlands | 233 | 40 |
| North West | 322 | 117 |
| North East | 238 | 58 |
| Yorks and Humber | 277 | 38 |
| South West | 213 | 67 |
| South East | 249 | 18 |
| London | 475 | Late award panel |
| Total[1] | [1]2,536,000 | [1]418 |

[1] In 2003–04, DfES funded a national evaluation of the Community Champions Fund. During 2002–04, an additional 1,530 "You and Your Community" awards were supported by the Community Champions Fund, which provided the matched funding element of a Millennium Commission award, delivered by the Scarman Trust.

### Comprehensive Performance Assessment

**Mr. Sanders:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total cost was including staffing, management and support, for the Comprehensive Performance Assessment process in local government in 2003 for *(a)* the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, *(b)* the Audit Commission, *(c)* the Improvement and Development Agency, *(d)* local authorities and *(e)* other agencies. [156688]

**Phil Hope:** The information requested is as follows:

*(a)* The Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) process in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in 2003 involved staff within the Office working directly on CPA, as well as a proportion of the time of staff across a wide range of other policy areas, and those at senior level, including Ministers with responsibility for local government policy. The total costs of the process will also have included a proportion of those relating to building, heating, lighting and computer equipment as well as stationery, postage and attending and arranging meetings and other events.

It is not possible to identify the overall cost of all this activity. The total cost of staff working full-time on CPA in 2003 was approximately £166,000.

*(b)* Details of the Audit Commission's costs in relation to the CPA process is an operational matter and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will ask the chief executive to write to the hon. Member and make a copy of that letter available in the Library of the House.

Information in relation to the cost of the CPA process to the bodies listed at *(c)*, *(d)* and *(e)* is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### Council Tax

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his latest estimate is of the costs of *(a)* council tax administration and *(b)* council tax benefit administration; and if he will make a statement. [156595]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's latest estimate based on 2003–04 Budget Estimate Returns from English local authorities is £337 million for council tax administration costs, and £235.7 million for council tax benefit administration costs. In 2003–04, council tax collection costs may include a small amount of NDR, rate (domestic and non-domestic) and community charge collection costs.

### Council Tenants

**Ms Oona King:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many council tenants in each local authority in London have transferred to other properties owned by their local authority in each year since 1990; and how many moved into homes with fewer bedrooms. [156776]

**Keith Hill:** A table on the number of council tenants who have transferred to other properties owned by their local authority since 1990 by London borough has been made available in the Library of the Houses.

This table also includes information on how many have moved into homes with fewer bedrooms since 1995 by London borough. Previous to 1995 this information was not collected centrally. All information is reported by local authorities on their annual Housing Investment Programme Statistical Returns.

### Elected Assemblies

**Mr. Jenkin:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the consultation period on the powers of elected assemblies began; when it will end; who is eligible to make representations; how many representations have been received to date; and which *(a)* individuals and *(b)* organisations have made representations so far. [156999]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The core powers and responsibilities the Government proposes for elected regional assemblies are set out in our 2002 White Paper "Your Region, Your Choice: Revitalising the English Regions" (Cm 5511).

As my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister made clear to the House on 11 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1496, we will be holding regional 'hearings' about the proposed powers of elected assemblies. The hearings will give people an opportunity to consider and discuss our proposals, and enable us to learn more about what people think about these issues.

There will be three hearings in each of the three northern regions over the next two months. The first hearings will be held on 4 March in Berwick and Blackburn. Details of the other hearings will be announced in due course and Members of Parliament will be notified of hearings in their region.

We are also interested in views from people who are unable to attend the hearings, and information about elected assemblies' powers will be available shortly to help inform such views. Copies of this information will also be placed in the House Library.

### Electoral Registration

**Mark Tami:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much each local authority has spent on *(a)* voter registration and *(b)* promoting voter registration in each of the last five years. [156549]

**Phil Hope:** A table with data on the Net Current Expenditure on voter registration for 1998–99, 1999–2000, 2001–02 and 2002–03 has been made available in the Library of the House. Data for 2000–01 is not available as the data was not separately identified.

Data on promoting voter registration are not collected centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### Fire Sprinklers

**Mr. Dhanda:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make it his policy to amend the building regulations in order to require the installation of fire sprinkler systems in new public leisure facilities. [156813]

**Phil Hope:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is keen to improve fire safety by all reasonable means and sprinklers are part of a package of measures that can be used in buildings. Other measures include the installation of fire alarm and fire detection systems and the provision of compartmentation that restricts the spread of fire within buildings by means of sub-dividing it into compartments, separated from one another by walls and/or floors of fire resisting construction.

In the case of places of assembly, which would include public leisure facilities, the guidance document that supports the fire safety aspects of the Building Regulations, known as Approved Document B, already limits the size of fire compartments to a floor area no larger than 2,000 square metres in multi-storey buildings. These compartments can be increased to 4,000 square metres where sprinklers are provided.

However, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister recently commenced a review of the fire safety aspects of the Building Regulations and we will be considering the role that sprinklers can play in all buildings, including places of assembly, and deciding whether the current thresholds in the guidance should be amended or indeed new ones introduced.

### Housing

**Ms Oona King:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his Answer of 22 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1464W, on housing, how many units built or acquired with social housing grant by *(a)* the Housing Corporation, *(b)* local authorities and *(c)* registered social landlords, without public subsidy, in each year since 1990 were (i) self-contained units and (ii) bedspaces. [156875]

**Keith Hill:** A breakdown of the number of self-contained dwellings and bedspaces is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

**Ms Oona King:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his Answer of 22 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1464W, on housing, how many units built or acquired with social housing grant by *(a)* the Housing Corporation, *(b)* local authorities and *(c)* registered social landlords, without public subsidy, in each year since 1990 were (i) social housing for rent and (ii) low cost home ownership. [156876]

**Keith Hill:** I will write to my hon. Friend with further details of the dwellings built or acquired with social housing grant by the Housing Corporation and local authorities for rent and low cost home ownership. A breakdown between social rent and low cost home ownership dwellings provided by registered social landlords without public subsidy is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

**Ms Oona King:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister who has been commissioned to undertake the research projects into *(a)* learning the lessons from the Estate Renewal Challenge Fund, *(b)* guidance on houses in multiple occupation amenities, *(c)* the effectiveness of disabled faculties grant administration and *(d)* key worker housing; what the terms of reference are for each project; and when work on each will be completed. [156877]

**Keith Hill:** The information requested is as follows:

*(a)* Heriot-Watt University have been commissioned to undertake the research project: Learning the Lessons from Estate Renewal Challenge Fund (ERCF). The terms of reference are to assess progress on the individual ERCF schemes and identify transferable lessons from ERCF for the wider stock transfer programme as well as other housing investment and regeneration programmes. The study should complete in May 2004.

*(b)* The research on guidance on houses in multiple occupation amenities has not been taken forward.

*(c)* The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, jointly with the Department of Health, is reviewing the Disabled Facilities Grant Programme in the context of the Spending Review 2004. The terms of reference for that review, and the scope of any research work that may need to be undertaken as part of it, are still being considered. The review will report later this year.

*(d) Key worker housing.* Heriot-Watt University have been commissioned to evaluate the Starter Homes Initiative (SHI). The study's main aims are to evaluate the effectiveness of the SHI, assess its impact, and give recommendations to improve future provision. The report is expected to be complete in October 2004.

NOP World were commissioned to explore recruitment and retention issues and housing preferences of key public sector workers. The study's main aim was to identify key public sector worker's future intentions (both employment and housing), the extent to which housing costs and the availability of suitable housing are affecting career choices and their preferences for different types of housing. The study was completed in December 2004.

**Ms Oona King:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will commission an assessment of the impact in London of Good Practice on Managing Under-occupation published by his Department in April 2001. [156775]

**Keith Hill:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has only just received the data from the Survey of English Housing for the first three quarters of 2003–04 which we would like to take into assessing the impact to date of the good practice on Managing Under-occupation on social housing in London. I will write to my hon. Friend once the results of this exercise have been collated, and will make the information available in the Library of the House. In the light of this information I shall consider how best to monitor the position for the future.

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister under what circumstances money from previously committed Housing Corporation grant schemes can be ringfenced for remodelled schemes. [156869]

**Keith Hill:** Grant from previous funded housing schemes may be recycled into new schemes, including remodelled schemes. Such schemes must meet the current Housing Corporation criteria for giving grant, which includes meeting regional and local priorities.

**Mr. Malins:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether, after 1 May, citizens of the EU accession states *(a)* without dependent children and *(b)* with dependent children will be entitled to council housing provision in the UK; and if he will make a statement. [154040]

**Keith Hill:** Housing is a devolved matter and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's remit only extends to England.

From 1 May citizens of the EU accession states who do not have a right to reside here because they are not self-sufficient (that is, they do not have sufficient resources so as to avoid being a burden on the social assistance system) will not be eligible for social housing. This will apply regardless of whether they have dependent children.

Nationals from the eight Eastern European accession countries who are employed and comply with the Home Office's worker registration scheme will have an unconditional right to reside here and will be eligible for social housing. Nationals from the other Accession countries who are workers will also be eligible for social housing.

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what research was undertaken on problems created by summertime overheating of lightweight buildings prior to the decision to encourage registered social landlords to use factory-built houses. [156640]

**Phil Hope:** No specific research into summertime overheating of lightweight buildings was commissioned. The Government and the construction industry were aware of research reports from hotter countries of problems of overheating that can occur in houses of lightweight construction, but this was not considered to be relevant to the decision to encourage the use of modern methods of construction in England and Wales. Nevertheless, the issue of overheating for all types of buildings is being addressed in the review of the Building Regulations announced in the Energy White Paper.

**Andy King:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what powers he has to enforce appropriate standards in the housing departments of local authorities. [156114]

**Keith Hill:** The Local Government Act 1999 provides powers that can be exercised if my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister is satisfied that a local authority is failing to comply with part 1 of the Act. The provisions of the Act requires that services, including housing services, are:

responsive to the needs of citizens

of a high quality and cost effective; and

air and accessible to all who need them.

My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister will exercise intervention powers under section 15 of the Local Government Act and other comparable legislation only when there is clear evidence that an authority is failing either to discharge its functions adequately or failing to meet its statutory obligations. My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister's powers are wide ranging, from directing the council to prepare a plan or perform a specified function through to removing specified functions from the council and appointing a nominee to exercise them.

Comprehensive Performance Assessments are in place to help identify local authorities' strengths and weaknesses, and provide a basis for improvement planning which the duty of best value confers.

### Land Regeneration Trust

**Paddy Tipping:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what progress is being made towards establishing the Land Regeneration Trust. [155849]

**Keith Hill:** English Partnerships, Groundwork, the Forestry Commission and the Environment Agency have jointly submitted to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister proposals for the establishment of a Land Restoration Trust. The purpose of the Trust would be to facilitate the remediation and management of brownfield sites that are not suitable for development, turning them into valuable new public open space and ensuring sustainable long-term management. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently discussing the detail of the plan with the partners and with other Government Departments. Hopefully it will be possible to conclude these discussions shortly.

### Land/Waste Reclamation

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions he has had with the Building Research Establishment on land and waste reclamations. [156386]

**Phil Hope:** The Building Research Establishment (BRE) has carried out research for the Buildings Division of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on protecting buildings from landfill gas. Buildings Division has also funded BRE to support widescale monitoring of research and guidance relating to contaminated land and to support the revision of British Standards relating to the waste management in buildings.

## Local Government Finance

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what grants that fall outside the revenue support grant were awarded to local authorities in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley by his Department in each of the last three years. [156512]

**Mr. Raynsford:** A table made available in the Library of the House shows the grants within aggregate external finance distributed to local authorities in Lancashire in each of the last three years, except for general grant support (Revenue Support Grant and National Non Domestic Rates). For 2003–04, this information is taken from the information supplied by the local authorities to the Office on the Revenue Account (Special Grant) form, which gives details of their budgeted revenue grants. For the earlier years, this information is taken from the information supplied by councils on the Revenue Outturn (Income from Specific and Special Grants) form.

**Jim Knight:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what grants were awarded to local authorities in Dorset by his Department in financial year 2003–04 that fall outside the revenue support grant. [156210]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The following table shows the grants within aggregate external finance distributed to authorities in Dorset in 2003–04, except for general grant support (Revenue Support Grant and National Non Domestic Rates). This information is taken in the main from the information supplied by the local authorities to the Office on the Revenue Account (Special Grant) form for 2003–04, which gives details of their budgeted revenue grants, although it also takes account of additional information supplied by the Department for Works and Pensions.

*£000*

| *Grant* | *Issuing Department* | *Dorset* | *Dorset Police* | *Bournemouth* | *Poole* | *Christchurch* | *East Dorset* | *North Dorset* | *Purbeck* | *West Dorset* | *Weymouth and Portland* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Civil Defence | CO | 0 | 0 | 70 | 62 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| National Parks and Broads | DEFRA | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Waste Re-Cycling Challenge | DEFRA | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 196 | 0 | 0 | 70 | 0 | 0 |
| Childcare | DfES | 989 | 0 | 455 | 415 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Excellence in Cities | DfES | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Leadership Incentive | DfES | 0 | 0 | 350 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| School Standards | DfES | 6,290 | 0 | 2,005 | 1,904 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Standards Fund | DfES | 7,840 | 0 | 2,150 | 2,913 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Teachers' Pay Reform | DfES | 4,876 | 0 | 2,081 | 1,508 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| GLA Transport Grant | DfT | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Metropolitan Railway Passenger Services | DfT | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Rural Bus Challenge | DfT | 130 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Rural Bus Subsidy | DfT | 865 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Urban Bus Challenge | DfT | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Access and Systems Capacity | DoH | 1,346 | 0 | 650 | 457 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| AIDS/HIV Support | DoH | 0 | 0 | 87 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services | DoH | 292 | 0 | 141 | 95 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Carers | DoH | 673 | 0 | 352 | 248 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Children's Services | DoH | 2,377 | 0 | 1,693 | 1,102 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Deferred Payments | DoH | 517 | 0 | 210 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Delayed Discharges | DoH | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mental Health | DoH | 869 | 0 | 210 | 319 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| National Training Strategy | DoH | 0 | 0 | 34 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Performance | DoH | 742 | 0 | 361 | 229 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Preserved Rights | DoH | 3,504 | 0 | 3,200 | 1,203 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Residential Allowance | DoH | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Teenage Pregnancy Local Implementation | DoH | 63 | 0 | 0 | 23 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Training Support | DoH | 342 | 0 | 169 | 126 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Council Tax Benefit Administration | DWP | 0 | 0 | 416 | 275 | 98 | 124 | 97 | 84 | 178 | 141 |
| Housing Benefit Administration | DWP | 0 | 0 | 712 | 331 | 126 | 153 | 142 | 97 | 211 | 253 |
| Workstep | DWP | 574 | 0 | 415 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| HB and CTB administration due to New Tax Credits | DWP | 0 | 0 | 36 | 19 | 7 | 9 | 8 | 6 | 14 | 12 |
| HB and CTB administration due to Pension Credits | DWP | 0 | 0 | 89 | 62 | 27 | 31 | 25 | 21 | 45 | 29 |
| HB and CTB administration due to New Tax Credits Special Subsidy Provision | DWP | 0 | 0 | 10 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 3 |
| HB and CTB administration due to Pension Credit set-up | DWP | 0 | 0 | 15 | 9 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 8 | 7 |
| Airwaves Communication Project | HO | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asylum Seekers | HO | 176 | 0 | 1,170 | 59 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Basic Command Units Challenge Fund | HO | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Community Support Officers | HO | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Counter Terrorism | HO | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Crime Fighting Fund | HO | 0 | 2,298 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| London and South East Allowance | HO | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Police Negotiating Board | HO | 0 | 430 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Rural Policing Fund | HO | 0 | 442 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Street Crime Initiative | HO | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Magistrates Courts | LCD | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Local Public Service Agreement Performance Reward | ODPM | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Neighbourhood Renewal Fund | ODPM | 0 | 0 | 400 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Neighbourhood Wardens | ODPM | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Planning Delivery | ODPM | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 75 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The Private Finance Initiative | ODPM | 1,893 | 2,915 | 1,761 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Supporting People (Administration) | ODPM | 349 | 0 | 120 | 177 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Supporting People (Programme) | ODPM | 7,475 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Other inside | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 282 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | | 42,182 | 6,085 | 19,352 | 11,894 | 535 | 478 | 290 | 285 | 599 | 445 |

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to set up a separate formula spending settlement for waste; and what discussions he has had on this issue with the Local Government Association. [156385]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The Government have no plans to set up a separate formula spending share for waste. In the course of the review of formula grant distribution, which led to the new formulae introduced for 2003–04, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister examined possible options in consultation with local government. Analyses undertaken demonstrated a very poor fit between expenditure levels on waste and any combination of plausible indicators.

### Local Government Reorganisation

**Mr. Jenkin:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions he has had with local authorities in *(a)* the North East, *(b)* the North West and *(c)* Yorkshire and Humber about how the costs of local government reorganisation will be funded. [157024]

**Mr. Raynsford:** None, but as previously explained in the answer given on 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 32W, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will be discussing the cost of reorganisation with local government in due course. A working group has been established to look at costs and the wider practical implications of reorganisation. Its first meeting will take place on 9 March. The Local Government Association is part of the group.

### Mobile Phone Masts

**John Cryer:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement about his powers to overturn decisions by the Planning Inspectorate to grant permission for mobile phone telephone masts. [157324]

**Keith Hill:** Planning Inspectors act in a quasi-judicial role, under delegated powers, for my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister. Once the Inspector issues a decision letter on behalf of my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister, that is his decision. If a party to the matter is dissatisfied, their recourse is through an appeal to the Court.

### New Deal

**Mr. Edward Davey:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what budgets have been allocated for *(a)* each New Deal for Communities partnership and *(b)* the New Deal for Communities in total for each financial year from 2003–04 to 2005–06, broken down by English region. [156473]

**Yvette Cooper:** The New Deal for Communities Programme has 39 NDC Partnerships and £2 billion has been committed to them over the 10 years of the NDC Programme. The 17 Round 1 Partnerships entered their delivery phase in 2000–01 and the 22 Round 2 Partnerships entered their delivery phase in 2001–02. Figures for 2003–04 to 2005–06 are tabled as follows. These figures are the budgets allocated to each NDC during the re-profiling exercise, which took place in early 2002.

The NDC budget is ring fenced and has end year flexibility, so the figures for 2004–05 onwards are estimates at this stage, and may be subject to change.

| | | *Budget* | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *NDC Partnership* | *2003–04* | *2004–05* | *2005–06* |
| West Ham and Plaistow | 10,195,000 | 7,600,000 | 6,500,000 |
| Shoreditch | 3,970,000 | 3,900,000 | 3,900,000 |
| Aylesbury | 5,500,000 | 7,800,000 | 8,500,000 |
| Ocean | 5,000,000 | 7,900,000 | 8,500,000 |
| South Kilburn | 3,438,900 | 5,000,000 | 6,000,000 |
| North Fulham | 6,500,000 | 6,200,000 | 6,200,000 |
| EC1 | 4,901,000 | 6,300,000 | 7,400,000 |
| Clapham Park | 3,500,000 | 6,700,000 | 7,800,000 |
| New Cross Gate | 5,000,000 | 5,400,000 | 6,300,000 |
| Seven Sisters | 3,300,000 | 5,500,000 | 7,000,000 |
| London total | 51,304,900 | 62,300,000 | 68,100,000 |
| EB4U, Brighton | 8,000,000 | 6,600,000 | 6,600,000 |
| Thornhill, Southampton | 4,000,000 | 5,800,000 | 6,800,000 |
| South East total | 12,000,000 | 12,400,000 | 13,400,000 |
| Devonport, Plymouth | 4,700,000 | 5,800,000 | 6,800,000 |
| Community at Heart, Bristol | 6,396,486 | 7,000,000 | 7,000,000 |
| South West total | 11,096,486 | 12,800,000 | 13,800,000 |
| Marsh Farm, Luton | 4,698,000 | 5,240,000 | 5,680,000 |
| North Earlham and Marlpit, Norwich | 5,800,000 | 5,280,000 | 4,928,000 |
| Eastern Region total | 10,498,000 | 10,520,000 | 10,608,000 |
| Braunstone, Leicester | 13,949,113 | 9,000,000 | 6,000,000 |
| Radford and Hyson Green, Nottingham | 7,500,000 | 8,500,000 | 7,800,000 |
| Derwent, Derby | 3,043,139 | 5,040,000 | 5,880,000 |
| East Midlands total | 24,492,252 | 22,540,000 | 19,680,000 |
| Greets Green, Sandwell | 4,639,632 | 7,800,000 | 7,800,000 |
| Blakenall, Bloxwich East and Leamore, Walsall | 6,000,000 | 6,200,000 | 7,200,000 |
| Coventry | 7,500,000 | 7,600,000 | 7,600,000 |

| NDC Partnership | 2003–04 | Budget 2004–05 | 2005–06 |
|---|---|---|---|
| All Saints and Blakenhall, Wolverhampton | 2,000,000 | 5,300,000 | 7,000,000 |
| Kings Norton, Birmingham | 5,000,000 | 7,000,000 | 7,500,000 |
| Aston, Birmingham | 5,300,000 | 6,000,000 | 7,000,000 |
| West Midlands total | 30,439,632 | 39,900,000 | 44,100,000 |
| Doncaster Central | 5,000,000 | 6,200,000 | 7,300,000 |
| Burngreave, Sheffield | 4,000,000 | 6,200,000 | 7,800,000 |
| Bradford Trident | 8,500,000 | 7,000,000 | 6,000,000 |
| Preston Road, Hull | 7,800,000 | 7,700,000 | 6,500,000 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside total | 25,300,000 | 27,100,000 | 27,600,000 |
| North Huyton, Knowsley | 7,645,000 | 7,800,000 | 7,800,000 |
| Kensington, Liverpool | 6,132,000 | 8,000,000 | 8,500,000 |
| East Manchester | 21,245,108 | 4,600,000 | 2,000,000 |
| Hattershaw and Fitton Hill, Oldham | 5,580,000 | 7,500,000 | 7,500,000 |
| Charlestown and Lower Kersal, Salford | 6,249,000 | 7,420,000 | 7,420,000 |
| Heywood, Rochdale | 5,692,600 | 6,200,000 | 7,280,000 |
| North West total | 52,543,708 | 41,520,000 | 40,500,000 |
| West Central Hartlepool | 5,500,000 | 6,500,000 | 7,500,000 |
| Newcastle Westgate | 5,500,000 | 7,600,000 | 8,200,000 |
| West Middlesbrough | 7,000,000 | 7,200,000 | 7,200,000 |
| Back on the Map, Sunderland | 5,500,000 | 6,466,000 | 7,500,000 |
| North East total | 23,500,000 | 27,766,000 | 30,400,000 |
| Overall total | 241,174,978 | 256,846,000 | 268,188,000 |

### Non-domestic Rate Pool

**Mr. Dhanda:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the national non-domestic rate pool. [156822]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The non-domestic rates are a national tax on the occupation of property and the billing and collection of the rates is undertaken locally.

The rates revenue is collected on behalf of my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister who pays it into the national non-domestic rates pool. The revenue from the pool is then re-distributed to all local authorities (including county councils, Police and Fire) as part of the financial settlement to local authorities.

The amount a local billing authority receives in a distribution from the pool is not necessarily the same as the amount it contributed to the pool. Distributions from the pool are calculated on the basis of domestic population in the local authority area not on the number of business ratepayers or business rates revenue.

**Mr. Dhanda:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much money was collected in 2003–04 from businesses in Gloucester in non-domestic rates; and how much of this was passed on to *(a)* Gloucester city council and *(b)* Gloucestershire county council. [156823]

**Mr. Raynsford:** A total of £129,720,708 was collected in non-domestic rates from businesses in Gloucestershire in 2003–04 of which Gloucester city council collected £34,588,861, under the national non-domestic rates allocation system, council receipts are related to population, rather than to the amount raised in their area. In the case of Gloucestershire, £3,836,122 was passed on to Gloucester city council and Gloucestershire county council received £151,436,097.

### Postal Voting

**Mark Tami:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much was spent by each local authority on *(a)* postal vote registration and *(b)* advertising postal voting in each of the last five years. [156547]

**Phil Hope:** Information on expenditure by local authorities on postal vote registration and advertising postal voting is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

### Regional Assemblies

**Mr. Jenkin:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost was of each *(a)* advertisement, *(b)* regional visit, *(c)* publication and *(d)* media broadcast in connection with the information campaign on regional assemblies. [157026]

**Mr. Raynsford:** I refer the hon. Member to the answers given to the right hon. Member for Skipton and Ripon (Mr. Curry) on 5 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 149W and 6 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 342W.

### Social Rented Sector (London)

**Ms Oona King:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the number of homes in the social rented sector in London which are *(a)* one-bedroom above the bedroom standard and *(b)* two or more bedrooms above the bedroom standard. [156777]

**Keith Hill:** Using data from the Survey of English Housing for the years 1999–2000 to 2002–03, the estimated number of households in the social rented sector in London that are one bedroom above the "bedroom standard" is 170,000 (i.e. 20 per cent. of

households). The estimated number that are two or more bedrooms above the standard is 60,000 (i.e. 7 per cent.)

### Starter Home Initiative

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many key workers in *(a)* England and *(b)* London the Starter Home Initiative has helped to buy a home since the scheme was launched. [156562]

**Keith Hill:** By mid-February 2004, 7,500 key workers in England (including over 3,500 in London) had been helped to buy a home under the Starter Home Initiative.

### Tenancy Deposits

**Mr. Laurence Robertson:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the number of tenants who did not have their deposits returned at the end of their tenancy in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [157309]

**Keith Hill:** The following table shows for the last three years for which information is available, the estimated figures for the number of tenancies where the deposit was withheld (in full or in part) unreasonably in the view of the ex-tenant. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not sought to obtain the view of the landlord/agent.

*Tenancies where ex-tenant stated that deposit was unreasonably withheld: England*

| | *Thousand* |
|---|---|
| 2000–01 | 112 |
| 2001–02 | 99 |
| 2002–03 | 104 |
| Average | 105 |

As these estimates, which were derived from the Survey of English Housing, are subject to considerable sampling error no conclusion should be drawn about the trend.

Over the three-year period these retained deposits represented 21 per cent. of all completed tenancies where a deposit was paid.

**Mr. Laurence Robertson:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to ensure that tenants receive their deposits back at the end of their tenancy; and if he will make a statement. [157310]

**Keith Hill:** I refer the hon. Member to the information given during the Standing Committee E on the afternoon of 24 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 704–11.

## PRIME MINISTER

### IBM

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 11 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1471W, on the Civil Service, whether he had been informed that IBM were subject to investigation by the Special Compliance Office of Inland Revenue in 1997; whether the then Cabinet Secretary's application declared that IBM UK were subject to Special Compliance Office investigation in 1997; when enquiries were made on IBM's standing of *(a)* Inland Revenue and *(b)* Customs and Excise as part of the approval process for the Cabinet Secretary's application to join IBM's UK advisory board; when the Prime Minister was informed that IBM were subject to Inland Revenue investigation; and when the former Cabinet Secretary advised the Prime Minister that he had resigned from IBM's UK advisory board. [156522]

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 11 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1471W and the answer provided by the Minister for the Cabinet Office on 2 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 713W.

In accordance with established procedures, Ministers are not informed of investigations into specific companies by either the Inland Revenue or Customs and Excise.

The then Cabinet Secretary submitted an application under the Business Appointment rules in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 4.3 of the Civil Service Management Code, a copy of which is in the Library of the House. There is no requirement on former civil servants to advise me that they have relinquished an outside appointment.

### House of Lords

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the future of People's Peers. [157978]

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Thurrock (Mr. MacKinlay) on 15 January 2003, *Official Report*, column 632W.

### Iraq

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Prime Minister whether it is his policy to press for the return to the people of Iraq of unallocated resources in the hands of the UN Compensation Commission. [157059]

**The Prime Minister:** The United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC) was established in 1991 to assess and pay claims in compensation for losses as a result of Iraq's illegal invasion of Kuwait in 1990. The UNCC has completed more than 98 per cent. of its claims work and it is the UK Government's position that this work should be completed.

UN Security Council Resolution 1483 (22 May 2003) decided that 5 per cent. of Iraqi oil revenues would be deposited in the UNCC fund to meet awards. This will continue unless an internationally recognised, representative Government of Iraq and the Governing Council of the UNCC decide otherwise.

**Lynne Jones:** To ask the Prime Minister what discussions he has had with President Bush on the allegation that Saddam Hussein attempted to procure uranium from Africa. [157136]

**The Prime Minister:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) on 15 July 2003, *Official Report*, column 174W.

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Prime Minister what reports he has received that Iraq assembled and tested a long range artillery shell packed with irradiated zirconium. [157577]

**The Prime Minister:** None.

**Tom Cox:** To ask the Prime Minister whether British officials have visited Saddam Hussein since his capture by the United States authorities. [158031]

**The Prime Minister:** No British officials have visited Saddam Hussein since his capture.

### Ministerial Speeches

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Prime Minister how many speeches *(a)* the Minister without Portfolio, *(b)* the Leader of the House of Lords and *(c)* he made between 9 June 2003 and 1 February 2004; and where a copy of each speech can be obtained. [156142]

**The Prime Minister:** I and members of the Government make a number of speeches on a wide range of domestic and international issues including Iraq, Europe and public services. A list of all speeches by the Government is not maintained centrally.

Copies of my speeches are available on the Number 10 website.

My right hon. Friend the Minister without Portfolio and my noble and right hon. Friend, the Leader of the House of Lords have both made public speeches in this period. These are available from the Cabinet Office Press Office.

### Pakistan

**Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Prime Minister what action has been taken by the UK Government to monitor the activities of Abdul Qadeer Khan since he was a research student with access to URENCO, with particular reference to the matters raised in the debate of 18 December 1979, *Official Report*, column 554 ff. [154969]

**The Prime Minister:** We have for many years been gathering information on the private network of suppliers of nuclear components operating across many countries and hinging on the activities of Dr. A Q Khan. The nature of this network is now well known to us and we, in co-operation with the US and other Governments have been engaged in closing down this network.

### Recruitment Advertising

**Pete Wishart:** To ask the Prime Minister what his Office's expenditure on recruitment advertising was in each of the last three years, broken down by publication; and what proportion of such expenditure was *(a)* to advertise vacant posts and *(b)* in the form of other general recruitment advertising. [155532]

**The Prime Minister:** The cost for advertising vacant posts in my Office: in 2001 £1,667; in 2002 £11,932; and, in 2003 it was £12,964. These were to fill vacancies in a number of units including information technology, security and the correspondence unit.

A difference in costs may occur because of the number of vacant posts advertised, the number of publications in which the advert is placed, the duration of the advert and the nature of the vacancy, for example specialist posts in information technology.

The adverts were published in a variety of media including the national, local and specialist press.

No expenditure was used for other general recruitment advertising.

### Secondments

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Prime Minister what secondments *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* Deloitte & Touche, *(c)* Ernst & Young and *(d)* KPMG have made to his Office since 2001; for what (i) periods and (ii) tasks the secondments were made; whether secondments of staff from his Office have been made to those firms; and for what (A) periods and (B) tasks. [156914]

**The Prime Minister:** Since 2001, no secondments have been made to or from my Office to these firms.

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the secondees from outside organisations working at 10 Downing Street, stating in each case *(a)* the name of the person, *(b)* the name of the organisation, *(c)* the post held and *(d)* the start and finish dates of the secondment; and which are involved in drafting parliamentary answers. [158050]

**The Prime Minister:** None.

### Terrorism

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Prime Minister which Government departments are responsible for *(a)* information on and *(b)* preparation against the use of radiological material as a terrorist device; and what expenditure on decontamination equipment there has been in the last two years. [157056]

**The Prime Minister:** The Cabinet Office is responsible for crisis and consequence management co-ordination across central Government in the event of such a terrorist attack.

Information on and preparation against the use of radiological material by terrorists involves many Government Departments and agencies. Protective security against the use of radiological material as a terrorist device is the responsibility of the Home Office. International non-proliferation of radiological material for terrorist means is the responsibility of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

The other Departments and agencies that would have a role include the Department of Health; the Health Protection Agency (particularly the National Radiological Protection Board); the Ministry of Defence, the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; the Health and Safety Executive; HM Customs and Excise; Department for Trade and Industry and the Department for Transport.

Over the past two years the Government have made available £54.4 million for investment in decontamination equipment for the Fire Service, Ambulance Service and Accident and Emergency Departments.

# Written Answers to Questions

*Tuesday 2 March 2004*

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### Agriculture and Fisheries Council

**Mr. Hood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the outcome was of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 24 February; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if she will make a statement. [157673]

**Margaret Beckett:** I represented the United Kingdom at a meeting of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council in Brussels on 24 February.

The Irish Presidency briefly presented its work programme for the first half of the year. Their general priorities were enlargement, simplification and enhancement of food safety.

The Council agreed by a qualified majority a regulation providing for tariff quotas for the importation of certain fishery products. Italy voted against because of its view that the quota for tuna loin imports was insufficient and Spain abstained because it felt that the quotas in general were too large. I supported the proposal.

The Council noted progress on technical level discussions preparatory to political discussion at the April Council on the proposals for a regulation on the protection of animals during transport. There was a discussion, and I supported the need for an early agreement and for a longer-term objective of moving trade in live animals for slaughter to a meat basis.

The Council noted a presentation from the Commission on its proposals for the financial perspective.

The Council noted a report from the Greek Minister about severe weather conditions in Greece affecting agriculture and the sympathetic response from the Commission. Greece and the Commission would pursue the assessment of this situation bilaterally.

The Council took note of a report from the Commission on its public hearing on 22 January on organic food and farming. This is preparatory to the tabling of an action plan by the Commission to the Council later in the Irish Presidency.

Under any other business, the Council noted a written report on BSE and reports from Commissioner Byrne on the current situation in regard to Avian Influenza in Asia and a recent outbreak in the US. Commissioner Byrne notified the Council that acting under comitology procedures the Commission was to introduce a ban on the importation of live poultry and certain products from the US. The Council also noted a report from Spain and Portugal about the high level of feed grain prices and indications from Finland and Sweden that there remained supplies of oats which could be used.

The Council also noted information from Italy and Portugal with support from other wine producing countries about recent changes which had been made to the use of traditional terms for wine imported from third countries. The Council noted that the Commission had explained that these changes were necessary to take account of recent discussions at WTO level.

The Council noted information from France about the low level of milk prices. A wide range of views were expressed in subsequent discussion. I made the point that this was to be expected as a result of the changes agreed last June which was reflected in the compensation payments to be introduced shortly. The Commission undertook to produce an analysis of the situation with assistance from the member states.

Finally the Commission amplified the terms of a letter which it had recently sent to all member states about the single farm payment to explain that it was simply making the point that member states which chose to operate on regional or hybrid models would need to justify this decision to the Commission as will be clarified in the Commission implementing regulations. This was noted by the Council.

### Animal Welfare

**Mr. Streeter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the prospects of obtaining approval under Article 30 of the Treaty of Rome to ban the live transport of horses to the Continent. [153628]

**Alun Michael:** We have considered very carefully the idea that the Government could seek a ban on the grounds of public morality (Article 30 of the Treaty of Rome), but we do not believe that this would be defensible *(a)* when horses have always been slaughtered in this country in order for the meat to be exported for human consumption and *(b)* when horses are exported for a variety of purposes. That is why we have concentrated our attention on issues of horse welfare during transport in order to make sure that we have future arrangements based on horse welfare which are stronger and more robust that the current 'minimum values' rules.

### Energy White Paper

**Alan Simpson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the Energy Efficiency Implementation Plan announced in the Energy White Paper of February 2003 is to be published; whether publication of the plan is expected to be within the timescale originally indicated in the White Paper; and when she expects to publish the second annual progress report on the UK Fuel Poverty Strategy. [154580]

**Mr. Morley:** As announced in a written statement by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on 3 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 30–31WS, the Energy White Paper first annual report will be published shortly after the Easter recess. This will allow the Government to report on a full year from the launch of the White Paper in February 2003, as

we are legally required to do by the Sustainable Energy Act 2003, as well as to capture some key energy statistics for the relevant period. Given the importance of energy efficiency to delivery of the Energy White Paper objectives, the Government intend to publish the Energy Efficiency Implementation Plan at the same time as the Annual Report. The Government also envisage simultaneous publication of the fuel poverty strategy implementation plan and the CHP strategy as well as the second annual progress report on the UK Fuel Poverty Strategy.

### Flood Defences

**Mrs. May:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what guidance has been issued to the Environment Agency on matching local authority funding for flood defences. [154915]

**Margaret Beckett:** No such guidance has been issued. From April 2004 the Environment Agency's flood defence service in England will be funded primarily through Defra grant in aid which will replace, in large part, the levies that local authorities have previously paid to the Agency. We have, however, left in place a power for the Agency to levy local authorities to fund works not covered by Defra grant. These levies need to be agreed by the relevant flood defence committee on which the local authorities have a majority.

Levies are also subject to a cap of three times the level of Formula Spending Share allocated to each local authority to support the levy payment.

### Horses

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much horse meat was exported in 2003. [157263]

**Alun Michael:** In 2003, 1,566 tonnes of horse meat was exported from the UK.

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what *(a)* grants and *(b)* other public funding she has made available to defray the start-up costs of the National Equine Database; [156652]

(2) what the *(a)* start-up budget and the *(b)* running costs of the National Equine Database are; and from which budget it will be funded. [156654]

**Alun Michael:** Defra is making provision for funding the start up costs of the National Equine Database for the first two years, and thereafter Defra will be responsible for the on-going maintenance costs of the data that Defra will use.

We have invited tenders to supply the database, and until the procurement process is complete the estimated costs for the database have to be treated as Commercial-in-Confidence.

### Pig Industry

**Mr. Nicholas Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the business recovery scheme to which the unspent funds from the pig industry restructuring scheme was re-allocated. [155497]

**Alun Michael:** The widely welcomed Business Recovery Fund (BRF) was set up in May 2001 to help small non-farming rural businesses recover from the effects of the foot and mouth outbreak. Pig farmers were eligible to apply for the BRF, but only if they wished to be helped to diversify from farming. The Fund provided a total of some £74 million for allocation to qualifying businesses. £54 million was new money provided by the Government, and the remainder was provided by Regional Development Agencies, who administered the Fund.

### Rural Payments Agency

**Mr. Steen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many *(a)* full and *(b)* part-time staff have been employed in the Rural Payments Agency in each of the last five years. [156046]

**Alun Michael:** The figures for the number of full and part-time staff employed by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) are set out in the following table.

The RPA was inaugurated with effect from 16 October 2001.

| *From* | *Full-time* | *Part-time*[1] |
|---|---|---|
| 16 October 2001 | 2,946.00 | 196.50 |
| 31 March 2002 | 3,003.00 | 241.69 |
| 31 March 2003 | 3,020.00 | 258.46 |
| 31 March 2004[2] | 3,336.00 | 291.70 |

[1] Full-time equivalent.
[2] Forecast figure as at 31 March 2004.

## TRANSPORT

### Liquified Petroleum Gas

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to encourage continued use of liquified petroleum gas following removal of road fuel tax support for liquid petroleum gas. [157450]

**Mr. Jamieson:** Liquified petroleum gas (LPG), has and will continue to receive considerable support from Government, not only in the form of a duty incentive (worth £75 million in terms of duty forgone in 2002–03 alone), but also through grants for vehicle conversions (the Powershift scheme), and reduced rates of vehicle excise duty for gas-powered vehicles.

As the pre-Budget report made clear, the relative environmental benefits of LPG vehicles have become less significant in recent years as a result of progressively tighter emission standards for new conventional petrol and diesel vehicles. As a result the Chancellor announced in the pre-Budget report that he will begin to gradually increase the rate for LPG over the next three years, setting duty differentials on a path towards a level commensurate with the fuel's environmental benefits. Consistent with the Government's commitment to give three-year certainty on duty differentials for alternative fuels, future differentials for the next three years will be announced at Budget 2004.

### Correspondence

**Mr. Horam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State will reply to the letter of the hon. Member for Orpington of 2 October 2003, regarding the public safety zone surrounding Biggin Hill airport. [157148]

**Mr. McNulty:** I regret that the hon. Member's letter had not been answered. I have written to him today explaining that in the light of revised forecasts of numbers and types of aircraft movements we have decided to reduce the size of the public safety zones at Biggin Hill airport. The effect will be that the areas of highest risk will no longer include any residential properties and that the airport company will no longer be expected to purchase any properties in Oaklands Lane or Victoria Gardens.

### Motor Insurance

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress his Department is making on establishing a link between existing DVLA and motor insurance databases. [157530]

**Mr. Jamieson:** DVLA established a link with the Motor Insurance Database on 17 February 2004 which allows the agency to confirm that a vehicle is insured prior to relicensing without having to view the insurance documents.

The Motor Insurers Anti Fraud and Theft Register is also linked to DVLA and automatically updates the vehicle record when a vehicle is seriously damaged. This allows an identity check to be carried out when such a vehicle is returned to the road.

### Overseas Hauliers (UK Roads)

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many overseas hauliers paid to use UK roads in each of the last three years; and how much the Government received in each year. [157718]

**Mr. Jamieson:** There is currently no charging regime in the UK for overseas hauliers. The Government announced in 2002 their intention to introduce a scheme to charge all lorries using UK roads on the basis of distance travelled. The Government remain committed to introducing such a charge and my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in the pre-Budget report his intention to publish a farther progress report during this year.

### Statutory Off Road Notifications

**Mr. Simon Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the *(a)* procedures and *(b)* priorities followed by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency when issuing a reminder notice in the case of Statutory Off Road Notifications. [157805]

**Mr. Jamieson:** Reminder notices are issued on or around the 15th day of the month of expiry of both the Statutory Off Road Notification and the vehicle licence.

## CABINET OFFICE

### Government Cars

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will list Whips to whom Government cars have been allocated, indicating in each case the *(a)* make and *(b)* engine size. [157852]

**Mr. Alexander:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to him on 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1569W.

### Government Services

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much the Government plans to spend in the next 12 months on delivering services via interactive television. [158135]

**Mr. Alexander:** Information on expenditure on delivering services via interactive television is not held centrally and could be produced only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what Government services projected to be delivered electronically in 2005 will be delivered through interactive television. [158136]

**Mr. Alexander:** Government Departments continue to work towards getting all Government services online by 2005, and seek to use Digital TV (DTV) wherever appropriate. Flagship services available now on DTV or planned by 2005 include Teacher TV, NHS Direct, Jobcentre Plus and the Pensions Service. In addition, UKonline Interactive is a world-first national one-stop-service for Government on DTV, bringing together access to all nationally available DTV services and progressively rolling out access to local government services on DTV.

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much the Government expects to save by providing all services through electronic means by 2005. [158137]

**Mr. Alexander:** The 2005 target aims to widen and facilitate access to Government services.

The Efficiency Review led by Sir Peter Gershon is encouraging Departments to review take-up of e-services to deliver savings.

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office whether the Government expects to have all its services available online by 2005; and if he will make a statement. [158133]

**Mr. Alexander:** Departments continue to work towards the target of 100 per cent. availability by 2005.

The latest figures on progress towards the target of making Government services available electronically by 2005 show that 66 per cent. of Government services are e-enabled.

### Parliamentary Questions

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many Parliamentary Questions have been tabled to his Department since 1 January 2003, broken down by *(a)* ordinary written and *(b)* named day; what

percentage in respect of *(a)* were answered within 10 working days; and what percentage in respect of *(b)* were answered by the specified date. [157518]

**Mr. Alexander:** The detailed information is not held in the form requested. However, during the period 1 January 2003 to 31 January 2004 the Cabinet Office answered 84 Named Day Questions of which 80 per cent. were answered on time and 341 Ordinary Written Questions of which 43 per cent. were answered on time.

### Websites

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much the Government has spent on its websites in each of the past four years. [158134]

**Mr. Alexander:** Individual Government Departments are responsible for the management and expenditure of their websites and as such expenditure figures are not held centrally by the Cabinet Office.

## SOLICITOR-GENERAL

### Fraud Trials

**Mr. Hawkins:** To ask the Solicitor-General (1) what steps she is taking following the most recent developments in the London City Bond and Operation Puma cases, in relation to *(a)* prosecution for perjury and *(b)* disclosure of documents by HM Customs and Excise to the Butterfield Inquiry into this matter; and if she will make a statement; [154656]

(2) what steps she is taking following the most recent developments in the London City Bond and Operation Puma cases; and if she will make a statement. [154655]

**The Solicitor-General** *[holding answer 12 February 2004]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer provided by the Economic Secretary to the Treasury on 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1552W, regarding the investigation jointly known as the London City Bond cases, and the review by Mr. Justice Butterfield that followed them. I also refer you to the Attorney General's statement made on 4 December 2003, *Official Report [Lords]*, column WA32, which announced the Government's intention to establish an Independent Prosecutions Office dealing with Customs and Excise prosecutions. The process will start soon to recruit a new Head to that office who will be directly accountable to the Attorney-General. As well as the developments outlined in that answer, I would draw the hon. Member's attention to some of the steps taken by Customs and Excise Prosecutions Office to improve the disclosure process in the large and complex cases prosecuted by them.

The Head of Prosecutions commissioned two reports on disclosure from CEPO's Quality Assurance team in order to assess and improve disclosure in CEPO cases. Recommendations from those reports are being taken forward.

A conference on disclosure was hosted by CEPO in December of last year attended by members of the Bar, the judiciary and defence practitioners which explored the difficulties involved in disclosure in large and complex cases, and encouraged the exchange of ideas and best practice which CEPO will take forward.

There is a current Metropolitan police investigation into the circumstances surrounding the LCB cases. No file has been received by the CPS in relation to any prosecutions arising from that investigation.

### Iraq

**Mr. Mitchell:** To ask the Solicitor-General what information the Attorney-General had received on weapons of mass destruction when he prepared his opinion on the legality of war against Iraq; whether this included information on weapons capable of being launched in 45 minutes; and whether it was indicated to him whether there were battlefield weapons or weapons deliverable to targets outside Iraq. [155417]

**The Solicitor-General:** The Attorney-General received a briefing from the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee on the content of the Government dossier published in September 2002 on 19 September 2002. As I explained to the hon. and learned Member for Medway (Mr. Marshall-Andrews) in my reply to him dated 14 October 2003, the Attorney-General did not rely upon any facts or assertions contained in the September dossier as material to his conclusion set out in his statement of 17 March that Iraq had failed to comply with Resolution 1441 and that a legal base for the use of force existed in the combined effect of UN Security Council Resolutions 678, 687 and 1441.

### Katharine Gun

**Mr. Ancram:** To ask the Solicitor-General whether *(a)* she and *(b)* the Attorney General had discussions with the Director of Public Prosecutions about the case of Katharine Gun before the Crown Prosecution Service decided not to offer any evidence against her. [157846]

**The Solicitor-General:** I have not discussed the case of Katharine Gun with the Director of Public Prosecutions.

For certain offences, including those under the Official Secrets Act, the Attorney General's consent is required by statute before a prosecution can go ahead. The Director of Public Prosecutions discussed the case with the Attorney General before the CPS took the decision to offer no evidence against Katharine Gun on evidential grounds.

**Mr. Cash:** To ask the Solicitor-General for what reasons the Attorney General did not issue a nolle prosequi in the case of Katharine Gun. [158132]

**The Solicitor-General:** Under the Code for Crown Prosecutors, it is for the prosecution to keep under review the prospects of a conviction as the case progresses. Counsel in this case did so and the CPS decided not to proceed with the case, on the advice of counsel and after consultation with the Attorney General, because the evidence was such that there was no longer a realistic prospect of conviction.

A nolle prosequi would not normally be entered where the reason not to proceed with the case is, as here, an evidential deficiency.

### Parmalat

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Solicitor-General what discussions she has had since the Parmalat affair on

greater co-operation between regulatory authorities *(a)* internationally and *(b)* at EU level; and if she will make a statement. [156884]

**The Solicitor-General:** I have not discussed, since the Italian police investigation into Parmalat, the issue of greater co-operation between regulatory authorities internationally or at EU level.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Aerospace Industry

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the future of aerospace manufacturing and its supply chain in Lancashire. [157713]

**Jacqui Smith:** We recognise the contribution that the North West of England has made to the UK aerospace industry in the past and the important role it continues to play as part of a highly innovative and competitive defence industry.

The Government's Defence Industrial Policy was launched in October 2002 and aims to enhance the industry's competitiveness and sustainability, while continuing to provide high quality equipment at best value for money. As part of that policy the MOD takes a range of factors into account when making major procurement decisions, and a key one is an evaluation of its impact on industrial activity regionally—both at prime contractor level and within the supply chain—and my Department actively contributes to that process.

### Bankruptcy

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to reduce the 8 per cent. interest rate charged on debts determined by the Judgment Act 1838 which is levied on bankruptcy debts under Rule 6.113 of the Insolvency Act 1986; and if she will make a statement. [157831]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** I have no plans to amend Rule 6.113 of the Insolvency Rules 1986 so that a rate of interest other than that specified in section 17 of the Judgments Act 1838 will apply to debts mentioned in sub rules (2) and (3) and outstanding at the date of the bankruptcy order. It is for the Lord Chancellor, with the concurrence of the Treasury, to make any order amending the rate of interest which applied under section 17 of that Act.

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to allow discretion on the charge of an interest rate of 8 per cent. on bankruptcy debts; and if she will make a statement. [157832]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** I have no such plans. I consider the interest rate at which judgment debts carry interest to be the appropriate rate to be applied to bankruptcy debts in those cases where the Insolvency Act 1986 provides for section 17 of the Judgments Act 1838 to be applied.

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to vary the percentage of debt recovered fee she charges for performance of her general duties under insolvency legislation; and if she will make a statement. [157833]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** A new Insolvency Fees Order will come into effect on 1 April 2004 that will include a new rate of 17 per cent. "For the performance by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry of her general duties under the insolvency legislation in relation to the administration of the affairs of each company which is being wound up by the court" and "For the performance by the Secretary of State of her general duties under the insolvency legislation in relation to the administration of the estate of each bankrupt". However, the fee will not be applied to the first £2,000 of receipts in a case and the maximum of this fee in any one case will be limited to £100,000. The new rate will only apply to cases where the insolvency Order is made on or after 1 April 2004.

For cases where the insolvency Order has been made before 1 April 2004 the current scales will continue to be applied except in relation to the affairs of companies which are being wound-up voluntarily where the fees will be revoked from 1 April 2004.

This is only one of a number of changes being made on 1 April 2004 in relation to fees in insolvency cases. The new Fees Order, which will shortly be signed and be made available on The Insolvency Service's website (insolvency.gov.uk), seeks to simplify the fee structure applicable in relation to insolvency proceedings by reducing the number of fees payable. Hence it is not possible to make a direct comparison between any specific fee that will be prescribed in the new Fees Order with a specific fee charged under the Insolvency Fees Order 1986 or earlier legisiation.

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which body is responsible for *(a)* responding to complaints about and *(b)* reviewing trustees' remuneration under bankruptcy legislation. [157834]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** Concerns regarding the remuneration of a trustee in bankruptcy should be addressed to the court dealing with the bankruptcy in question by making an application under either section 303 of the Insolvency Act 1986 or Rule 6.142 of the Insolvency Rules 1986.

### Broadband

**Michael Fabricant:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the likelihood of achieving 100 per cent. broadband coverage by non-wireless connection by the end of 2005; and if she will make a statement. [156464]

**Mr. Timms:** The Government's call in November 2003 for Government, public bodies and broadband providers to bring broadband to every community in the UK by the end of next year was supported by BT and other industry stakeholders.

By January 2004, broadband either by cable or ADSL was available to 85 per cent. of households and that is almost certain to rise to 90 per cent. this year. Decisions on the type of networks to be deployed are predominately for the market. It is likely that wireless will make a contribution to 100 per cent. availability.

The Government are making a significant contribution to ensure 100 per cent. broadband coverage is achieved. Between 2003 and 2006 public services will be

spending £1 billion on broadband connectivity. The Regional Aggregation Bodies (trading as Adits) are using their buying power to bring broadband to new and previously untenable areas and the Regional Development Agencies will be spending or committing a further £235 million to broadband development by 2006. This will provide opportunities for further investment by industry using a range of appropriate technical solutions, including alternatives to ADSL and cable—for example, powerline and satellite in addition to wireless.

### Call Centres

**Mr. Best:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the number of *(a)* call centres and *(b)* call centre jobs in Leeds. [156240]

**Ms Hewitt:** Existing information does not enable us to provide reliable figures. However, my Department has commissioned research on the key factors contributing to the relative competitiveness of UK call centre operations to help identify any appropriate actions which need to be taken by industry or Government in response to the increasingly global market for call centre services. This will include an examination of the main product areas in the UK call and contact centre industry that are vulnerable to growing competition from lower-wage economies; and which types of call and contract centre activity and which regions have been most affected or are most likely to be affected in the near future.

**Mr. Best:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the number of call centre jobs relocated abroad in the last five years. [156241]

**Ms Hewitt:** Existing information does not enable us to provide reliable figures. Official statistics do not generally separate call centre activities from the main activity of a firm or enterprise (e.g. banking). The term "Call Centre" can be used to describe a broad variety of functions and activities across a wide range of commercial, industrial and public sectors. Difficulties and differences in definition are reflected in commercial market research on call centres where estimates on the number of call centres and call centre employees vary substantially. In light of this my Department has commissioned research on the key factors contributing to the relative competitiveness of UK call centre operations to help identify any appropriate actions which need to be taken by industry or Government in response to the increasingly global market for call centre services.

### Cold Calling

**Mr. Truswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when the Office of Fair Trading will report on its investigation into the complaint from the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux regarding cold calling. [157476]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** The Office of Fair Trading expect to report in April. They expect to make public their position on legislative options for tackling bogus traders in advance of the full report.

### E-commerce

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of UK retail was represented by on-line shopping in each quarter since January 1999; and what targets her Department has set for on-line shopping as a proportion of all UK retail. [157214]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** Official statistics separately identifying online orders within the retail sector are not available. In 2002, the value of online orders received from households by the UK wholesale, retail, catering, travel and telecommunications sectors was £5.2 billion (excluding the financial sector). This represents an increase of 63 per cent. from the 2001 estimate of £3.2 billion. Figures for the period prior to this are not available (Source: Office for National Statistics experimental statistics[1]). These figures represent 0.3 per cent. of total sales by UK businesses (excluding the financial sector) in 2002 and 0.2 per cent. in 2001. Total UK retail sales were £230 billion in 2002 and £219 billion in 2001.

The Department does not set targets for on-line shopping.

[1] 2002 e-commerce survey of business.

### E-mail

**Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimates her Department has made of *(a)* the number of spam e-mails sent to UK companies and *(b)* the cost to business associated with tackling spam e-mails in 2002–03. [157804]

**Mr. Timms:** The Government do not have an estimate of the number of spam e-mails sent to UK companies or the cost to businesses here in tackling spam e-mails in 2002–03, although business recipients of spam point to the impact of time spent in deleting spam messages and paying for anti-spam and anti-virus protection. The UK is actively involved in a current exercise by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development which aims to develop better techniques for measuring spam and estimating its impact.

### Employment Information Booklets

**Mrs. Lait:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what savings she estimates will be made by the ending of the supply of printed employment information booklets *(a)* URN 03/595, *(b)* URN 03/597, *(c)* URN 00/632, *(d)* PL 517, *(e)* PL 699, *(f)* PL 700, *(g)* PL 704, *(h)* PL 707, *(i)* PL 711, *(j)* PL 712, *(k)* PL 714, *(l)* PI 716, *(m)* PL 718, *(n)* PL 724, *(o)* PL 808, *(p)* PL 810, *(q)* PL 833 and *(r)* PL 958; and how much additional grant funding will be made available to citizens' advice bureaux to cover the extra costs to their offices of receiving the booklets electronically. [156781]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** The Department estimates savings in the region of £140,000 per annum. Booklets *(a)*, *(b)*, *(l)* and *(m)* (replaced by PI 718x) remain available in hard copy.

Acas produces leaflets on individual employment rights. These can be obtained free of charge from the Acas distribution centre on 08702 429090. Therefore I do not consider it necessary or appropriate to provide additional grant funding to Citizen's Advice Bureaux.

### Financial Services Industry

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when her Department intends to introduce legislation on the consumer credit market in the UK. [157215]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** On 8 December 2003 we published a White Paper setting out our proposals on the consumer credit market. This was the culmination of the first major review of the regulation of this market in 30 years. The regulatory proposals in the White Paper will be implemented by a combination of Statutory Instruments, which will be brought forward during the course of this year with the first coming into force in October 2004, and a Bill, which will be introduced when parliamentary time is available.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department is taking to promote the reporting by financial services companies of suspected cases of money laundering. [157216]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** HM Treasury and the Home Office are jointly responsible for the UK's money laundering reporting regime. Financial services companies, along with other businesses in the "regulated sector", are required to have in place formal systems for deterring, detecting and reporting money laundering and to train their staff accordingly. The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 and the Money Laundering Regulations 2003 substantially strengthened these requirements, for example by making it a criminal offence to fail to make a disclosure where there are reasonable grounds to know or suspect money laundering.

This Department works closely with the Treasury and Home Office in supporting this regime.

### Flexible Working

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when her Department expects to conclude its review of the legislation on flexible working. [157220]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** Following on from the detail I provided in my answer to my hon. Friend on 3 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 777–78W, we continue to gather data which will form the evidence base for the review scheduled to commence in 2006. However at such an early stage it is inappropriate to speculate on the nature of the review itself, and therefore the length of time it may take.

### Football (Scotland)

**Pete Wishart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what responsibilities her Department has in relation to the Scottish football industry; and if she will make a statement. [156854]

**Ms Hewitt** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]:* My Department has no responsibilities in relation to the Scottish football industry.

### Gas Storage

**Mrs. Humble:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on her policy on the development of gas storage facilities in underground caverns formed within deep rock salt deposits. [157500]

**Mr. Timms:** As Great Britain becomes increasingly dependent on imported gas it will be important that the market continues to provide sufficient flexibility to meet demand. Gas storage projects help do this. The Government therefore welcomes proposals for new projects. They must, of course, obtain necessary planning and other regulatory consents.

### Higher Education Innovation Fund

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much money was spent on the first round of the Higher Education Innovation Fund. [157248]

**Ms Hewitt:** Around £78 million has been awarded to 89 applicants under the first round of the Higher Education Innovation Fund. A further £1 million has already been allocated to organisations to train more knowledge-transfer professionals.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the budget is for the second round of the Higher Education Innovation Fund; and how many organisations will be eligible for this funding. [157249]

**Ms Hewitt:** £187 million will be available to higher education institutions through the second round of the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF 2).

132 higher education institutions in England are eligible for HEIF 2 funding.

### Local Government Finance

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what grants were awarded to local authorities in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley in each of the last three financial years that fall outside the revenue support grant. [157085]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** The Department of Trade and Industry provided the following grants:

*(a) Lancashire county council*

Start-up grant of £5,000 in 2001–02 to develop a Consumer Support Network. Lancashire county council are part of the trading standards North of England regional group who received funding of £42,000 in 2001–02 and 2002–03 for regional co-ordination projects, £96,900 in 2002–03 to support an e-commerce enforcement project and £74,753 and £100,000 in 2003–04 for trading standards enforcement co-ordination projects and a consumer education project respectively.

*(b) Chorley borough council*

No grants were awarded to Chorley borough council from the Department of Trade and Industry.

### Manufacturing Skills Base

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what Government schemes and initiatives have been enacted to retain the skills base in the United Kingdom following manufacturing job losses. [156984]

**Mr. Timms:** The Government's Manufacturing Strategy, which we developed in partnership with industry, trade unions and other stakeholders, aims to create a high-value manufacturing sector in the UK with a highly skilled and well paid workforce, moving away from competing on the basis of low skill and low wages. We are continuing to develop a range of initiatives under the Skills Strategy such as employer training pilots, modern apprenticeships, the growing network of Sector Skills Councils and other measures to better deploy and retain skills to improve business performance.

Where there are significant redundancies in the manufacturing sector, the Rapid Response Service works to move people quickly into new jobs, preventing them from becoming detached from the labour market. Although a trend to declining manufacturing employment has been a feature of advanced economies over the last 30 years, new jobs are still being created all the time. Around 250,000 manufacturing vacancies were reported to Jobcentre plus in the last year. Overall the UK labour market is performing well, with total employment rising by nearly 1.7 million since spring 1997, and unemployment falling in every region in Britain over the past year.

### Near Earth Objects

**Lembit Öpik:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will maintain the level of service provided by the *(a)* National Near Earth Object Information Centre and *(b)* the Spaceguard Centre. [155368]

**Ms Hewitt:** The British National Space Centre (BNSC) has contributed funding to the setting up and maintenance of the Near Earth Object (NEO) Information Centre based at the National Space Science Centre in Leicester. It provides information to the public and monitors NEO activity. This follows the recommendations of the Near Earth Object Task Force Report. The BNSC contract expires on 31 December 2004. The Government has not contributed funding to the Space Guard Centre in the UK.

### Online Banking

**Mr. Simmonds::** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions her Department has had with the banking sector to combat internet hackers and fraudsters from obtaining customers' online banking details through deception and other means. [157807]

**Mr. Timms:** The Department has no direct responsibility for the banking sector. As part of our normal discourse with business we do speak with the banking sector, including discussion of recent attempts to gain customers' passwords and other details. The results of these discussions are reflected in our promotion of information security best practice to business.

### Post Office

**David Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what procedures govern the categorisation of rural and urban post offices. [157810]

**Mr. Timms:** The decision to classify a post office branch as urban or rural is an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. The company classifies as rural any post office within a community of less than 10,000 inhabitants. Above that the post office is classified as urban. I understand that the company has a geographical mapping model that enables it to adopt a consistent approach to classification across the country.

### Public Sector Research Exploitation Fund

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much money has been spent on the Public Sector Research Exploitation Fund in each year since its inception; and how many organisations have received assistance through this fund. [157250]

**Ms Hewitt:** An award totalling over £10 million was made through the Public Sector Research Exploitation (PSRE) fund in October 2001. A second round of the PSRE fund worth almost £15 million was announced in the Science Budget for 2003–06. Money spent so far in Round 1 is as follows:

| *Financial year* | *£* |
|---|---|
| 2001–02 | 287,500 |
| 2002–03 | 7,521,860 |
| 2003–04 | 300,000 |
| Total | 8,109,360 |

A further £2,000,000 of funding has been approved but not yet drawn down.

19 applications received funding through PSRE round 1 and 16 in PSRE round 2. The organisations that have received assistance through the fund in rounds 1 and 2 are listed as follows, with their funding allocation. In collaborative applications to the fund, institutions nominate a lead establishment, shown as follows.

| *Lead Institution* | *Partner Institutions* | *Award (£)* |
|---|---|---|
| *Public Sector Research Establishment Round 1* | | |
| Council for the Central Laboratory of the Research Councils (CCLRC) | Defence Science and Technology Laboratory<br>Natural Environment Research Council<br>Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council<br>UK Atomic Energy Authority | 4,000,000 |
| CCLRC | | 475,000 |
| Central Manchester and Manchester Children's University Hospitals NHS Trust | | 510,000 |
| Central Science Laboratory | Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Veterinary Laboratories Agency | 231,860 |

| *Lead Institution* | *Partner Institutions* | *Award (£)* |
|---|---|---|
| Institute of Food Research | Plant Bioscience Ltd. | 160,000 |
| Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust | Barnsley District General Hospital NHS Trust<br>Bradford Hospitals NHS Trust<br>Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals Trust<br>Sheffield Teaching Hospitals Trust<br>York Health Services NHS Trust | 220,000 |
| National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside | Lynton Lasers Ltd.<br>Product Innovation and Development Centre | 287,500 |
| Natural Environment Research Council | | 600,000 |
| Newcastle upon Tyne NHS Hospitals Trust | BioSci North Ltd.<br>MKW Engineering Ltd.<br>Newcastle General Hospital<br>NHS Executive, Northern and Yorkshire Region<br>RTC North Ltd.<br>University of Newcastle upon Tyne | 270,000 |
| Particle Physics and Astronomy Research | CERN | 200,000 |
| Plant Bioscience Ltd. | | 530,000 |
| Public Health Laboratory Service | National Institute of Biological Standards and Controls | 300,000 |
| South Glasgow University Hospitals Trust | BioIndustry Association (Scotland)<br>Connect<br>Grampian University Hospital NHS Trust<br>Greater Glasgow Primary Care NHS Trust<br>LINC Scotland<br>Lothian University Hospitals NHS Trust<br>Scottish Enterprise<br>Scottish Executive, Chief Scientists<br>Scottish National Blood Transfusion<br>Tayside University Hospital NHS Trust | 425,000 |
| University Hospital Birmingham NHS Trust | Birmingham Heartlands and Solihull NHS Trust<br>Birmingham Specialist Community Health NHS Trust<br>Burton Hospital NHS Trust<br>City Hospital NHS Trust<br>Good Hope Hospital NHS Trust<br>Mid Staffordshire General Hospital NHS Trust<br>North Staffordshire Hospital NHS Trust<br>Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic<br>South Birmingham Mental Health NHS Trust<br>South Warwickshire General Hospital NHS Trust<br>The Royal Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Trust<br>The Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals NHS Trust | 300,000 |
| University Hospital NHS Trust | Nottingham City Hospital Trust<br>South Derbyshire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust | 300,000 |
| *Four London NHS Trusts comprising:*<br>Barts and the London NHS Trust | City and Hackney Primary Care Trust<br>East London and City Mental Health Trust<br>Homerton Hospital NHS Trust<br>Newham Healthcare Trust<br>Newham Primary Care Trust<br>Tower Hamlets Primary Care Trust | |
| Guy's and St. Thomas's NHS Trust | Epson and St. Helier NHS Trust<br>King's College Hospital Trust<br>Lewisham Hospital NHS Trust<br>South West London and St George's Mental Health Trust<br>St. George's Hospital NHS Trust<br>The Royal Hospital for Neuro-Disability | |
| Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS Trust | Chelsea and Westminster Healthcare NHS Trust<br>Hammersmith Hospitals NHS Trust<br>North West London Hospitals Trust<br>St. Mary's NHS Trust | |

| *Lead Institution* | *Partner Institutions* | *Award (£)* |
|---|---|---|
| The Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust | Camden and Islington Community Health Services NHS Trust<br>Camden and Islington Mental Health NHS Trust<br>Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust<br>Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Trust<br>North Middlesex Hospital NHS Trust<br>Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Trust<br>The University College London Hospitals NHS Trust<br>The Whittington Hospital NHS Trust | 1,300,000 |
| Total | | [1]10,109,360 |
| *Public Sector Research Establishment Round 2* | | |
| Barts and the London NHS Trust | The Royal Free Hampstead<br>The Royal Brompton and Harefield<br>Guy's and St. Thomas'<br>The London Development Agency | 2,300,000 |
| Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) | Council for the Central Laboratory of the Research Councils (CCLRC)<br>Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)<br>Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL)<br>Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council (PPARC)<br>UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) | 2,000,000 |
| Central Manchester and Manchester Children's Hospitals NHS Trust | University TrusTECH<br>Health Protection Agency<br>BIONOW<br>Medical Devices Faraday | 750,000 |
| CLIK Knowledge Transfer | | 750,000 |
| Defence Science and Tech Lab (DSTL) | Central Science Laboratory<br>Health Protection Agency<br>Veterinary Laboratories Agency | 1,000,000 |
| Forensic Science Service, The | | 500,000 |
| Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust | Sheffield Teaching Hospitals Trust<br>Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust<br>Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust<br>York Hospitals NHS Trust<br>Barnsley District General Hospital NHS Trust<br>Yorkshire Forward<br>Medilink (Yorkshire and Humber) | 250,000 |
| Moredun Research Institute | Roslin Institute<br>Rowett Research Institute<br>Scottish Agricultural College<br>Institute for Animal Health | 1,500,000 |
| Natural Environment Research Council | | 600,000 |
| National Museums Liverpool | Lynton Lasers<br>The Hothouse<br>Castle Fine Arts Foundry<br>Shape Design | 750,000 |
| Newcastle Upon Tyne NHS Hospitals Trust | RTC North Ltd.<br>University of Newcastle upon Tyne Regional Medical Physics Dept<br>City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Trust<br>Centre of Excellence for Life Sciences<br>North Tyneside Primary Care Trust<br>County Durham and Darlington Acute Hospitals NHS Trust<br>South Tees Hospitals NHS Trust<br>University of Durham | 490,000 |
| Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals NHS Trust, The | South East England Development Agency<br>Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust<br>Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Trust<br>Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust | 540,000 |

| *Lead Institution* | *Partner Institutions* | *Award (£)* |
|---|---|---|
| Papworth Hospital NHS Trust | The Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust<br>Addenbrookes NHS Trust<br>East of England Development Agency | 500,000 |
| Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council (PPARC) | | 175,000 |
| Plant Biosciences Ltd | BBSRC | 1,800,000 |
| Roslin Institute (Genecom) | Institute of Animal Health<br>Moredun Research Institute | 800,000 |
| Total | | 14,705,000 |

[1] The Advisory Board recommended that the additional £109,360 (over and above the £10 million allocated for the PSRE Fund) be taken from the surplus from University Challenge.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many organisations have been helped by the Public Sector Research Exploitation Fund in each year since its inception. [157251]

**Ms Hewitt:** The Public Sector Research Exploitation Fund has been awarded through two competitive funding rounds. PSRE Round 1 awards were made in October 2001 with over £10 million going to 19 lead institutions. The allocation of Round 2 funds was announced in January 2004. Almost £15 million went to 16 lead organisations. For a list of organisations that have received assistance from the fund, please refer to PQ No. 157250 answered today.

### Security Breaches

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many staff are employed in her Department to tackle problems arising from information security breaches. [157257]

**Ms Hewitt:** Fourteen staff employed in my Department may potentially be involved in investigating, and tackling problems arising from, information security breaches. Others from across the Department and from our key service suppliers may assist these staff when dealing with individual cases.

### Springfields Site (USA)

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry for what reason she has accepted responsibility on behalf of the taxpayer for the costs of clearing up the Springfields site in the United States; what steps she is taking to identify those individuals responsible for generating this environmental and financial liability; and if she will make a statement. [157865]

**Mr. Timms:** Springfields, the BNFL fuel manufacturing facility is located near Preston in Lancashire. The NDA on formation will become responsible for its clean-up.

### Sugar Regime

**Mr. Wiggin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she expects to respond to the letter to her from the Biscuit, Cake, Chocolate and Confectionery Alliance concerning reform of the sugar regime; and for what reason she has not yet responded. [157095]

**Ms Hewitt:** My office has no record of having received this letter. If the hon. Member writes to me again I will ensure that a response is sent as soon as possible.

### UK Online for Business

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what products her Department intends to introduce to rationalise the activities of UK online for business; how these will encourage the effective use of the Internet and other information and communication technologies by small and medium-sized companies; and what the projected costs are for each new product; [157241]

(2) what the budget is for the forthcoming year to promote effective use of information and communication technology by businesses. [157246]

**Mr. Timms:** Under its programme of reform of business support products my Department is launching two new products under the theme of "Achieving best practice in your business". These bring together the best of a number of existing schemes such as "UK online for business" and "Fit for the Future", as well as offering direct support for implementation of best practice business projects. The promotion of effective use of information and communication technology will underpin these products, which will have a programme budget, in the first year, of £20 million.

### Weights and Measures Act

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made in amending the Weights and Measures Act 1985 to facilitate electronic communications. [157198]

**Mr. Timms:** The Government are in the process of identifying provisions in consumer legislation, including the Weights and Measures Act 1985, which may need to be amended. The Government aims to start public consultations on any proposed changes by March 2005.

### Written Ministerial Statement

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the Written Ministerial Statement made by the Minister for Energy, E-Commerce and Postal Services on 5 February 2004,

*Official Report*, column 48WS, on Post Office Urban Reinvention Network, (1) what his definition of dense network is; [156483]

(2) what percentage of post offices in urban deprived areas are situated in dense networks. [156484]

**Mr. Timms** *[holding answer 26 February 2004]:* Post Office Ltd. defines a dense network of surrounding offices, in the context of offices in the 10 per cent. most deprived areas, as being several accessible branches in the 0.5 to one mile range travelling distance. Each proposal will however be considered on an individual basis with regard to reasonable transport links between the branches and travel across the area generally needed for retail needs. In addition, the role of Postwatch in the consultation process ensures that each proposal is analysed on a case-by-case basis.

## INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Burma

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) how much money his Department has provided to the Burma Border Consortium in *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04; [157474]

(2) what steps his Department has taken to meet the food needs of refugees in camps on the Thai-Burmese border in 2003–04; [157618]

(3) what support his Department has made available in *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04 for Burmese refugees outside the country. [157638]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** The Department provided £600,000 to the Burmese Border Consortium in 2002–03 and 450,000 in 2003–04 to help meet the food needs of refugees in Thailand. £220,000 is being provided in 2003–04 for a border areas health programme of the World Health Organisation (WHO), which covers refugees in Thailand.

The Department is also providing support to refugees from Burma through the European Commission (EC). The EC has so far allocated 2 million euros (£2.8 million) for the Burmese Border Consortium, over the period 2002–04, 20 per cent. of which is attributable to the UK.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much money has been provided by his Department in *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04 to assist internally displaced people in Burma and to provide education for Burmese refugees in refugee camps on the Burma-Thailand border. [157620]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** The Department did not support programmes specifically focused on internally displaced people in Burma in 2002–03 or 2003–04. However, internally displaced people may be among the beneficiaries of other DFID programmes during this period, such as a UNICEF-led immunisation programme in Burma for which DFID provided £567,000 in 2002–03, work by the International Committee of the Red Cross for which DFID provided £1.5 million in 2002–03, and some small grants to civil society organisations in both years.

Our support in these years to Burmese refugees in camps on the Thai-Burma border focused on meeting basic food needs. Some support for education activities has been provided in the past through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees as detailed in my reply to another question from the hon. Member for Buckingham.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what the projected level is of expenditure by his Department in 2004–05 on wildlife projects in Burma; and how the money will be allocated; [157621]

(2) what funding has been provided by his Department in 2003–04 for wildlife projects in Burma; and how the money was allocated. [157622]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** The Department has not funded wildlife projects in Burma during 2003–04 and currently has no plans to do so in 2004–05.

### Deforestation

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much of the world's rainforests has been destroyed in each of the last 10 years to provide land purely to provide food for animals; and how much grain for humans this land could provide per year. [156966]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** A recent Food and Agriculture Organisation study sampled 10 per cent. of the world's tropical forests in 1980, 1990 and 2000. The key changes noted were a loss of 'closed forest' (i.e. rain forest) amounting to 70–80 million hectares per decade, and a gain in "other land cover", primarily cultivation and pastures, of an almost identical area.

It is not possible to state the proportion of forest destroyed to provide food for animals, since deforested land often has a sequence of changing uses. For example, in South America land cleared for cattle ranching is often later used for soy bean cultivation. In Africa, land cleared for small-scale landholdings is often used for both cultivation and raising livestock.

It is not possible to say how much grain for humans deforested land could provide per year owing to huge variations in land fertility.

### Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

**Chris McCafferty:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the forthcoming Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific population and development meetings in *(a)* Santiago in March and *(b)* Puerto Rico in June. [157780]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** This year the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean will be holding a 10-year regional review of progress against the commitments made in the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994 (ICPD). The process will consist of two parts: Firstly there will be a

technical open-ended meeting of an ad-hoc working group in Santiago, Chile in March. The outcome of this will be a report of key lessons and challenges in relation to further implementation of ICPD. Secondly there will be a high-level regular meeting of ECLAC in Puerto Rico in June, which will consider the outcome of Santiago.

The UK Government will be represented at both these meetings as members of ECLAC. We are keen to emphasise the importance of the ICPD commitments and to support countries that do not wish to weaken the consensus of ICPD. DFID is particularly concerned with maintaining wording on reproductive health, rights and sexual health and avoiding unproductive arguments about issues that have already been agreed. The emphasis of the two ECLAC meetings should be on monitoring of progress of the ICPD commitments in the region and discussion around enhancing progress for the next 10 years.

### Ethiopia

**Mr. Robathan:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on progress on human rights in Ethiopia; what indicators he is using to monitor human rights in Ethiopia; and when he expects the Ethiopian Government to set up the Human Rights Commission promised in 2000. [156828]

**Hilary Benn:** When I visited Ethiopia in February I spoke to Prime Minister Meles and members of his Government about how respect for human rights can be improved. The Prime Minister accepted there are problems, but told me of his commitment to improving this situation. He gave an undertaking to build the capacity of the judiciary and security sectors to help protect constitutional rights for all.

The Government of Ethiopia have agreed to link progress with human rights to our UK budget support agreement. The 'Establishment of a Human Rights Commission and Ombudsman' will be one indicator of progress. The target for June 2004 is for the commissioners of both bodies to be appointed. By June 2005, both bodies will be expected to produce a report outlining cases and complaints handled.

We will be monitoring progress carefully.

### Famine

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate he has made of the amount of grain required to provide an adequate level of sustenance for those people living in famine. [156965]

**Hilary Benn:** DFID follows the international guidelines as set by the World Food Programme and the World Health Organisation for the provision of food in emergency situations.

The guidelines recommend a minimum of 2,100 Kcals per person per day. This is equivalent to approximately 600 g of grain. However, wherever possible, we seek to ensure a diet with an appropriate balance of nutrients. Rations are therefore not usually provided as grain alone, but typically consist of 400 g of grain, 50 g of corn soy blend, 25 g of oil, 60 g of pulses and 15 g of sugar per person per day.

Different degrees of under-nourishment require different feeding regimes. For example, severely malnourished children are usually taken into a therapeutic feeding regime that will provide 200 Kcal per kilogramme of body weight per day. The rations are usually made up of a mixture of fortified flour, oil, sugar, vitamins and mineral complex and other local foods as appropriate.

### HIV/AIDS

**Tom Brake:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent assessment his Department has made of trends in HIV/AIDS rates in countries identified by UNAIDS as the worst affected countries. [156398]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** DFID provides support to UNAIDS, and looks to them to provide information on the global status of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Last December, UNAIDS launched the Global Epidemic Update (available at www.unaids.org) which provided a synthesis of trends in the epidemic in all regions. They will be producing detailed country information to launch at the World AIDS Conference in July 2004 in Bangkok.

**Tom Brake:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what representations his Department has made to UNAIDS about changes to future exercises estimating HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in sub-Saharan Africa, to include population-based surveys as opposed to surveys which indicate trends in HIV prevalence; [156438]

(2) what representations his Department has *(a)* received from non-governmental organisations and *(b)* made to UNAIDS on over-estimates of HIV/AIDS rates in sub-Saharan Africa by UNAIDS; [156784]

(3) what research his Department *(a)* has commissioned and *(b)* plans to commission into differences between data based on population-based surveys and on ante-natal clinic-based surveys in giving reliable estimates of the level of HIV/AIDS infection in sub-Saharan Africa; [156397]

(4) what representations his Department *(a)* has made and *(b)* plans to make to UNAIDS to include population-based HIV survey data in UNAIDS' next report on the global HIV/AIDS epidemic. [156400]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** We have not received any representations from non-governmental organisations on over-estimates of HIV/AIDS rates in sub-Saharan Africa. This Department does not plan to commission research into the differences between data based on population-based surveys and on ante-natal clinic-based surveys in giving reliable estimates of the level of HIV/AIDS infection in sub-Saharan Africa. UNAIDS has the mandate to provide information on the status of the epidemic.

UNAIDS included information about methodological issues relating to differences between data taken from these two different sources in the Global Epidemic update, which was released last World AIDS day. They concluded

that population based surveys are likely to underestimate true HIV prevalence in most cases, because some respondents are absent from the household at the time of a survey and some refuse to participate. UNAIDS also recognise that most antenatal clinic-based surveillance systems have limited geographical coverage, which can lead to wide variations in the quality of the national estimate of HIV prevalence.

UNAIDS is now doing some analysis linking behavioural data to the surveys, to see whether and how that has affected the result of the population-based surveys. They will convene a meeting in May to analyse different results across a number of countries in sub-Saharan Africa from the two sources of data. They aim to report findings at the World AIDS Conference in Bangkok in 2004.

We have not made any specific representations to UNAIDS about changes to future exercises estimating HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in SA, to include population based surveys as opposed to surveys which indicate trends in HIV prevalence. DFID is in dialogue with them on issues around data sources for HIV estimates. UNAIDS contend that conducting ante-natal clinic-based surveys and population surveys at three to five year intervals can serve as valuable components of surveillance systems and can help improve estimates of the levels and trends in HIV prevalence. This Department supports UNAIDS in their efforts to analyse the different results from different sources, rather than relying on one source alone. All HIV estimates need to be assessed critically. Using different sources for data and interrogating the results will always provide more robust analysis than relying on one source.

**Mr. Nigel Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what support the Department is providing for research into developing vaccines to prevent HIV/AIDS. [157486]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** DFID have agreed to provide a contribution of £14 million over the period January 2000 to December 2004 in support of the work of the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI).

IAVI is a global non-profit making organisation that is working to speed the development and distribution of preventive AIDS vaccines through: mobilising support through advocacy and education; accelerating scientific progress; encouraging industrial participation in AIDS vaccine development; and assuring global access. IAVI's stated mission is to ensure the development of safe, effective, accessible, preventive AIDS vaccines for use throughout the world.

### Kuwait

**Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the UK's contribution to the Humanitarian Operations Centre in Kuwait is; and if he will make a statement. [156358]

**Hilary Benn:** The Humanitarian Operations Centre in Kuwait was established prior to the conflict by the Coalition military and the Kuwaiti Government to support the coordination and facilitation of humanitarian operations from Kuwait into southern Iraq. The UK military contributed human resources. DFID has not contributed financially to the centre but is involved closely with it, including through the sharing of information. We have benefited from its information and co-ordination functions.

### Parliamentary Questions

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many Parliamentary Questions have been tabled to his Department since 1 January 2003, broken down by *(a)* Ordinary Written and *(b)* Named Day; what percentage in respect of *(a)* were answered within 10 working days; and what percentage in respect of *(b)* were answered by the specified date. [157749]

**Hilary Benn:** Since 1 January 2003, DFID has been asked 2,358 Written Parliamentary Questions. We are unable to break this down into Ordinary Written and Named Day Questions without incurring disproportionate cost.

DFID try to respond to Parliamentary Questions within the Parliamentary deadlines whenever possible.

### Swaziland

**Tom Brake:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what aid his Department intends to offer Swaziland in respect of the recent declaration of a state of national emergency. [156782]

**Hilary Benn:** DFID is supporting the work of the Vulnerability Assessment Committee in Swaziland, and has provided funding to the Food and Agriculture Organisation to run a series of "seed fairs" providing tools and seeds to families to enable them to grow food. We have also provided emergency funding to UNICEF to improve water and sanitation in schools. We have no immediate plans to provide further assistance following the emergency declaration.

**Tom Brake:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what aid his Department will offer to Swaziland in relation to its HIV/AIDS policy. [156783]

**Hilary Benn:** DFID supports Swaziland's efforts to combat HIV/AIDS through two regional programmes—the International Partnership against AIDS in Africa (implemented by UNAIDS and ActionAid), and a programme implemented by the Southern African Development Community.

### UK Presidencies (G8/EU)

**Tom Brake:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with ministerial colleagues in the last 12 months on the priorities the Government intend to pursue when the UK assumes the presidencies of the *(a)* G8 and *(b)* EU. [156187]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** I refer the hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington to the response given by the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs my hon. Friend the Member for Rotherham (Mr. MacShane) on 26 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 483W, regarding the same matter.

## DEFENCE

### Aircraft Carriers

**Dr. Julian Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions his Department has held with representatives of the French government about future carrier requirements and co-operation thereon. [154661]

**Mr. Ingram:** Defence Ministers routinely meet with their French opposite numbers and the UK's Future Aircraft Carrier programme has frequently been discussed in that context. There is a high level steering group which helps to facilitate UK French co-operation and, in addition, there have been regular meetings on the subject both between project officials from the UK's Defence Procurement Agency and their equivalents in the DGA and on a navy-to-navy basis. These meetings have identified several areas for potential co-operation.

### Armed Forces Compensation

**Mr. Dismore:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many claims under the Armed Forces compensation scheme were successful in each of the last five years; what estimate he has made of the number of likely successful cases per year under the proposed new scheme; and if he will make a statement. [153877]

**Mr. Caplin:** The Ministry of Defence provides benefits for death, injury or illness due to service through the War Pensions Scheme and the Armed Forces Pension Scheme. The number of awards for new claims under the War Pensions Scheme in the last five years is set out as follows (the figures are taken from Table 2.5 of the recently published March edition of the War Pensions Quarterly Statistics). This includes awards where a pension was paid and those where only a gratuity was paid:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1998–99 | 6,810 |
| 1999–2000 | 7,445 |
| 2000–01 | 6,385 |
| 2001–02 | 6,955 |
| 2002–03 | 5,440 |

Current Information Technology systems do not enable us to identify the numbers who have also received attributable pensions from the Armed Forces Pension Scheme. However, the overall figure will be lower as the benefits can only be paid to those who are medically invalided.

The new Armed Forces Compensation Scheme will provide benefits for currently serving personnel for injury, ill-health or death which is caused after 5 April 2005. The number of claims is expected to build up gradually over an extended period but to remain lower than the current level of claims against the War Pensions Scheme. This is because the latter covers periods of conscription, of worldwide conflict and of much larger than at present armed forces.

### AWE Aldermaston

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the planned laser simulation facility at AWE Aldermaston. [156642]

**Mr. Ingram:** The Ministry of Defence are considering a new laser facility (Project ORION) at AWE Aldermaston to replace the existing laser facility which is more than twenty years old. The project is currently in the Assessment Phase.

### Beef

**Annabelle Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what percentage by weight of current beef supply contracts for his Department and its agencies are sourced from *(a)* British and *(b)* Scottish herds. [157870]

**Mr. Ingram:** 46 per cent. of the beef and beef products purchased for consumption by the armed forces in the United Kingdom is British. Of that total, in the past 12 months, 70 per cent. came from Scottish herds.

### Belgian Ammunition

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the rate of failure of large general purpose machine gun ammunition supplied by Belgium. [155135]

**Mr. Ingram:** There was a problem reported on the Browning 0.5" Heavy Machine Gun (HMG) when firing standard Ball (M33) and Tracer (M17) rounds on training overseas prior to Operation Telic. The ammunition was manufactured to NATO standards by the Belgian contractor FN Herstal. A thorough and immediate investigation by the contractor could not replicate the reported problem. However, it was identified that a minor increase in the loaded propellant charge, still within NATO specifications, would increase the performance of the ammunition in the weapon. This change was immediately implemented by FN Herstal, at no cost to the MOD, and the new ammunition was available within four weeks.

### Defence Export Services Organisation

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost of the Defence Export Services Organisation was in 2002–03; what his estimate is of the projected cost in each year to 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [156710]

**Mr. Ingram:** Operating costs for Defence Export Services Organisation (DESO) for the last and current financial years are as follows:

| *Financial year* | *Net operating costs (£ million)* |
|---|---|
| 2002–03 | 11.944 |
| 2003–04[1] | 15.583 |

[1] Figures for 2003–04 are forecasts for the year.

The DESO budgets for financial years 2004–05 and 2005–06 have not yet been finalised, and I am withholding projections of the costs in these years under exemption 2c of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

The costs of DESO are more than offset by benefits to the Defence budget arising from defence exports. Savings to the defence budget come from spreading the fixed overhead costs of equipment over the longer production runs generated by exports, from the sale of

surplus military equipment to overseas governments, and from Commercial Exploitation Levy on exports of equipment developed using public money.

### Eurofighter Typhoon

**Norman Lamb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many Eurofighter Typhoons have been delivered to No. 17 Squadron, Royal Air Force; [156951]

(2) how many Eurofighter Typhoons he plans to be delivered to No. 17 Squadron, Royal Air Force; when the squadron will receive the final aircraft of its intended complement; and if he will make a statement. [156952]

**Mr. Ingram**: It is planned that four aircraft will be delivered to No. 17 Squadron, Royal Air Force. The final aircraft of its intended complement is expected to be received by April this year. To date, two have been delivered.

**Norman Lamb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he plans to re-form No. 29 Squadron, Royal Air Force to conduct the first Eurofighter Typhoon pilot training course at RAF Coningsby; when the first Typhoon pilot training course will start; and if he will make a statement. [156953]

**Mr. Ingram:** The Eurofighter Typhoon Operational Conversion Unit is currently being re-formed as 29 Squadron at the BAE System facility at Warton, Preston, Lancashire. Re-formation of 29 Squadron will be complete when it moves to RAF Coningsby next year. Present plans are for initial instructor pilots to commence training this summer.

**Norman Lamb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Eurofighter Typhoons delivered to No. 17 Squadron, Royal Air Force have refuelling probes fitted and ready for use; and if he will make a statement. [156954]

**Mr. Ingram:** The Typhoons delivered to date do not have refuelling probes fitted. Early aircraft delivered without probes will be retro-fitted.

### Iraq

**Mr. Swayne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment has been made of the requirement for Personal Role Radios in Iraq. [154015]

**Mr. Ingram:** Personal Role Radio (PRR) is a short-range communications system designed to provide connectivity at the tactical level within small military teams, such as infantry sections. It is therefore ideal for use in Iraq and has been used extensively by UK forces since the commencement of operations. Approximately 3,500 Personal Role Radios are currently in use with British forces in Iraq.

**Mr. Keetch:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many rounds were contained in the standard issue of ammunition to *(a)* infantry and *(b)* Royal Military Police in Iraq during (i) major hostilities and (ii) since the end of major war-fighting operations; whether this requirement has been met in every circumstance; and if he will make a statement. [154676]

**Mr. Ingram** *[holding answer 12 February 2004]:* The standard issue of 5.56mm ammunition provided to Army combat soldiers and other Army arms/services in Iraq has not changed from 150 rounds and 120 rounds respectively. Royal Military Police Personnel are normally issued with 120 rounds of ammunition in line with other Army arms/services. Commanders in theatre make an assessment based on local conditions as to whether adjustments to the planning allocations should be made. Over 23 million rounds of 5.56mm ammunition were delivered to Operation Telic, which was well in excess of the projected requirement of all units deployed.

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the average daily cost has been of the occupation of Iraq. [154940]

**Mr. Ingram:** The Ministry of Defence identifies the costs of Operations in terms of the net additional costs it has incurred. The costs that the Department would have incurred regardless of the operation taking place, such as wages and salaries, are not included. Savings on activities that have not occurred because of the operation—training exercises for example—are taken into account in arriving at the net figures.

Costs are not incurred on a regular daily basis and force levels have fluctuated considerably during 2003–04. As a result, to attempt to provide daily average costs would be misleading.

However, you may wish to know that outturn information for 2002–03 on the cost of operations in Iraq has been published as part of the MOD's Annual Report and Accounts. Operating Costs for 2002–03 for operations in Iraq total £629.531 million. Expenditure on Capital equipment amounts to £217.680 million. The grand total is, therefore, £847.211 million.

For 2003–04, funding voted at Winter Supplementary Estimates amounted to £1.2 billion and covered the cost of peacekeeping and associated Urgent Operational Requirements (UORs). The MOD has sought a further £300 million at Spring Supplementary Estimates to cover primarily the cost of the recuperation of the Department's operational capability. Thus, the total sought in 2003–04 will be £1.5 billion.

It is too early to say what costs might be incurred after 2003–04.

### Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which parts of the joint strike fighter aircraft are to be built in the UK. [156133]

**Mr. Ingram:** Production contracts have not yet been negotiated for any part of the Joint Strike Fighter and are unlikely to be awarded before 2006 on current plans.

Development work is currently under contract in the UK on a number of significant assemblies and aircraft systems, including the complete aft fuselage and tail assembly (BAES); engine components (Rolls Royce); ejection seat (Martin Baker) and electrical power, actuation and display systems (Smiths Aerospace). All work on JSF is won on a best value basis, and subject to

continuing to meet best value criteria, there is every reason to anticipate that these development contracts will lead to follow-on production contracts.

### Naval Vessels

**Dr. Julian Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the disposal of Type 22 frigates to Romania has been concluded; and if he will make a statement. [152226]

**Mr. Ingram:** The Government-to-Government Acquisition Agreement was signed on 19 December 2002, comprising the sale of two regenerated and updated warships (ex-HMS London and ex-HMS Coventry), an initial support package, and a training package for ships' complements. The agreement includes a significant offset programme to be carried out by British Industry, led by the United Kingdom Prime Project Contractor, BAE Systems, over a five-year period.

The regeneration of the ships is proceeding satisfactorily, in accordance with the agreed schedule, and on track to achieve commissioning of the first ship, due in September 2004.

**Mr. Kevan Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the projected number of orders for naval vessels to be placed over the next 10 years. [153789]

**Mr. Ingram:** The Ministry of Defence is already undertaking a large programme of new ship procurement, including orders for six Type 45 destroyers, three Astute Class submarines and four Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary).

Future plans include the purchase of two new aircraft carriers, further orders of Type 45 destroyers and Astute Class submarines, the Joint Casualty Treatment Ship, and the replacement of existing RFA vessels through the Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability project. The Department is also considering options for leasing new Offshore Patrol Vessels to replace the current Castle Class capability. Tenders are currently being assessed for the Nato Submarine Rescue System, which will enter service in 2006.

Looking further ahead, we expect to replace the capability provided by the Type 22 and 23 Frigates with the Future Surface Combatant. It is too early to say how the capability will be met or when orders will be placed because the project is still at the concept stage.

### Operation Telic

**Mr. Soames:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what equipment was purchased under the Urgent Operational Requirement process for Operation Telic 1 and 2. [147273]

**Mr. Ingram:** It is assumed that the period covered by Operation Telic 1 and 2 is from the time of deployment until the end of the first roulement of troops (November 2003). Information regarding specific Urgent Operational Requirements remains operationally sensitive and I am therefore withholding details of equipment purchased in accordance with Exemption 1 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information. However equipment procured using the UOR process falls into five broad areas:

enhancements to communications equipment and infrastructure;

upgrades to maritime, air (both fixed and rotary wing) and land platforms. These included improvements to environmental/desert operating capabilities, force protection, secure communications, combat ID and enhancements to associated weapons systems;

improved dismounted close combat capabilities;

improved logistics and deployable infrastructure (includes procurement of additional Temporary Deployable Accommodation); and

NBC protection measures; and enhancements to deployed medical capabilities.

**Mr. Keetch:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list all requests for urgent operational requirements for Operation Telic stating *(a)* whether the request was approved, *(b)* the equipment requested, *(c)* the date the request was submitted, *(d)* the date the urgent operational requirement was approved and *(e)* the cost; and if he will make a statement. [151347]

**Mr. Ingram** *[holding answer 27 January 2004]:* Urgent Operational Requirements (UOR) are requested via an Urgent Statement of User Requirement generated by frontline commands or operational planners. The content of these remains operationally sensitive and I am withholding the information requested under Exemption 1 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information. However, approved UORs covering the deployment and fighting phases of Operation Telic fall into five broad capability areas with total approved values as follows:

| *Capability area* | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1. Enhancements to communications equipment and infrastructure | 56 |
| 2. Upgrades to maritime, air (both fixed and rotary wing) and land platforms. These included improvements to environmental/desert operating capabilities, force protection, secure communications, combat identification and enhancements to associated weapons systems | 270 |
| 3. Improved dismounted close combat capabilities | 36 |
| 4. Improved logistics and deploy able infrastructure | 58 |
| 5. NBC protection measures; and enhancements to deployed medical capabilities | 90 |

During the deployment and fighting phases of Operation Telic over 190 Urgent Operational Requirements were approved at a total approved cost of around £510 million. Since the end of major combat operations, a range of other UORs have been approved.

### Overseas Bribery

**Mr. Simon Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many allegations of overseas bribery his Department has received since *(a)* November 1997 and *(b)* February 2002; [151399]

(2) how many allegations of overseas bribery his Department has forwarded to the law enforcement agencies since *(a)* November 1997 and *(b)* February 2002; and if he will name the agencies to which allegations were forwarded, and give the dates concerned. [151398]

**Mr. Ingram:** Since 1997 the Ministry of Defence has received 11 allegations of bribery occurring overseas of which six were received after February 2002. One case was passed to the Metropolitan police in October 1999 and another to the Brunei authorities in May 2002.

Another four were investigated by the Department's Defence Fraud Analysis Unit, in some cases in conjunction with the Ministry of Defence Police authorities, at various dates between March 2000 and November 2002. Three were passed to the Royal Military Police in the period April 1999 to April 2003. One other case arising in July 2002 is being handled by the MOD Police on behalf of another government agency. An allegation passed to the Department by the Serious Fraud Office in March 2001 was the subject of an internal Departmental review.

### Research and Development

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence to whom his Department distributes expenditure on research and development; how many staff are employed as a result; and how many research establishments *(a)* the Department and *(b)* its agencies have in each region and nation of the United Kingdom. [154360]

**Mr. Ingram:** The Ministry of Defence places contracts with a wide range of organisations including:

The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSL), and the Meteorological Office, the two major MOD agencies which conduct research.

The Medical Supplies Agency receives funding for development of Medical Countermeasures.

Industry. Approximately 600 companies received payments against R&D contracts in the eight months to end November 2003.

Academia.

The Meteorological Office is primarily located at its new site in Exeter with a residue still at the old Bracknell sites. Figures for 2001–02, the latest date for which there are published figures showed 330 employees, to the nearest 10, were employed in research.

Dstl currently has research facilities in a number of areas in the UK. These are shown in the following table together with the number of staff employed in each region.

| *Region* | *Number of employees* |
|---|---|
| *Dorset* | |
| Winfrith | 103 |
| *Hampshire* | |
| Alverstoke | 110 |
| Farnborough | 737 |
| Porton Down | 875 |
| Portsdown | 383 |
| *Kent* | |
| Fort Halstead | 639 |
| *Worcestershire* | |
| Malvern | 226 |

In addition to these there are a further 170 staff working in small numbers on a further 25 sites.

Information about staff employed in industry and academia, as a result of MOD funding of research and development but not directly employed by the Department, is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### Royal Fleet Auxiliary

**Dr. Julian Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate he has made of the suitability of current Royal Fleet Auxiliary oilers for future expeditionary warfare. [146507]

**Mr. Ingram:** The Royal Fleet Auxiliary operates four classes of oilers (Wave, Leaf, Rover, and Fort Victoria). The two Wave class oilers (Wave Ruler and Wave Knight) entered service in 2003 and will remain operational until after 2025.

The Leaf and Rover classes are due to reach their expected out of service dates by 2011. They are single-hulled and so will be non-compliant with revised Marpol (International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships) regulations on the introduction of double-hulled vessels. The newer Fort Victoria ships are also single-hulled but we are currently considering ways of maintaining compliance with international legislation beyond 2010. While Marpol does not apply to vessels owned or operated by a state and used only on Government non-commercial service, as is the case with the RFA oilers, it remains MOD policy to comply with Shipping Acts and associated regulations where practicable. Consequently, MOD has a programme to phase out all non-compliant RFA vessels with a target date of 2010 based on the earliest practicable point for compliance.

As explained in my answer of 11 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1459–60W, the Department's programme, known as the Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability (MARS) programme, seeks progressively to replace most of the current RFA fleet, including Leaf, Rover, and Fort Victoria class oiler vessels. As part of this, these ships will be replaced by more flexible and capable vessels fully compliant with Marpol. This will significantly enhance the RFA's ability to provide the Royal Navy with its afloat support requirements.

### Royal Navy

**Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on progress on modernising the Royal Navy's chart and navigation system. [155020]

**Mr. Ingram:** In January 2004 the Ministry of Defence announced that a contract had been awarded to Lockheed Martin UK Ltd. to fit Royal Navy ships with a new electronic charting system. The system, known as WECDIS (Warship Electronic Chart Display and Information System), will provide enhanced situational awareness to ensure RN navigating capability is more accurate, efficient and responsive.

The programme is proceeding as planned and the first ship installation is scheduled to commence in June 2004.

### Salisbury Plain (Unauthorised Use)

**Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many drivers of private civilian *(a)* motorcycles and *(b)* four-by-four vehicles have been (i) intercepted, (ii) cautioned and (iii) prosecuted for unauthorised use of Salisbury Plain Training Estate in the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement. [157298]

**Mr. Caplin:** In 2003, 41 motorcycles and 52 four-by-four vehicles were intercepted by the Ministry of Defence Police. As a result, 27 drivers were warned off military lands under the byelaws and a further 33 drivers were prosecuted.

### Typhoon

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much money his Department has spent on developing the Typhoon's operational role to allow it to operate off the new aircraft carriers. [154909]

**Mr. Ingram:** No money has been spent on developing the Typhoon's operational role to operate off the new aircraft carriers. As part of the Concept Phase for the Joint Combat Aircraft project, a feasibility contract was let with BAE Systems to identify broad order costs and design issues for a number of different solutions. This contract was valued at around £2 million. The study considered the potential for adapting Typhoon for carrier operations but showed that a significant amount of re-design and investment would be required to operate Typhoon from the future carriers. Joint Strike Fighter has been selected to meet this requirement.

## TREASURY

### British Overseas Territories

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer with which British overseas dependent territories he has arrangements for the exchange of tax information; on what dates such arrangements were made; which team in his Department or in agencies for which his Department is responsible has the task of negotiating such arrangements; and with which British overseas dependent territories there are negotiations on tax information arrangements. [157055]

**Dawn Primarolo:** The UK has Double Taxation Arrangements with Guernsey (1952), Isle of Man (1955) and Jersey (1952) (all Crown Dependencies), and the Falkland Islands (1997) and Montserrat (1947) (both Overseas Territories) all of which include provisions for the exchange of information for tax purposes. The Inland Revenue's International team is responsible for negotiating arrangements that provide for exchange of information between tax authorities. They have had discussions about new or improved exchange of information arrangements with all of the UK's overseas dependent territories that are operating as offshore financial centres.

### Child Benefit

**Mr. Goodman:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many families are eligible to receive child benefit. [158058]

**Dawn Primarolo:** The number of families in receipt of Child Benefit are shown in "Child Benefit Quarterly Statistics", which can be found on the Inland Revenue website at: www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/child_benefit/menu.htm.

Precise figures on the take up rate of child benefit are not available, but it is thought to be around 98 per cent.

### Company Tax Credits

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his estimate is of the cost to public expenditure of each company tax credit for each year from 2003–04 to 2006–07; and if he will make a statement. [156765]

**Dawn Primarolo:** The forecast costs for research and development tax credits, vaccines research relief and contaminated land tax credits are set out in the following table. The costs are on a receipts basis, showing when the costs are incurred by the Inland Revenue.

*£ million*

| | *2003–04* | *2004–05* | *2005–06* | *2006–07* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Research and Development Tax Credits | 660 | 670 | 700 | 760 |
| Vaccines Research Relief | 10 | 20 | 20 | 20 |
| Contaminated Land Tax Credits | 70 | 80 | 80 | 90 |

*Note:*
Figures are rounded to the nearest £10 million.

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list each tax credit available to companies; what assessment he has made of the economic benefit in each case; and if he will make a statement. [156766]

**Dawn Primarolo:** Companies may be able to claim tax credits under the research and development tax credit schemes, vaccines research relief scheme or remediation of contaminated land scheme.

The Government plan to evaluate all of the impacts of these policies. However, because the policies are intended to produce benefits over the medium to longer term, it would be inappropriate to do so at present.

### Credit Cards

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the case for introducing interest-rate limits on credit cards. [157342]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** I have been asked to reply.

The Government are not yet persuaded of the benefits of introducing interest rate ceilings on any products. We are concerned that their introduction might cause detriment to consumers and competition, for example by encouraging imposition of additional fees and charges, that some lenders might exit the market denying some consumers access to credit, or that rates might gravitate towards the ceiling.

We have, however, commissioned research on how interest rate caps operate in other countries. We expect to publish this research in the spring of this year, and will then make a decision on the case for introducing a ceiling.

### Demography (North-West)

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of the population of *(a)* the North West and *(b)* Lancashire is over (i) 50, (ii) 55, (iii) 60, (iv) 65, (v) 75, (vi) 85 and (vii) 100 years. [157092]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Hoyle, dated 2 March 2004:*

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what percentage of the population of *(a)* the North West and *(b)* Lancashire is over (i) 50, (ii) 55, (iii) 60, (iv) 65, (v) 75, (vi) 85 and (vii) 100 years. I am replying in his absence.(157092)

The information requested, except for those aged 100 and over, is given in the following table. This gives percentages based on the 2002 mid year population estimates, the latest year for which figures are available.

*Percentage of the population in older age groups in the North West and Lancashire*

| *Age group* | *North West* | *Lancashire* |
|---|---|---|
| 50 and over | 33.9 | 35.2 |
| 55 and over | 27.3 | 28.4 |
| 60 and over | 21.1 | 21.9 |
| 65 and over | 16.0 | 16.7 |
| 75 and over | 7.4 | 7.9 |
| 85 and over | 1.0 | 2.0 |

*Source:*
2002 mid year population estimates, Office for National Statistics

We are not able to provide estimates for those aged 100 and over from mid year population estimates. Estimates of populations at very old ages using the standard methodology for population estimates (the cohort component method) are unreliable, especially for sub-national areas where numbers in these very old age groups may be very small.

However this information is available from the 2001 Census. It recorded that under 0.02 per cent. of the population of both the North West and Lancashire were over 100 years of age.

## Departmental Buildings/Costs

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list London buildings occupied by *(a)* Her Majesty's Treasury, *(b)* Customs and Excise, *(c)* the Inland Revenue and *(d)* other Treasury agencies and non-departmental public bodies; what the estimated value of each publicly owned building is; and if he will make a statement. [156761]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested relating to buildings in London postal districts is given as follows:

*(a) Her Majesty's Treasury*

1 Horse Guards Road, SW1

*(b) Customs and Excise*

3 Griffin House, W6
London City Airport, E16
Berkeley House, N3
Jubilee House, E15
Portline House, E16
Thomas Paine House, EC1
Custom House, EC3
GSS Garage, SE1
Water Tower, SE18
Parcelforce LDC, E16
Dorset House, SE1
Unit 2 Thames Road Industrial Estate, E16
Towergate Car Park Pope Street, SE1
Towergate 163 Tower Bridge Road, SE1
Stratford Lift, E15
Mount Pleasant Postal Depot, EC1
Waterloo Terminal, SE1
Willesden EPU, NW10
Olympia Passenger Terminal
Enterprise House, SE1
New King's Beam House, SE1
Swan Lane Car Park
Stratford Car Park, E15

*(c) Inland Revenue*

Capitol House, N21
Jubilee House, E15
Euston Tower, NW1
Clifton House, NW1
New Century House, WC1
Lyndhurst House, NW7
Conquest House, WC1
Colindale Station House, NW9
Gateway House, N3
Collingwood Business Centre, N19
Surrey House, SE1
Heron House, SE23
Woolwich Crown Building, SE18
Meridian House, SE10
Lancaster House, SE1
Radnor House, SW16
Government Building, W3
19–29 Woburn Place,WC1
Charles House, W14
Solar House, SW20
11 Belgrave Road, SW1
Melbourne House, WC2
Somerset House, WC2
Bush House, SW Wing
Duchy House, WC2
22 Kingsway, WC2
Bush House, NW Wing WC2
Angel Court, SE1
Haymarket House, SW1
City Gate House, EC2
Ibex House, EC3
Empire House, E15
6–10 Church Hill, E17
Britannia House, SE1
International House, W5
31 High Street, W5
Waterford House, SW6
Candy House, W5
Tavis House, WC1
Dansom House, E17
31 Scarborough Street, E1
Steel House, SW12
Tresco House, NW1
Victory House, WC2
53 Parliament Street, SW1
Clifton House, NW1
10 Great George Street, SW1

*(d) Other Treasury Agencies/Bodies*

Eastcheap Court, EC3

Finlaison House, EC4

1 Horse Guards Road, SW1

Charles House, W14

Trevelyan House, SW1

New Court, WC2

Cityside, E1

Chase House, E14

1 Francis Grove, SW19

Lincoln House, SE1

Wingate House, W1

1 Drummond Gate, SW1

1 Myddleton Street, EC1

The only London building publicly owned and wholly occupied by my Departments is the Treasury building at 1 Horse Guards Road, which has an estimated value of £71.6 million. Other buildings are privately owned, or where forming part of the Government estate, are occupied by my departments on a shared, minor occupancy basis.

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his latest estimate is of Her Majesty's Treasury core departmental annual running costs for each year from 1996–97 to 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [156755]

**Ruth Kelly:** Details of the Department's gross administrative expenditure for 1998–99 to 2005–06 are contained in Table 5.1 of Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2003 (Cm 5901). The figures are on a resource basis. Figures for 1996–97 to 2001–02 were published in Table 5.5 of Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2000–01 (Cm 4601) but these are on a cash basis.

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his estimate is of the cost of running *(a)* the Inland Revenue and *(b)* Customs and Excise in each year from 1996–97 to 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [156759]

**Ruth Kelly:** Details of the Departments' gross administrative expenditure for 1998–99 to 2005–06 are contained in Table 5.1 of Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2003 (Cm 5901). The figures are on a resource basis. Figures for 1996–97 to 2001–02 were published in Table 5.5 of Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2000–01 (Cm 4601) but these are on a cash basis.

Copies of Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses are in the Library of the House and are on HM Treasury's public website (www.hm-treasury.x.gsi.gov.uk).

## Economic Activity (Northampton)

**Mr. Tony Clarke:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the economic activity rate in the Northampton South constituency was in *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 1996–97. [157008]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Tony Clarke, dated 2 March 2004:*

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the economic activity rate in the Northampton South constituency. I am replying in his absence. (157008)

The table below shows the working age economic activity rates for the Northampton South constituency, covering the twelve-month periods ending February 1997 and February 2002. Information for 2002/03 is not yet available.

*Working age economic activity rates[1] in the Northampton South constituency*

| *12 month period ending February each year* | *Rates* |
|---|---|
| 1997 | 85.5 |
| 2002 | 84.4 |

[1] Economically active as a percentage of men aged 16–64 and women aged 16–59.

As with any statistical sample survey, estimates from the Labour Force Survey are subject to sampling variability.

## Employment Statistics

**Mr. Spring:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) by what rate employment grew on average annually in *(a)* the United Kingdom, *(b)* the Republic of Ireland, *(c)* Denmark, *(d)* Sweden, *(e)* Finland, *(f)* Germany, *(h)* the Netherlands, *(i)* Belgium, *(k)* Luxembourg, *(l)* France, *(m)* Spain, *(n)* Portugal, *(o)* Italy, *(p)* Austria, *(q)* Greece, *(r)* the area now forming the euro-12, *(s)* the EU 15 and *(t)* the United States since (i) 1992 and (ii) 1997; [157180]

(2) by what rate employment grew in each year since 1992 in *(a)* the United Kingdom, *(b)* the Republic of Ireland, *(c)* Denmark, *(d)* Sweden, *(e)* Finland, *(f)* Germany, *(h)* the Netherlands, *(i)* Belgium, *(k)* Luxembourg, *(l)* France, *(m)* Spain, *(n)* Portugal, *(o)* Italy, *(p)* Austria, *(q)* Greece, *(r)* the area now forming the euro-12, *(s)* the EU 15 and *(t)* the United States. [157181]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Richard Spring, dated 2 March 2004:*

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your two recent Parliamentary Questions about average and annual employment growth rates for Europe and the USA. I am replying in his absence. (157180, 157181)

The attached table provides growth rates for the number of people of working age in employment in the requested countries. The data (where available) are provided for all years since 1993, together with average annual growth rates a) from 1992 and b) from 1997.

Demographic trends affect the size and the age profile of the working-age population, and are a significant driver of change in the number of people in employment. The data in the table do not take account of these effects.

*Annual and average employment growth rates for the UK and other countries, 1993–2003*

Percentage

| | Annual employment growth rates | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *1993* | *1994* | *1995* | *1996* | *1997* | *1998* | *1999* |
| United Kingdom | -1.3 | 0.7 | 1.1 | 1.0 | 1.7 | 1.0 | 1.2 |
| Ireland | 1.3 | 4.3 | 4.4 | 3.9 | 6.3 | 8.1 | 6.3 |
| Denmark | -1.5 | 1.4 | 1.3 | 1.0 | 1.3 | 1.6 | 1.2 |
| Sweden | — | -0.9 | 1.5 | -0.8 | -1.3 | 1.5 | 2.1 |
| Finland | -6.0 | -1.4 | 2.0 | 1.3 | 3.3 | 2.0 | 2.5 |
| Germany | -1.4 | -0.2 | 0.2 | -0.3 | -0.2 | 1.1 | 1.2 |
| Netherlands | 0.0 | 0.7 | 1.5 | 2.3 | 3.2 | 2.6 | 2.6 |
| Belgium | -0.7 | -0.4 | 0.0 | 0.3 | 0.9 | 1.8 | 1.3 |
| Luxembourg | 1.6 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.6 | 3.1 | 4.5 | 5.0 |
| France | -1.3 | 0.1 | 0.9 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 1.5 | 2.0 |
| Spain | -2.8 | -0.5 | 1.9 | 1.3 | 2.9 | 3.9 | 3.5 |
| Portugal | -1.2 | 0.6 | -0.1 | 1.4 | 2.5 | 2.6 | 1.2 |
| Italy | -2.5 | -1.5 | -0.1 | 0.6 | 0.4 | 1.0 | 1.1 |
| Austria | -0.6 | -0.1 | 0.0 | -0.6 | 0.5 | 1.0 | 1.4 |
| Greece | 0.8 | -0.1 | -0.4 | -0.4 | -0.5 | 4.1 | 0.0 |
| EU-12 | -1.6 | -0.3 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.9 | 1.8 | 1.8 |
| EU-15 | -1.6 | -0.1 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 1.0 | 1.7 | 1.7 |
| USA | 1.5 | 2.3 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 2.3 | 1.5 | 1.5 |

| | *Annual employment growth rates* | | | | *Average annual employment growth rates* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* | *2003* | *From 1992 to date*[1] | *From 1997 to date*[1] |
| United Kingdom | 1.4 | 0.9 | 0.6 | 1.0 | 0.8 | 1.0 |
| Ireland | 4.7 | 2.9 | 1.4 | — | 4.3 | 4.6 |
| Denmark | 0.5 | 0.4 | -0.6 | — | 0.7 | 0.6 |
| Sweden | 2.4 | 1.9 | 0.2 | — | 0.7 | 1.6 |
| Finland | 2.3 | 1.5 | 0.4 | — | 0.8 | 1.7 |
| Germany | 1.8 | 0.4 | -0.6 | — | 0.2 | 0.8 |
| Netherlands | 2.2 | 1.8 | 0.9 | — | 1.8 | 2.0 |
| Belgium | 1.9 | 1.4 | -0.2 | — | 0.6 | 1.2 |
| Luxembourg | 5.6 | 5.6 | 3.1 | — | 3.6 | 4.8 |
| France | 2.6 | 1.8 | 0.6 | — | 0.9 | 1.7 |
| Spain | 3.5 | 2.3 | 1.5 | — | 1.7 | 2.9 |
| Portugal | 2.0 | 1.4 | 0.2 | — | 1.0 | 1.5 |
| Italy | 1.9 | 1.9 | 1.4 | — | 0.4 | 1.5 |
| Austria | 0.8 | 0.7 | -0.4 | — | 0.3 | 0.7 |
| Greece | -0.1 | -0.4 | -0.2 | — | 0.3 | 0.7 |
| EU-12 | 2.2 | 1.4 | 0.4 | — | 0.8 | 1.5 |
| EU-15 | 1.9 | 1.2 | 0.3 | — | 0.8 | 1.4 |
| USA | 2.5 | 0.0 | -0.3 | 0.9 | 1.4 | 1.0 |

[1] UK and US growth rates are average rates until 2003. EU rates are until 2002. All rates are average growth since 1992, except Sweden which is since 1993.

*Source:* UK—UK Labour Force Survey, Spring Quarters, Employed aged 16 and over

EU—Eurostat New Cronos database, table: "/theme3/employ/indic_y", covering those employed aged 15 and over

US—US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey. Employed aged 16 and over

### Inland Revenue

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many Inland Revenue local tax offices there are; what their running costs were in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [156760]

**Dawn Primarolo:** The Inland Revenue has approximately 350 local Tax Offices. However many are located in multi-occupied buildings with other Revenue Offices. For example, a building might house a Tax Office but it could also house a Contact Centre, Tax Enquiry Point, Working Families Tax Credit Office etc. It would therefore require a disproportionate amount of effort to manually extract and disaggregate the running costs attributable to local Tax Offices.

### Population Growth

**Mr. Lilley:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the growth of the population up to 2031; what that estimate would be if there were no net immigration in future; and what estimate he has made of the proportion of expected population growth which is due to net immigration and dependants. [156194]

**Ruth Kelly:** The Government Actuary's latest (2002-based) principal population projection was published in December 2003. The Government Actuary also published a range of variant projections based on alternative assumptions in January 2004. The variant projections included a 'Natural Change' projection which assumes zero net migration in future. Relevant results from the principal projection and the natural change variant projection are summarised in the following table.

*Projected population change, United Kingdom 2002–31*

Million

| | *Principal projection* | *Natural change variant projection* |
|---|---|---|
| Population at mid-2002 | 59.2 | 59.2 |
| *Population change (2002–31)* | | |
| Natural change[1] | 2.6 | 0.9 |
| Net migration | 3.8 | — |
| Other changes[2] | -0.8 | — |
| Total change | 5.6 | 0.9 |
| Population at mid-2031 | 64.8 | 60.1 |

[1] Births less deaths.

[2] The principal projection includes a downward adjustment for unattributable population change. Not migration and other changes are both assumed to be zero in the natural change variant projection.

### Private Finance Initiative

**Mr. Tyrie:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what contribution was made to each of the figures in Table B5 of the pre-Budget report 2003 by Private Finance Initiative or associated schemes that have been accounted for on the balance sheet of the public sector client; and whether the data underlying Table B5 are updated when a particular Private Finance Initiative scheme subsequently moves on- or off-balance sheet to the public sector client. [156158]

**Mr. Boateng:** The assumptions used for the spending projections underlying Table B5 are set out in paragraph B27 on page 208 of the pre-Budget report. Current and capital expenditure under PFI contracts is fully recorded in the expenditure rows of Table B5, and hence in the fiscal aggregates consistent with independently set accounting and reporting standards. Accordingly, these tables will fully reflect the balance sheet treatment of assets once this treatment has been determined.

PFI contracts where the assets concerned are on departmental balance sheets are reported in departmental accounts, together with disclosure of information relating to any contracts assessed as off balance sheet.

### Research and Development Tax Credits

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to publish claims from large companies for research and development tax credits. [157203]

**Dawn Primarolo:** The research and development tax credit for large companies was introduced in April 2002. Claims are made as part of a company's corporation tax self assessment. Consequently, the first claims under this scheme have only just started to be received by the Inland Revenue.

### Spirit Duty

**Angus Robertson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list each bonded warehouse licensed by Customs and Excise which stocks spirits, including *(a)* geographic location and *(b)* gross volume turnover of spirits for each financial year since 1994. [155841]

**John Healey:** Customs and Excise approve warehouses to stock excise goods in duty-suspension. Quantities of spirits released for consumption in the UK, and UK production volumes, are published in Customs' Annual Report. Details of individual warehouses are not available; Exemptions 6 (Effective management of the economy and collection of tax) and 13 (Third party's commercial confidences) of the Open Government Code apply.

The numbers of excise warehouses approved to stock alcoholic drinks which may include spirits, in each country of the United Kingdom are shown in the following table.

| *Country* | *Approved warehouses* |
|---|---|
| England | 467 |
| Scotland | 213 |
| Northern Ireland | 32 |
| Wales | 21 |

The more detailed data requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

### Taxation

**Mr. Redwood:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost to public funds would be of reducing corporation tax to *(a)* 25 per cent. and *(b)* 20 per cent. [157572]

**Dawn Primarolo:** Reductions in the main rate of corporation tax of this magnitude would be likely to have indirect as well as direct effects on tax revenues. The "Tax Ready Reckoner and Tax Reliefs" published with the pre-Budget report in December showed the direct effects of a one percentage point change in the main rate of corporation tax in April 2004 as £650 million in 2004–05 and £1,300 million in 2005–06.

**Mr. Redwood:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost to public funds would be of raising the threshold for inheritance tax to £1 million. [157575]

**Dawn Primarolo:** The PBR projection of inheritance tax yield is £2.8 billion for 2004–5. The full year cost of raising the inheritance tax threshold to £1 million in 2004–5 would be £2.5 billion.

### Thalidomide Trust

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to announce the conclusion of his Department's discussions with the trustees of the Thalidomide Trust about the tax treatment of payments to the beneficiaries. [157221]

**Dawn Primarolo:** The tax affairs of the Thalidomide Trust are a matter for the Trust and the Inland Revenue. I can confirm that discussions between the Trust and officials of the Inland Revenue are currently taking place on a number of issues to ensure the Trust pays the correct amount of tax and the beneficiaries claim all the tax repayments and Tax Credits to which they are entitled. If the Trust wish to make an announcement about the outcome of those discussions then that is a matter for the trustees.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on recent discussions with the trustees of the Thalidomide Trust. [157687]

**Dawn Primarolo:** I can confirm that discussions between the Thalidomide Trust and officials of the Inland Revenue are currently taking place on a number of issues to ensure the Trust pays the correct amount of tax and the beneficiaries claim all the tax repayments and Tax Credits to which they are entitled. However the tax affairs of the Thalidomide Trust are confidential and a matter for the Trust and the Inland Revenue. If the Trust wish to make a statement about those discussions then that is a matter for the trustees.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Afghanistan

13. **Paul Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the results of efforts to reduce poppy cultivation in Afghanistan. [157425]

**Mr. Rammell:** The UK Government has regular discussions with the Afghan Government, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and international partners about progress on measures to reduce opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan. There are no immediate solutions and no single approach to address the variety of factors which influence farmers to grow poppy. The UK is supporting the Afghan Government in implementation of their national drug control strategy with £70 million committed over three years and a dedicated counter narcotics team in place in Kabul. We also co-hosted last month a counter narcotics conference in Kabul to increase Afghan and international awareness and engagement in tackling this problem.

**Mr. Best:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his assessment is of the current security situation in Afghanistan. [157023]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** The security situation in Afghanistan remains fragile. The two lethal bomb attacks on Canadian and UK IS AF personnel in January in Kabul followed the killing of four German ISAF personnel in a similar attack in June 2003. Other attacks, such as the murder of a UN employee in November 2003 and the attack near Kandahar on 22 February in which an Australian pilot was killed and a British aid worker wounded, have targeted the international community and NGO operations outside the capital. Security in the south continues to cause concern, especially near the border with Pakistan, where extremist groups are operating. There have been fewer problems in the north, but long-standing tensions persist and these can flare up into violence.

### Iraq

14. **Richard Ottaway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the progress of the Iraq survey group. [157426]

**Mr. MacShane:** The Iraq Survey Group is continuing to undertake investigations at sites throughout Iraq in its search for evidence of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programmes. The Group is also engaged on translation of the huge volume of documents that it has collected, and is interviewing scientists and others who were previously employed on Iraq's weapons programmes.

They will produce a further progress report in due course.

16. **Mr. Kilfoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps have been taken to establish who was responsible for forging documents relating to attempts by Iraq to obtain uranium from Niger. [157428]

**Mr. MacShane:** We have repeatedly made clear that our assessment that Iraq sought to procure uranium from Africa was not based upon the documents submitted to the International Atomic Energy Agency which subsequently were identified as forgeries. Since these documents did not have any bearing on our assessment, the Government has taken no steps to identify the forgers.

21. **Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Office what recent discussions he has had with the UN about its future involvement in Iraq. [157433]

**Mr. Rammell:** We are in regular discussion with representatives of the United Nations, at ministerial and official level, concerning its involvement in the reconstruction of Iraq. We warmly welcome the Secretary-General's recent report on the future political process in Iraq and its proposals on UN involvement.

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the senior members of the former Iraqi regime under Saddam Hussein detained by the Coalition Provisional Authority; how many are being held in Iraq; how many are being held outside Iraq; and at what locations. [145181]

**Mr. Ingram** *[holding answer 5 January 2004]:* I have been asked to reply.

The status of the 55 "most wanted" members of the former Iraqi regime may be found on the website of the US Central Military Command. The relevant website address is: www.centcom.mil/operations/Iraqi-freedom/55mostwanted.htm.

All those in Coalition custody are currently held in Iraq at undisclosed locations.

**Mr. Best:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs by whom, and under what authority, the leaders of Saddam Hussein's regime will be brought to trial. [157020]

**Mr. Rammell:** It is for the Iraqis to decide how to try senior members of the former regime. In December 2003, the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) established a Special Tribunal to fulfil such a task. The IGC are in the process of agreeing the rules and procedures of the Tribunal.

### Gibraltar

15. **Mr. Hammond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he will be taking to celebrate the three hundredth anniversary of British possession of Gibraltar. [157427]

**Mr. MacShane:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Poole (Mr. Syms) earlier today.

As my right hon. Friend, the Defence Secretary, said in this House on 27 November last year, we intend to play a full part in celebrating the warm relationship that we have enjoyed with the people of Gibraltar for the past 300 years. Units of HM Armed Forces will take part in a total of more than 20 events throughout the year. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary is grateful to my noble Friend Baroness Symons for representing him at the Service of Thanksgiving and

Celebration now taking place at St. Clement Danes. As he told the Chief Minister of Gibraltar earlier this month, he sends his very best wishes for the Service and for this Tercentenary year.

### Zimbabwe

17. **Kate Hoey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the Government's policy on sanctions against Zimbabwe. [157429]

**Mr. Mullin:** Our policy, and that of our EU partners, is to use targeted measures against Zimbabwe's leadership as a means of pressing it to return to democratic governance which respects human rights and the rule of law. We do not support economic or trade sanctions, as these would have a negative impact on all Zimbabweans. The EU measures are targeted on the ZANU(PF) leadership and on those who are responsible for human rights abuses and do not impact on ordinary Zimbabweans. On 19 February the EU agreed, by consensus, to continue with the targeted measures for another year and to extend from 79 to 95 the number of people on the travel ban and assets freeze.

**Mr. Best:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with Commonwealth governments about tightening sanctions against members of the Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe. [157016]

**Mr. Mullin:** There are no Commonwealth sanctions on Zimbabwe. The Commonwealth suspended Zimbabwe from its Councils in 2002. Commonwealth Heads of Government decided to continue the suspension when they met in Nigeria in December 2003. Following that decision Mugabe decided to withdraw Zimbabwe from the Commonwealth. The EU does have targeted measures against Zimbabwe consisting of a travel ban, assets freeze and arms embargo. On 19 February the EU decided to continue these measures for another year and to extend by 16 the number of people on the travel ban and assets freeze. The measures are now targeted on 95 people.

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action is being taken by Her Majesty's Government to assist in the restoration of freedom and democracy in Zimbabwe. [157420]

**Mr. Straw:** The Government are providing practical and political support to civil society, human rights organisations and all those in Zimbabwe who want to see an early return to a democratically accountable government which respects human rights and the rule of law.

We are providing humanitarian assistance to millions of Zimbabwean people on the basis of need.

We are encouraging the South African government, and others in the region, to push for a return to democracy and freedom.

We have been a consistent advocate of a robust international approach. In December, we argued successfully to maintain Zimbabwe's suspension from the Commonwealth. Mugabe has since withdrawn from the Commonwealth, demonstrating that he is now incapable of meeting the Harare principles which he helped to establish.

This week, the EU extended sanctions against the Mugabe regime, rightly standing with the people of Zimbabwe, and against those responsible—Mugabe and his government—for bringing a once prosperous and successful state to the edge of total collapse. The number of those caught by the sanctions now rises from 79 to 95. Those we have added to the list include several individuals who bear particular responsibility for the abuses of human rights in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe's opposition party welcomed this move, saying it was "a clear indication that the international community will not fold its arms while the regime in Zimbabwe continues to trample upon people's basic human rights".

### Abdul Quader Khan

18. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the progress of action taken to break up the network of Abdul Quader Khan since 18 December 1979. [157430]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** The intelligence community in the UK and in the US have been working on this network for several years—they identified it, monitored it, penetrated it, and finally took action against it with the result we have seen in recent weeks. We, the US Government and other Governments are now engaged in winding it up.

### Northern Uganda

19. **Valerie Davey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Office what action he has taken following the recent massacre and ensuing violence in Northern Uganda. [157431]

**Mr. Mullin:** This Government deplores the brutal massacre of around 200 innocent civilians in a camp for internally displaced persons in northern Uganda which took place on 21 February. We are also extremely concerned about the ensuing inter-ethnic violence in Lira and Gulu. We are urging the Government of Uganda and local religious and community leaders to restore calm.

A UN Humanitarian Assessment Team is now in the Barlonyo area. Relief supplies have begun to be distributed to the survivors. Serious burns victims have been moved to Lira Hospital. The British High Commission and DFID remains in close contact with the United Nations and other agencies on the ground. UN assistance includes contributions from the UK.

### Saddam Hussein

20. **Jim Sheridan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Office where Saddam Hussein is being held; and what legal procedures are to be taken against him. [157432]

**Mr. Rammell:** Saddam Hussein is being held as a prisoner of war by the US in Iraq. It is coalition policy not to disclose the precise location of detainees for

security reasons. It is for the Iraqis to decide what legal procedures should be taken against him. In December, the Iraqi Governing Council established a Special Tribunal to try senior members of the former regime. Iraqis are currently discussing the rules and procedures for this tribunal.

### India/Pakistan

22. **Colin Burgon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his assessment is of the current state of the relationship between India and Pakistan. [157434]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** We warmly welcome the 18 February announcement that India and Pakistan have agreed an agenda and a timetable for substantive talks to commence after the Indian General Election. This consolidates the breakthrough announced by President Musharraf and Prime Minister Vajpayee in January, and shows the willingness of both countries to address each other's concerns through peaceful engagement. We appreciate that there will be no quick or easy solutions, but wish both governments well and hope that the talks will be sustained and, in due course, lead to the resolution of all their outstanding differences, including over Kashmir.

### Antarctica

**Jeremy Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many visitors there were to Antarctica in each year since 1995; and what projections are available for future years. [157730]

**Mr. Rammell:** The International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) has published the following figures on tourist visitors to Antarctica:

| *Antarctic austral season* | *Number of visitors (estimated actual figures)* |
|---|---|
| 1995–96 | 9,367 |
| 1996–97 | 7,413 |
| 1997–98 | 9,604 |
| 1998–99 | 10,013 |
| 1999–2000 | 13,826 |
| 2000–01 | 12,248 |
| 2001–02 | 11,588 |
| 2002–03 | 13,571 |

These figures include ship and land-based passenger numbers. Commercial yacht activity is included from 1997–98, and 2002–03 figures include airborne passengers making landings.

IAATO estimates that visitor numbers will increase to 20,818 for 2003–04 and 21,216 for 2004–05. However, the biggest growth in the tourist industry over the next decade is expected to be large ships and over-flights, which do not land passengers in Antarctica.

### China

**Mr. Wilkinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the EU-People's Republic of China Dialogue. [157410]

**Mr. Straw:** I welcome the recent round of the EU/China Human Rights Dialogue which took place in Dublin on 26/27 February. The bi-annual dialogue allows the EU to raise its human rights concerns regularly with China. In addition to the usual agenda on a wide range of human rights issues, the Presidency focused on China's ratification of the ICCPR. The Presidency also handed over a list of individual cases.

### Colombia

**Jeremy Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what visits have been made to the areas of conflict in Colombia by UK diplomatic representatives in the past year. [157710]

**Mr. Rammell:** Members of the diplomatic staff at our Embassy in Bogota travel around Colombia as widely and as frequently as they can within the constraints of local security conditions. In the past year, Embassy staff have carried out many visits outside of Bogotá, including to a range of other cities in Colombia and where possible into areas where the effects of the conflict are greatest. In the latter category, areas visited include: Cúcuta, Choco, San Vicente del Caguán, Arauca and Saravena, northern Cundinamarca (Pacho), Barrancabermeja, Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Amazonas, La Guajira, Monteria (Córdoba) and Antioquia; all places which have seen serious conflict in recent months.

### Diego Garcia

**Jeremy Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many of the current population of Diego Garcia are *(a)* US military personnel, *(b)* UK military personnel, *(c)* civilian workers and *(d)* detainees; and if he will make a statement. [157690]

**Mr. Rammell:** The current population on the island of Diego Garcia consists of:

(a) approx 1,400 US military personnel

(b) approx 40 UK military personnel

(c) approx 1,800 civilian workers (mainly of Mauritian and Filipino nationality).

There are no detainees in Diego Garcia or elsewhere in the British Indian Ocean Territory.

**Jeremy Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions have been held with *(a)* the Chagos Refugee Association and *(b)* other groups on the possibility of return to Diego Garcia and the Chagos Islands of the original inhabitants and their descendants; and if he will make a statement. [157708]

**Mr. Rammell:** We have held many discussions with representatives of the Chagos Refugees Group, and with other persons claiming to represent the views of the Chagossian community. In that context, a team of independent experts was commissioned in April 2000 to carry out a study of the feasibility of a return to the Chagos Islands. Their report on the second phase of their study was delivered in June 2002.

In the meantime, various members of the Chagossian community, including the leaders of the Chagos Refugee Group, initiated legal proceedings against the Government in the High Court, raising, among other

things, issues relating to such a return. Though the High Court has given summary judgement in favour of the Government in these proceedings, the claimants have applied for leave to appeal and their application is still pending. No final decision has been taken on the future of the feasibility study.

### EU Constitution (Solidarity Clause)

**Mr. Spring:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether it is the Government's policy to support a solidarity clause in the constitutional treaty between EU member states in the event of attack. [157111]

**Mr. MacShane:** The Government support the proposal to establish a solidarity clause, on the basis of the language for the draft Constitutional Treaty for the EU, presented by the Italian presidency to the Inter Governmental Conference in December.

### Free Movement of Workers

**Mr. Spring:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what transitional arrangements for the free movement of workers from relevant states among the countries acceding to the European Union have been put in place by *(a)* Ireland, *(b)* Denmark, *(c)* Sweden, *(d)* Finland, *(e)* Germany, *(f)* Austria, *(g)* the Netherlands, *(h)* Belgium, *(i)* Luxembourg, *(j)* France, *(k)* Spain, *(l)* Portugal, *(m)* Italy and *(n)* Greece; what transitional arrangements EU partners have indicated they will put in place; and if he will make a statement. [154171]

**Mr. MacShane:** After Accession on 1 May, nationals from the ten new EU member states will be able to travel freely throughout the EU. However, except for nationals of Malta and Cyprus, they will not automatically be allowed to work in the existing member states. Those existing member states may, however, open their labour markets to nationals from the new member states if they so choose.

*(a)* Ireland will open their labour markets to nationals from the new member states.

*(b)* Denmark will open its labour market from 1 May, but has decided to impose a new administrative set-up with work and residence permits for new EU citizens. Citizens from the new member states will be able to stay in Denmark for a six month job-seeking period during which they will not be entitled to social benefit. This rule also applies to other EU citizens. A Work and Residence Permit will be granted for one year (as opposed to five year residence certificate for present EU member states' citizens) only if the person concerned has found a job and will be employed on the same pay and working conditions as those applying on the Danish labour market.

*(c)* Sweden will open its labour market from 1 May, but the Swedish Government has signalled its intention to introduce transitional arrangements for workers from the new member states. It has yet to bring forward formal proposals.

*(d)* Finland will impose a two-year transition period and existing controls on workers from eight of the ten new member states will apply. No restrictions will apply to citizens of Malta and Cyprus.

*(e)* Germany will apply a transition period for two years, which may be extended to seven. Existing controls on workers from the relevant eight new member states will apply.

*(f)* Austria will apply a transition period of at least two years. After that, it has indicated that it will follow Germany's lead.

*(g)* The Netherlands is not imposing a transition period. The Dutch Cabinet agreed on 23 January to introduce a system of work permits for workers from new member states from 1 May. But this proposal was rejected by the Dutch Parliament on 9 February that asked for tougher measures. On 13 February the Dutch Government came forward with new proposals which will only allow workers from new member states to work in sectors where there is a shortage of available suitably qualified Dutch or EU nationals. The Centres for Work and Income (Job Centre Plus equivalent) will decide which sectors have such a shortfall. These regulations will be effective from 1 May 2004 to 1 May 2006. An evaluation of the system will take place before 1 May 2005 to see if these restrictions can be relaxed earlier.

*(h)* Belgium will impose a transition period of at least two years.

*(i)* Luxembourg will impose a transition period of at least two years.

*(j)* France will impose a transition period of at least two years.

*(k)* Spain will apply a transition period for two years. Depending on developments in the labour market, they may allow new member states citizens full rights to work before the end of the transition period. Spain has a bilateral agreement with Poland to allow a limited number of Poles to work in Spain.

*(l)* Portugal has yet to decide whether it will open up its labour market to workers from the eight new member states.

*(m)* Italy has yet to decide whether it will open up its labour market to workers from the eight new member states.

*(n)* Greece is imposing a two year transition period.

My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary made clear UK Government policy in this House on 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 23–25. The UK has decided to allow free movement of workers to those who genuinely want to come and work here. Genuine workers from the eight new member states will be allowed access to the UK labour market via a workers registration system. This will benefit the UK economy, expanding the range of skills and supply of workers available across the UK.

Maltese and Cypriot nationals will be free to work anywhere in the EU.

### Fund Expenditure

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his latest estimate is of expenditure on the *(a)* Drugs Assistance Fund, *(b)* Human Rights Fund and *(c)* Environment Fund for each year from 1996–97 to 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [156606]

**Mr. Rammell:** Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) expenditure on these programmes is shown in the following table:

*£ million*

| | *1996–97* | *1997–98* | *1998–99* | *1999–2000*[1] | *2000–01* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* | *2003–04*[2] | *2004–05*[3] | *2005–06*[3] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *(a)* Drugs Assistance Fund[4] | 0.9 | 4.4 | 5.9 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 7.3 | 10.0 | 9.4 | 9.4 | 9.4 |
| *(b)* Human Rights Fund[5] | — | — | 5.0 | 5.1 | 6.0 | 6.6 | 7.4 | 11.1 | 10.5 | 14.5 |
| *(c)* Environment Fund[6] | — | — | 0.6 | 0.9 | 2.5 | 2.9 | 3.0 | 4.8 | 4.2 | 6.3 |

[1] Outturn
[2] Budget
[3] Plan
[4] FCO programme activity in support of drugs objectives includes the former Drugs Assistance and Drugs Programme Fund, now (since 2001–02) the Drugs and Crime Fund.
[5] The Human Rights Project Fund was started in 1998–99 but was subsumed into the new Global Opportunities Fund (GOF) in 2003–04. Figures from that year onwards include Human Rights Programme activity under several strands of the GOF e.g. Engaging with the Islamic World, Re-Uniting Europe and Strengthening Relationships with Emerging Markets, but not human rights activity across all FCO programme budgets.
[6] The Environment Project Fund (EPF) was started in 1998–99 but was subsumed into the new GOF in 2003–04. The figures from that year onwards include estimated expenditure on the environment across all FCO programmes, not just the former EPF.
*Note:*
The figures for 2004–05 and 2005–06 indicate current spending plans. All future resource allocations may be subject to review in the light of changing foreign policy priorities. 2005–06 spending plans will be covered by the 2004 Spending Review.

### Haiti

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the current situation in Haiti. [157648]

**Mr. Rammell:** The UK welcomes the constitutional succession and political process now underway in Haiti in order to promote a peaceful and lasting solution to the current crisis.

The UK welcomes the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1529 which authorises the deployment of a multi-national Interim Force to Haiti and declares the Security Council's readiness, within three months, to establish and deploy a UN stabilisation force that will support the continuation of a peaceful and constitutional political process.

### Hong Kong

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether China has informed him of plans to change the legal system in Hong Kong. [157820]

**Mr. Rammell:** We are not aware of any plans to change the legal system in Hong Kong. The Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984 provided for the maintenance of the existing legal system in Hong Kong after the handover in 1997. The Joint Declaration also provides that the legal system in Hong Kong should be autonomous from the legal system of mainland China and should be vested with independent judicial power. This should remain unchanged until at least 2047.

### India and Pakistan

**Mr. Best:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his assessment is of the state of the relationship between India and Pakistan. [157018]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** We warmly welcome the recent announcement by India and Pakistan that they have agreed an agenda and a timetable for substantive talks, due to begin after the Indian General Election. Following the breakthrough in relations announced by President Musharraf and Prime Minister Vajpayee at the start of January, this agreement demonstrates the commitment of both countries to address each other's concerns. We support both governments in their efforts, recognising that the talks will be the start of a long and difficult process and hope that they will, in due course, lead to the resolution of all their outstanding differences, including over Kashmir.

### Interception of Communications

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he is empowered to authorise the interception of communications where that communication begins and terminates outside UK territory. [157921]

**Mr. Straw:** I refer the hon. Member to Sections 5, 7 and 8 of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.

### Iran

**Mr. Best:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Iranian Government about pluralist democratic procedures in their recent national election. [157021]

**Mr. Rammell:** In his contacts with Iranian leaders, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has made clear our support for Iran's efforts to reform. The flawed parliamentary elections held on 20 February were a setback for Iran's democratic development. On 23 February, EU Foreign Ministers expressed their deep regret and disappointment that large numbers of candidates, including many sitting deputies, had been prevented from standing, thus making a genuine democratic choice by the Iranian people impossible. For

elections in any country to be regarded as free and fair, electors must have a chance to vote for candidates with a range of views.

**Mr. John Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to prevent the flow of Shia Muslims from Iran into Southern Iraq. [157579]

**Mr. Rammell:** We are monitoring the border situation closely, and have been in contact with all Iraq's neighbours, including Iran, to urge them to take steps to ensure better border security. Within Iraq, Coalition forces have been conducting operations aimed at monitoring and reducing illegal cross-border traffic. In the long-term, we are working hard to train all Iraqi security forces, including those with responsibility for border security.

### Israel

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the stance of the Government at the International Court of Justice with regard to the reference of the Israeli security fence. [156390]

**Mr. Rammell:** The Government believe that the building of a wall on Palestinian territory is unlawful but that the International Court of Justice (ICJ) should exercise its discretion not to give an opinion on this matter on the grounds:

that an opinion is not needed by the UN and could hinder the peace process;

that it involves essentially a bilateral dispute, one of the parties to which has not consented to the ICJ's jurisdiction;

and that it would involve the determination of issues of fact, on which the necessary evidence is not before the Court.

A copy of the UK's written statement to the ICJ to this effect has been placed in the Library of the House.

### Katharine Gun

**Mr. Ancram:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he had with the Attorney-General concerning the case of Katharine Gun before the Crown Prosecution Service decided not to offer any evidence against her. [157847]

**Mr. Straw:** Because I have statutory responsibility for GCHQ, I spoke with the Attorney General by telephone on 14 February and at a meeting on 24 February about the Gun case. The purpose on both occasions was to learn about the position of the prosecuting authorities relating to the continuation of the prosecution. I took no part in the decisions relating to discontinuation of the prosecution.

I was earlier consulted by the Attorney General, in accordance with the Shawcross procedure, about public interest issues relating to the case, before he took the decision to initiate the prosecution.

### Kuwait

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether it is the policy of the Government to continue *(a)* the approval of new claims in Kuwait and *(b)* the payment and settlement of claims in Kuwait under the UN Compensation Commission. [157042]

**Mr. Rammell:** The UK Government support the UN Compensation Commission's (UNCC) approval of Kuwait's submission of certain new claims relating to the 605 detainees held in Iraq following the 1990 invasion of Kuwait, and who are now believed to be dead.

The Government support the completion of the UNCC's claims processing work for all claimant states, including Kuwait, and for the payment of approved awards, to the extent that it has funds available to do so.

### Libya

**Mr. Best:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on developing British relations with Libya. [157015]

**Mr. Rammell:** Libya's announcement, on 19 December 2003, that it would dismantle its Weapons of Mass Destruction programmes opened the way to Libya's reintegration into the international community.

The visit of the Libyan Foreign Minister, Abdul Rahman Shalgam, to the UK from 9 to 10 February was tangible proof of the improving relations between Libya and the UK. Discussions covered a broad range of bilateral and regional issues.

The UK and Libya will now seek to build on these contacts to develop further our political, cultural and commercial ties, helping Libya in its aim of restructuring its economy and co-operating in tackling terrorism.

The Government will continue to seek progress on the difficulties that remain between the United Kingdom and Libya. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has had an assurance from Foreign Minister Shalgam that Libya stands by the commitments it has given on the Lockerbie bombing and on the investigation into the murder of WPC Yvonne Fletcher.

### Non-military Overseas Sites

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the overseas sites which are owned by the Government for non-military purposes; and if he will make a statement on the Government's disposals policy for them. [157164]

**Mr. Rammell:** The National Asset Register lists overseas properties (over a book value of £3,000) owned by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. All such assets are held for diplomatic use. The latest edition of the register, published in July 2001 (Cm5221), can be found at: www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/mediastore/otherfiles/218.pdf

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has an on-going programme of estate modernisation. Under an agreement with the Treasury, land or buildings that are surplus, not operationally effective or not providing value for money, are sold and the proceeds are then reinvested.

### North Korea

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to promote cultural and sporting exchanges between the United Kingdom and North Korea. [157539]

**Mr. Rammell:** We are not specifically promoting any cultural or sporting events between the UK and the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the *(a)* size and *(b)* value of heroin exports from North Korea in each of the last five years. [157543]

**Mr. Rammell:** There is no evidence that heroin has been trafficked through North Korea to the UK in significant quantities during the period in question.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with *(a)* the UNHCR in Geneva and *(b)* his counterparts in the European Union about possible visits by international inspection teams to assess prison conditions in North Korea. [157537]

**Mr. Rammell:** UNHCR's responsibility is for the welfare of refugees and, as such, it has no mandate to inspect prisons in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

In the EU, the issue has been discussed by member states regularly. The resolution on DPRK at the UN Commission on Human Rights in 2003, tabled by the EU, included a specific request for the North Korean authorities to allow inspection visits by international independent monitors.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the size of the prison population in North Korea. [157538]

**Mr. Rammell:** The US Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, in a report dated October 2003, estimated the prison population of North Korea to be around two hundred thousand.

We have no access to any more accurate and reliable figures.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the nature and extent of the United Kingdom's diplomatic ties with North Korea are. [157542]

**Mr. Rammell:** The UK and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) established full diplomatic relations on 12 December 2000. The British Embassy in Pyongyang was established in July 2001, and the DPRK Embassy in London was established in November 2002.

Through both Embassies we ensure that we take regular opportunities to emphasise to the DPRK authorities our strong concerns on human rights and on the nuclear issue. We make clear that the scope of our co-operation with the DPRK will remain severely limited until progress is made on meeting these concerns.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his estimate is of per capita income in *(a)* North Korea and *(b)* South Korea in 2004. [157544]

**Mr. Rammell:** South Korea's average income per capita in 2002 (latest year for which actual figures are available) was US$9,979. This year, the figure is expected to reach around US$12,000, owing to economic growth and appreciation of the Korean won against the US dollar.

The North Korean government does not publish economic statistics. Reliable figures for per capita incomes are therefore unavailable. However, the Bank of Korea (South Korea's central bank) estimate average per capita incomes in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in 2002 was US$760. The figure is unlikely to have changed significantly since then.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the effect of trade sanctions by the United States on the economy of North Korea. [157556]

**Mr. Rammell:** The US lifted trade sanctions on North Korea in 2000, although US exports of arms and certain products with possible military use remain banned. Despite the lifting of sanctions, trade flows are small—IMF figures for 2002 show the US exporting only US$25 million worth of goods to North Korea in 2002 and importing less than US$l million.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the incidence of *(a)* infanticide and *(b)* torture in prisons in North Korea. [157568]

**Mr. Rammell:** We are appalled by the reports of infanticide, torture and other inhumane treatment carried out in North Korean prisons. We have expressed our concerns regularly to the North Korean government at both ministerial and official levels, and have called for access by international monitors to verify the conditions in North Korean prisons. I recently called in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Ambassador to register my strong concerns.

## Parliamentary Questions

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many parliamentary questions have been tabled to his Department since 1 January 2003, broken down by *(a)* ordinary written and *(b)* named day; what percentage in respect of *(a)* were answered within 10 working days; and what percentage in respect of *(b)* were answered by the specified date. [157744]

**Mr. Straw:** As of 27 February 2004, 3,668 written parliamentary questions (PQs) had been tabled to my Department since 1 January 2003, of which 3031 were for ordinary written answer and 637 for answer on named day.

Since 1 January 2003, 94 per cent. of ordinary written PQs have been answered within 10 working days and 74 per cent. of named day PQs answered on time.

## Russia

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Russian Foreign Minister about EU enlargement. [157397]

**Mr. Rammell:** My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary maintains regular dialogue with his Russian counterpart on a range of issues, including EU enlargement and EU/Russia relations.

### Scholarships

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the cost of Foreign Office scholarships for each year from 1996–97 to 2005–06 (planned); what value for money assessment has been made of the scheme; and if he will make a statement. [156605]

**Mr. Mullin:** Annual costs of Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) scholarships during the period are:

| | *Number of scholars* | *Cost (£ million)* |
|---|---|---|
| 1996–97 | 2,198 | 34 |
| 1997–98 | 2,259 | 36 |
| 1998–99 | 2,196 | 39 |
| 1999–2000 | 2,300 | 40 |
| 2000–01 | 2,470 | 45 |
| 2001–02 | 2,510 | 46 |
| 2002–03 | 2,568 | 48 |
| 2003–04 | [1]2,487 | [2]49 |
| 2004–05 | n/k | [2]49 |
| 2005–06 | n/k | [2]49 |

[1] estimated
[2] planned
n/k = not known

FCO scholarships include Chevening Scholarships, Marshall Scholarships, Atlantic Fellowships and the FCO contribution to the UK input into the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan.

An external review of FCO scholarships in 2003 examined value for money issues and recommended some reprioritisation within the Chevening scholarships scheme in particular. I will place a copy in the Library of the House.

### Surveillance

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what requests have been made to the US authorities to undertake *(a)* interception of communications and *(b)* surveillance of (i) hon. Members and (ii) other UK citizens where such activity would require express authorisation from a senior Minister in the UK were it to be carried out by UK authorities. [157864]

**Mr. Straw:** It is the well established and long standing practice of successive Governments not to comment on operations of the Intelligence Services.

## DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

### Council Tax

**Mr. Truswell:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list by type of authority *(a)* the Band D council tax level set by each local authority for 2004–05, excluding precepts, *(b)* the percentage change of *(a)* from 2003–04, *(c)* the precept set by the authority's relevant Fire and Civil Defence Authority for 2004–05, *(d)* the percentage annual change represented by *(c)*, *(e)* the precept set by the relevant police authority for 2004–05, *(f)* the percentage annual change represented by *(e)*, *(g)* the sum total of *(a)*, *(c)* and *(e)* and *(h)* the percentage change of *(g)* compared to 2003–04. [156991]

**Mr. Raynsford:** Precepting authorities have until 1 March to set their council taxes for 2004–05, and billing authorities have until 11 March. The requested information will be published after all local authorities have set their council taxes and notified their figures to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total grant received from his Department is in Durham to compensate for loss in revenue from council tax consequent on student exemption from council tax. [156779]

**Mr. Raynsford:** There is no separate grant in respect of council tax revenue foregone through student exemptions.

The main central Government support for spending by the City of Durham is through redistributed business rates and Revenue Support Grant, together known as Formula Grant. The amount of Formula Grant for Durham City depends on Durham's Formula Spending Share, Durham's share of the assumed national council tax, Durham's council tax base, and the operation of the floor and ceiling damping mechanism. Where there are student exemptions this will reduce the council tax base and so result in additional Revenue Support Grant.

### Departmental Advertising

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much *(a)* his Department and *(b)* each agency and non-departmental public body sponsored by his Department spent on (i) advertising and (ii) information campaigns in each year since 2001–02. [149916]

**Yvette Cooper:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created on 29 May 2002.

In the financial year 2002–03 the office spent £3,346,943 on advertising and £3,718,767 on information campaigns.

In the financial year 2003–04 the Office spent £3,411,000 on advertising and £6,882,000 on information campaigns.

In both years the majority of the spend was on Fire Safety campaign (93 per cent.).

Figures for each agency and non-departmental bodies are not held centrally and could be supplied only at disproportional cost.

### Fire Sprinklers

**Sandra Gidley:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of sprinkler systems in tackling fires in residential properties. [157368]

**Phil Hope:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister commissioned, in April 2001, an extensive research project with the Building Research Establishment (BRE) to consider fully the effectiveness of residential sprinklers. BRE published their research last month and a summary document of the work can be found on the Building Regulations section of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website—www.odpm.gov.uk

The findings of the research indicate that residential sprinklers would appear to be generally effective in controlling fires. However, the work did show that in the case of some slow burning and shielded fires people

could still eventually be overcome by smoke inhalation. The research also found that it would not be cost effective to require the universal installation of sprinklers in all residential premises. However, the research concluded that in some types of premises, typically those where the occupants are considered to be the most vulnerable to fire, further consideration is warranted. These premises include residential care homes, high-rise houses and flats and higher risk houses in multiple occupation.

As part of our current review of the fire safety aspects of the building regulations we will be considering the findings of the BRE research to see if there is a case for introducing amendments that enable us to target the provision of sprinklers in those new and altered premises where the people are considered to be most vulnerable.

### Green Belt

**Mr. Brady:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what *(a)* area in hectares and *(b)* percentage of green belt land within Metropolitan authorities has been removed from green belt designation since 1997. [157920]

**Yvette Cooper:** Statistics on the extent of green belt in England were last published in 2000, based on area of green belt contained in local development plan maps existing in 1997. Officials in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister are currently investigating the extent of designated green belt changes for authorities that have adopted new development plans since 1997. These updated statistics on green belt will be published shortly. I will write to the hon. Member when the information is available.

### Regional Planning Guidance

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will publish the new Regional Planning Guidance for East of England (RPG14). [157170]

**Keith Hill:** The East of England Regional Assembly plan to submit Draft RPG 14 in Autumn 2004; this will be followed by a period of consultation and a formal Examination in Public. The Government expects to publish the final version as a Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England (RSS14) in summer 2006. Regional Planning Guidance documents will become Regional Spatial Strategies on commencement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act currently before Parliament.

### Thames Gateway

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 2 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 744W, on the Thames Gateway, by when the Gateway delivery office will be operational. [157269]

**Keith Hill:** A new Thames Gateway directorate has been established in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, responsible for securing delivery of the Government's agenda for the Gateway. The Thames Gateway Delivery Unit will be established as part of the new directorate with premises in the Thames Gateway in April 2004.

## ELECTORAL COMMISSION

### Voter Registration

**Mark Tami:** To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission what steps the Electoral Commission is taking to increase levels of voter registration. [156539]

**Mr. Viggers:** The Commission undertakes national public awareness campaigns, including campaigns targeted at specific groups such as students and home-movers. It also provides support to local authority elections staff in the form of advice and best practice guidance on both the local promotion of electoral registration and the application of new legislation in this area.

The Commission is also undertaking research that will provide a better understanding of the extent and nature of under-registration, together with an assessment of the operation and impact of 'rolling registration' on levels of registration.

## CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### Alcohol Licences

**James Purnell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what plans she has to tackle anti-social behaviour near premises with licences to sell alcohol; [157760]

(2) what discussions she has had with local councils on increasing the responsibility of landlords with alcohol licences for excessive consumption of alcohol and associated public disorder problems; [157761]

(3) what plans she has to attach conditions to licences for *(a)* public houses and *(b)* other drinking establishments. [157762]

**Mr. Caborn:** The responsibility for attaching conditions to liquor licences under current law rests with the licensing justices. Under the Licensing Act 2003, which received Royal Assent on 10 July 2003, this responsibility will be transferred to licensing authorities which, in the main, are local authorities. There are two mandatory conditions in the 2003 Act, which will be attached in all cases where a premises licence authorises the supply of alcohol. The first is that no supply of alcohol may be made at a time when there is no designated premises supervisor in respect of the premises or at a time when the premises supervisor does not hold a personal licence or it is suspended. The second is that every supply of alcohol under the premises licence must be made or authorised by a person who holds a personal licence.

The 2003 Act provides further mechanisms to promote the prevention of nuisance and crime and disorder. The Act introduces the review of licences. Interested parties and responsible authorities will be able to request that a review of a premises licence occurs on a ground which is relevant to one or more of the licensing objectives (the prevention of crime and disorder, the prevention of public nuisance, the protection of children from harm and public safety). The review may lead to modifications of the conditions

on the licence, the exclusion of certain licensable activities from the licence, the removal of the premises supervisor, or the suspension or revocation of the licence.

In addition, the 2003 Act provides powers for a magistrates court in a particular area to make an order requiring premises at or near a place of disorder, or expected disorder, to be closed for a period not exceeding 24 hours.

In addition a particular premises may be closed if a senior police officer reasonably believes there is, or is likely imminently to be, disorder on, or in the vicinity, of the premises and the closure is necessary for public safety, or alternatively if a public nuisance is being caused by noise coming from the premises and closure is necessary to prevent the nuisance. These closure orders can be for up to 24 hours and may be extended in certain situations. These powers will also be applicable to temporary events held under temporary event notices.

In addition to these provisions, the 2003 Act contains offences such as the sale of alcohol to a person who is drunk or obtaining alcohol for a person who is drunk. Before the licensing Bill was introduced, during its passage through Parliament and since Royal Assent, we have engaged in extensive and detailed consultation with the Local Government Association, the Association of London Government and the Local Authorities Co-ordinators of Regulatory Services about the provisions of the new legislation and its implementation.

### Crystal Palace

**Miss Kirkbride:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the progress of negotiations regarding the future of Crystal Palace sports facilities; and what role the Government have played in the negotiations. [157758]

**Mr. Caborn:** As the hon. Member for Bromsgrove may be aware, it was announced on 25 February that Sport England, the Greater London Authority and the London borough of Bromley have between them secured the future of the National Sports Centre. Details of the re-development, and its timing, are yet to be finalised.

Sport England's lease will continue for a further two years. After that, the London Development Agency will take responsibility for the site. This will ensure that the Crystal Palace Grand Prix—the last major athletics event before the Athens Olympics—will take place this summer.

It has been agreed that Sport England, the Greater London Authority/London Development Agency and the London borough of Bromley will each pay one third of the maintenance costs for the first year of the agreement. After that, the London Development Agency will be solely responsible. This will be the starting point for the modernisation of the whole of Crystal Palace Park.

The Government have remained close to all partners throughout discussions.

### Departmental Budget

**Miss Kirkbride:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when the updated figures for her Department's budget for the next five years will be published. [157788]

**Mr. Caborn:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave her on 5 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 129W.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport's Annual Report 2004 is expected to be published in April 2004. All data will be subject to revision following the outcome of the Spending Review 2004, due in the autumn, at which time budgets for 2006–07 will be agreed.

### Departmental Christmas Card

**Miss Kirkbride:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the total cost was of producing her Department's Christmas card last year. [157790]

**Mr. Caborn:** The cost of the production of the DCMS Christmas card for 2003 was £1,587.50.

**Miss Kirkbride:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many Christmas cards were sent by her Department last Christmas. [157791]

**Mr. Caborn:** There were 3,798 Christmas cards sent out from DCMS in 2003.

### Digital Television

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the purchases necessary to receive digital television in different areas of the United Kingdom. [157514]

**Estelle Morris** *[holding answer 1 March 2004]:* There are four ways consumers can receive digital television today:

*(a) Terrestrially*

Consumers need to buy either a digital adapter (set top box) or an integrated digital television. While many people will be able to use their existing aerials, some may need to have new aerials or cabling installed to receive all services. Digital terrestrial television is now receivable in around 75 per cent. of the UK.

*(b) Through Satellite*

Consumers need to get either a digital satellite adaptor and connect it to their existing analogue TV set or a digital TV set designed to receive digital satellite signals. They will also need a dish installed outside their home. Digital satellite signals reach the vast majority of UK homes, but in a few cases reception may not be possible, because the line of sight to the satellite is obstructed, or because planning or property regulations do not permit householders to put up a dish.

*(c) Through Cable*

Consumers need a set top box provided and installed by the operator of the cable network which serves their home, if they live in a cabled area.

*(d) Through Broadband DSL*

A fourth digital platform is emerging through use of digital subscriber line technologies based on telephony network cabling. Today, this service is only available in Kingston upon Hull, and London.

More information is available on www.digitaltelevision.gov.uk.

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what efforts her Department is making to ensure that all households that desire it have access to digital television prior to the analogue signal being switched off. [157515]

**Estelle Morris** *[holding answer 1 March 2004]:* The Department for Culture, Media and Sport is working with stakeholders, within the Digital Television Action Plan, to ensure that everyone who can currently get the main public service broadcasting channels in analogue form (BBC 1 and 2, ITV, Channel 4/S4C and Channel 5) will be able to receive them on digital systems. However, this might not be possible before switchover for a small minority of consumers. Though Digital satellite signals reach the vast majority of UK homes, in a few cases reception or installation of the necessary dish may not be possible, either for topographic or legal reasons. We are reviewing these legal constraints to ensure they are minimal and proportionate. Any further extension of the digital cable networks is a commercial matter for the operators. As for terrestrial reception, it is not possible to extend it before switchover, as signals currently have to be transmitted at low power to prevent interferences with UK and foreign analogue signals. Only switchover will allow digital terrestrial television to reach the same level of coverage as analogue.

**Miss Kirkbride:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate she has made of the number of *(a)* analogue and *(b)* digital television sets bought in the last five years in the United Kingdom. [157772]

**Estelle Morris:** The department holds figures for television sales in the UK up to December 2003 for the last four years only. These figures are:

| | *Number (Thousand)* |
|---|---|
| *(a)* Analogue TV sets | 18,775.8 |
| *(b)* Digital television sets | 395.9 |

These figures do not include sales of set top boxes, which allow viewers to receive digital television through analogue sets. They also do not include TV/VCR and TV/DVD combination sets.

### Mobile Phones

**Miss Kirkbride:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many departmental mobile phones are used by her Department; and what the total cost of calls was in the last five years. [157775]

**Mr. Caborn:** The Department for Culture, Media and Sport currently has 70 departmental mobile phones. The cost to the Department of mobile phones supplied to Ministers and officials was £25,500 in 2000–01, £21,000 in 2001–02, £29,000 in 2002–03 and £35,000 as of the end of February this year. It is not possible to provide figures prior to 2000 save at disproportionate cost.

### Parliamentary Questions

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many Parliamentary Questions have been tabled to her Department since 1 January 2003, broken down by *(a)* ordinary written and *(b)* named day; what percentage in respect of *(a)* were answered within 10 working days; and what percentage in respect of *(b)* were answered by the specified date. [157519]

**Mr. Caborn:** Ministerial colleagues and officials at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport attach great importance to answering parliamentary questions accurately and to time. We aim to ensure that all Members receive a substantive response to an ordinary written question within a working week of it being tabled and that named day questions are answered on the specified date.

1,532 House of Commons written Parliamentary Questions were tabled to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport for answer between 1 January 2003 and 26 February 2004. This figure excludes those questions either withdrawn by the Member or transferred to another Department.

1,356 ordinary written questions were answered during this period. Of these 1,131 (83.4 per cent.) were answered within 10 working days.

176 named day questions were answered during this period. Of these 105 (59.6 per cent.) were answered on the specified date or named day.

### Performance Targets

**Miss Kirkbride:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how she will measure her Department's performance in reaching its Public Sector Agreement target to increase by eight per cent. the number of adult C2DE visitors to national museums and galleries. [157802]

**Estelle Morris:** Progress against the target is measured by using the results of periodic surveys carried out by each museum and gallery. These record the number of C2DEs visiting the museum. Progress is reported to the Department half-yearly and annually. The results are aggregated to measure progress against the PSA target.

### School Sport

**Miss Kirkbride:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how she will measure her Department's performance against the Public Sector Agreement target to increase the percentage of school children who spend a minimum of two hours per week on high quality physical education and school sport to 75 per cent. by 2006. [157778]

**Mr. Caborn:** As I indicated in my written answer of 5 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 137–38W, to the hon. Member for Bromsgrove, data are now being collected for the first time—for publication in April—on the number of pupils who choose to take up the

entitlement to two hours of high-quality PE and school sport each week within and beyond the curriculum. This exercise will be repeated in future years so that performance against the PSA target can be assessed.

### Sports Funding

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much money has been given to *(a)* football and *(b)* cricket in (i) the north-west, (ii) Lancashire and (iii) Chorley in each of the last three years; and for what purposes. [157686]

**Mr. Caborn:** Details of Lottery support from Sport England for football and Cricket from the following programmes: Community Capital, Active Community Development Fund, Safer Sports Grounds, Football Youth Development and Awards For All are as follows.

| | *Football* | | | | *Cricket* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *2000-01* | *2001-02* | *2002-03* | *Total* | *2000-01* | *2001-02* | *2002-03* | *Total* |
| Awards in Chorley (Number) | 1 | 4 | 2 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 7 |
| Total Sum for Chorley (£) | 4,789 | 15,272 | 6,700 | 35,165 | 5,935 | 4,198 | 4,954 | 25,879 |
| Awards in Lancashire (Number) | 44 | 39 | 60 | 143 | 30 | 34 | 40 | 107 |
| Total Sum for Lancashire (£) | 852,448 | 869,748 | 275,737 | 1,997,933 | 137,702 | 317,323 | 164,937 | 619,962 |
| Awards in North West region (Number) | 103 | 74 | 131 | 308 | 68 | 68 | 79 | 218 |
| Total Sum for North West region (£) | 1,360,352 | 4,776,147 | 1,506,483 | 7,642,982 | 1,479,590 | 1,367,864 | 822,892 | 3,670,346 |

*Note:*
Lancashire figures do not include schemes in Greater Manchester.

### Sunbeds

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many public leisure facilities are equipped with sunbeds; what her Department's policy is on the provision of sunbeds in public leisure facilities; and what plans she has to phase out the use of sunbeds in public leisure facilities. [156950]

**Mr. Caborn:** There are 2,945 Public Sports Centres in England, 935 of which contain one or more sunbed.

As I am sure the hon. Member will appreciate, any decision to provide sunbeds in public leisure facilities will be for the individual local authorities to make. However, the Government acknowledge the risks to young people of exposure to ultraviolet radiation (UVR) in all of its forms and the Health and Safety Executive has published guidance for operators and customers on using sunbeds. This guidance was developed after consultation with leading experts and is accepted as good advice.

The hon. Member may be interested to know that the potential dangers involved in the use of sunbeds will be the subject of a meeting of experts and industry on 29 March 2004. The campaign will review the latest scientific evidence and develop practical recommendations for better self-regulation.

### Tourism

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many people she estimates work in tourism in *(a)* the north-west, *(b)* Lancashire and *(c)* Chorley; and how many people are employed in hotels in each case. [157685]

**Mr. Caborn:** Research carried out by the North West Development Agency's Regional Intelligence Unit estimates that the number of people working in tourism in *(a)* the north-west is 193,871, *(b)* Lancashire is 47,828 and *(c)* Chorley is 3,839. It has not been possible to estimate the number of people employed in hotels but the North West Tourist Board estimates that 90 per cent. of tourism employees in each case work in the accommodation sector.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### Ballast Plc

**Sir Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the effect of the liquidation of Ballast plc, Salford Quays, on the value of the final salary occupational pensions of its former employees. [156683]

**Malcolm Wicks:** The Government are aware of the situation of the former employees of Ballast plc, but has not made an assessment of the effect the liquidation has had on their occupational pensions. However, we have great sympathy for the uncertainties they, and other people in similar circumstances, are facing in regard to their pensions.

**Sir Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make representations to the authorities in the Netherlands about the protection of the assets of the occupational pension schemes of former employees of the Dutch construction group Ballast Nedam NV and its liquidated UK subsidiary Ballast plc. [156684]

**Malcolm Wicks:** The Government recognise the concerns that have been expressed about the financial responsibilities of parent companies and sympathises with the position of all members of pension schemes that may not receive the pension that they expected as a result of employer insolvency. However, the legal obligation to fund a salary-related occupational scheme is with the sponsoring employer of the scheme. The holding company is not responsible for the debts of an insolvent subsidiary because the two companies have separate legal identities. Any political intervention would, therefore, be inappropriate in this case.

### Council Tax Benefit

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions which local authorities do not actively promote the take-up of council tax benefit for elderly people. [153793]

**Mr. Pond:** The information requested is not available.

Local authorities have a statutory duty to promote awareness of council tax benefit. But we want to do more to support authorities in their role, to encourage all those who may be entitled to claim. This is why I made a written statement on 15 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 125WS, in which I announced that we will be launching a take-up campaign to raise the awareness of council tax benefit among those who are likely to be entitled and also their family, friends and carers. Working with local authorities, we will provide promotional material, and will develop guidance and advice to help ensure that procedures are in place to handle inquiries about entitlement and provide support for those, particularly pensioners, making claims.

## Child Support Agency

**Mr. Webb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the administration cost of the Child Support Agency was in each of the last six years; and what the projected expenditure is for 2003–04. [152843]

**Mr. Pond:** The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member.

*Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. Steve Webb, dated 2 March 2004:*

In replying to your recent Parliamentary question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked what the administration cost of the Child Support Agency was in each of the last six years; and what the projected expenditure is for 2003–04.

The net operating costs of the Agency as included in the Annual Statement of Accounts are.

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1997–98 | 225.9 |
| 1998–99 | 231.2 |
| 1999–00 | 260.3 |
| 2000–01 | 250 |
| 2001–02 | 290.4 |
| 2002–03 | 294.3 |

The projected expenditure for 2003–04 for which the Agency is directly accountable is £320 million. The actual costs will be available when the Agency Accounts are published in July 2004.

I hope this is helpful.

**Nick Harvey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) when Child Support Agency cases initiated before March 2003 will be transferred to the new system; and if he will make a statement; [153619]

(2) whether all Child Support Agency cases will be transferred to the new system at the same time; and if he will make a statement. [153620]

**Mr. Pond:** I refer the hon. Member to the written answer I gave the hon. Member for Dartford (Dr. Stoate) on 27 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 341W.

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the timetable is for migration from the old to the new Child Support Agency scheme; and what factors affect the timetable. [155145]

**Mr. Pond:** I refer the hon. Member to the Written Answer I gave the hon. Member for Castle Point (Bob Spink) on 18 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 1092W.

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people were on each of the Child Support Agency schemes in each month since the inception of the new scheme. [155412]

**Mr. Pond:** The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

*Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. David Drew, dated 2 March 2004:*

In reply to your recent Parliamentary question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people were on each of the Child Support Agency schemes in each month since the inception of the new scheme. Because of issues associated with producing management information from the new computer system I cannot answer your question precisely in the format that it is asked. I can however indicate in the table below, the number of cases where;

either an assessment (old scheme) or a calculation (new scheme) has been completed as at each month end since March 2003, and

for old scheme cases the record is held on the "old" computer system and for new scheme cases it is held on our "new" computer system.

| | *Old scheme* | *New scheme* |
|---|---|---|
| March | 993,940 | 10 |
| April | 978,420 | 731 |
| May | 960,680 | 2,541 |
| June | 943,880 | 6,671 |
| July | 917,520 | 13,593 |
| August | 899,200 | 20,792 |
| September | 882,800 | 30,528 |
| October | 861,340 | 42,335 |
| November | 839,620 | 52,310 |
| December | 824,460 | 60,200 |

In addition there are around 120,000 "old scheme" cases operating on the new computer system. I cannot at this stage indicate the number of these cases at monthly rests. But the growth in this number toward the current total will mirror the decline in old scheme case numbers set out in the table above.

I hope that this is helpful.

**Mr. Webb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) if he will make a statement on the performance of the Child Support Agency's new reforms IT system; [155885]

(2) when he estimates the Department's Child Support Agency new reforms IT system recovery programme will be completed; and if he will make a statement. [155886]

**Mr. Pond:** The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

*Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. Steve Webb, dated 2 March 2004:*

In replying to your recent Parliamentary question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to make a statement on the performance of the Child Support Agency's new reforms IT system and also asked when does he estimate the Department's Child Support Agency new reforms IT system recovery programme will be completed.

The Secretary of State issued a Written Statement on the performance of the Agency on 12 February 2004. We are continuing to work with EDS on the detail of their proposed recovery plan and that has not yet been finalised.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the new computer programme for the Child Support Agency. [157254]

**Mr. Pond:** The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

*Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. Lindsay Hoyle, dated 2 March 2004:*

In replying to your recent Parliamentary question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to make a statement on the new computer programme for the Child Support Agency.

The Secretary of State issued a Written Statement on the performance of the Agency on 12 February 2004.

**Mr. Goodman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions by what date he will decide whether to cease to use the new computer system provided by EDS to assess Child Support Agency cases; and if he will make a statement. [158130]

**Mr. Pond:** I refer the hon. Member to the Written Answer I gave the hon. Member for Tamworth (Mr. Jenkins) on 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1591W.

### Cockle Bed Workers

**Geraldine Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether the Health and Safety Executive has powers to prevent working after dark on cockle beds if this activity presents a risk of serious personal injury. [156860]

**Mr. Pond** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]:* The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has no existing powers to impose a general ban on cockle picking after dark.

However, HSE inspectors do have the power to issue a prohibition notice on a person carrying on or in control of a work activity until the risks are remedied, if there is sufficient evidence of a breach of health and safety law.

**Geraldine Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether the Health and Safety Executive has powers to prohibit work on cockle beds if those activities present a risk of serious personal injury. [156852]

**Mr. Pond:** The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has no existing powers to impose a general ban on cockle picking.

However, HSE inspectors do have the power to issue a prohibition notice on a person in control of a work activity to stop that activity until the risks are remedied, if there is sufficient evidence of a breach of health and safety law.

### Final Salary Pension Schemes

**Sir Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps his Department is taking to protect the final salary pension schemes of employees; what assistance is provided to those people who are denied access to their pensions following company bankruptcy; and if he will make a statement. [156686]

**Malcolm Wicks:** We are taking significant steps to protect members of defined benefit schemes. We are introducing the Pension Protection Fund, which will protect scheme members by paying compensation if their employer becomes insolvent and the pension scheme is under funded. We are also introducing a new Pensions Regulator that has the flexibility and powers to take a targeted and proportionate approach to protecting the funds held in pension schemes.

Additionally, on 23 February, we laid Regulations that strengthen members' protection when a defined benefit occupational pension scheme starts to wind up while its sponsoring employer is solvent. On 24 February, we announced changes to the priority order which applies on wind up. This will help ensure that assets of the pension scheme are shared as fairly as possible between non-pensioner and pensioner scheme members.

In the event of employer insolvency assistance is available to pension scheme members under the Employment Rights Act 1996 and the Pensions Scheme Act 1993. Under these Acts, the Redundancy Payments Directorate makes insolvency payments from the National Insurance Fund (NIF) to qualifying former employees. Claims for unpaid employees' contributions are limited to the actual amount deducted from wages during the 12 months prior to the date of insolvency. Unpaid employers' contributions for the 12 month period prior to the insolvency date are also payable, but are subject to monetary limits depending on the type of pension scheme.

### Pension Credit

**Mr. Carmichael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much money has been allocated to promote Pension Credit; what proportion of these funds will be spent on regional and local media sources; and how much money has been spent advertising the new payment in *(a)* England, *(b)* Wales, *(c)* Scotland and *(d)* Northern Ireland. [156620]

**Malcolm Wicks:** The marketing campaign for Pension Credit has been designed to be flexible, and the level of expenditure may change according to need. However, in England, Scotland and Wales, it is currently estimated that media costs, including direct mailing, television and press advertising, will be in the region of £12–£17 million, excluding VAT, to October 2004.

In Northern Ireland the Department for Social Development is responsible for the promotion and take-up of Pension Credit.

A direct mail pack to pensioner households remains at the heart of our marketing campaign for Pension Credit. From September 2003 to March 2004 this is being supported by commissioning largely national press and television advertising to introduce Pension Credit in England, Scotland and Wales.

The proportion of advertising spend in regional and local media is approximately 25 per cent., although this is likely to increase with the identification of key areas for targeting during 2004.

Actual spend from September 2003 to date is given as follows. Figures exclude VAT.

England: £7,725,000

Scotland: £759,000

Wales: £623,000

### Triplex Components

**Mr. Djanogly:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the situation of the employees at Triplex Components, Peterborough following the closure of its final salary pension scheme; and if he will make a statement. [156933]

**Malcolm Wicks:** The Government are aware of the situation of the employees at Triplex Peterborough and Ministers have recently met representatives of the Triplex Pension scheme.

The Government have not made an assessment of the pension fund prospects in question. However we have great sympathy for the uncertainties they, and other workers in similar circumstances, are facing with regard to their pensions.

**Mr. Djanogly:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many final salary pension schemes have been wound up in (i) England and (ii) Cambridgeshire in each of the last five years. [156934]

**Malcolm Wicks:** We are unable to provide these figures. The only source of information on winding up schemes is the Pensions Schemes Registry, which is administered by the Occupational Pension Schemes Regulatory Authority (OPRA). The information on this database is limited and does not allow us to identify the location of schemes winding up.

### Winter Fuel Payments

**Dr. Evan Harris:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what targets the Pensions Agency has set for the issuing of Winter Fuel Payments to those eligible to receive them as *(a)* existing claimants and *(b)* new claimants. [156771]

**Malcolm Wicks:** There are no targets set for issuing Winter Fuel Payments. The majority of those who are entitled are paid automatically. We aim to ensure their payments are sent to them before Christmas. People who have not previously received a payment and who do not receive a Social Security benefit other than Child Benefit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit must claim. Provided they have claimed by the Friday of the qualifying week we aim to send them their payments before Christmas as well.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Population Profile

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of the population of Northern Ireland is over *(a)* 50, *(b)* 55, *(c)* 60, *(d)* 65, *(e)* 75, *(f)* 85 and *(g)* 100 years. [156377]

**Mr. Pearson:** The percentage of the Northern Ireland estimate of population (mid-2002) aged 50 years and over, 55 years and over, 60 years and over, 65 years and over, 75 years and over and 85 years and over is given in table 1 as follows. Mid-year estimates for those aged 100 and over are not routinely published. However this information is available from the 2001 Census and is given in table 2 as follows.

*Table 1: Percentage of the Northern Ireland mid-year estimate of population (2002) by various age-groups*

| *Age-group* | *Percentage of Northern Ireland population (2002 mid-year estimate)* |
|---|---|
| *(a)* 50 years and over | 29.06 |
| *(b)* 55 years and over | 23.30 |
| *(c)* 60 years and over | 17.83 |
| *(d)* 65 years and over | 13.40 |
| *(e)* 75 years and over | 6.05 |
| *(f)* 85 years and over | 1.39 |

*Table 2: Percentage of the Northern Ireland 2001 Census by age-group*

| *Age-group* | *Percentage of Northern Ireland Population (2001 Census)* |
|---|---|
| *(g)* 100 years and over | 0.01 |

### Prison Suicides

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the cost of maintaining suicide watch observations in prisons in Northern Ireland in the last 12 months. [156324]

**Jane Kennedy:** Prisoners who are considered to be at risk of suicide or self-harm are managed within the normal prison regime and no additional staffing resources are required to keep prisoners at risk under observation.

Any costs associated with managing prisoners at risk are largely notional. Hence there has been no requirement to quantify costs in monetary terms.

### Asbestos

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what regulations apply to building contractors when asbestos is discovered in *(a)* schools and *(b)* school premises during building work; and how they are enforced. [156554]

**Mr. Pearson:** The legislation that applies in such circumstances is as follows:

1. The Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978

2. The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995

3. The Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003; and

4. The Asbestos (Licensing) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1984

The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI) is the enforcing authority for the above legislation in relation to a wide range of work premises, including schools. HSENI adopts a risk-based approach to carrying out inspections of asbestos removal operations and insist on a very high standard of compliance with statutory provisions in relation to all such work.

### Assets Recovery Agency

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what measures are in place to monitor the operation of the Assets Recovery Agency in Northern Ireland. [156604]

**Jane Kennedy:** The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 requires the Director of the Agency to prepare an annual plan setting out how she intends to exercise her functions during the financial year. The plan includes a statement of the objectives and any performance targets and sets out in particular how the Director intends to exercise her functions in Northern Ireland. It is referred to the Secretary of State for approval.

The Director must, as soon as possible after the end of each financial year, prepare a report on how she has exercised her functions during the financial year.

I receive regular progress reports from the Agency's Director and the Assistant Director.

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the budget of the Assets Recovery Agency has been in each year since its creation. [156630]

**Jane Kennedy:** The Assets Recovery Agency became operational on 24 February 2003. Budget and resource allocation is a matter for the Home Office. The Agency's initial budget for the United Kingdom for 2003–04 is £13 million.

### Car Thefts

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many car thefts there were in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [156379]

**Jane Kennedy:** The information is set out in the following table.

| | *Number of thefts/ unauthorised taking of motor vehicles* |
|---|---|
| 1998–99 | 7,983 |
| 1999–2000 | 8,038 |
| 2000–01 | 8,563 |
| 2001–02 | 9,005 |
| 2002–03 | 8,317 |

### Ceasefire Breaches

**David Burnside:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how he defines a breach of a ceasefire; and whether any breaches of ceasefires have been made by the *(a)* Provisional IRA, *(b)* UDA and *(c)* UVF since 1 January. [156669]

**Jane Kennedy:** The Secretary of State, in making a judgment on the status of a paramilitary ceasefire, takes account of all relevant considerations, and in particular those set out in Section 3(9) of the Northern Ireland (Sentences) Act 1998. The Government do not comment on specific intelligence matters. I call upon all paramilitary groupings to stop all forms of violent activity.

### Civil Service Numbers

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many civil servants in Northern Ireland have resigned from the Civil Service as a result of the ongoing pay dispute; what recent steps he has taken to resolve the dispute; and if he will make a statement. [156977]

**Mr. Pearson:** As far as I am aware no civil servants in Northern Ireland have resigned from the Civil Service as a result of the current pay dispute. Extensive negotiations over several months did not result in an agreed pay deal for the 11 Departments of the Northern Ireland Administration this year. Management Side presented an offer worth 3.67 per cent. on 5 November. As this could not be agreed, and Trade Union Side declined to negotiate within the 3.67 per cent. envelope, we took the decision to proceed to pay the award and communicated this to staff and Trade Union Side on 27 November. I have made clear to Trade Union Side that the 3.67 per cent. deal is the maximum that can be paid. We are however open to exploring other reasonable means of resolving the dispute. The latest meeting of the Central Whitley Council between Trade Union and Management Sides took place on Thursday, 19 February, and we have agreed to hold further negotiations as a matter of urgency.

Members of the NI Civil Service working in the Northern Ireland Office are subject to separate pay negotiations involving three Unions: NIPSA, PCS and the PDA. A formal offer of 3 per cent. was made to the Unions but was rejected. NIO intend to proceed to pay the award at the end of March.

### Community Care (Delayed Discharges Etc) Act

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Community Care (Delayed Discharges etc.) Act 2003 in addressing delayed discharges from hospitals; and what plans he has to introduce similar provisions in Northern Ireland. [157653]

**Angela Smith:** I refer the hon. Lady to my answer on 3 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 394W. The Community Care (Delayed Discharges etc.) Act 2003, which became fully operational on 5 January 2004, places duties upon the NHS and councils relating to communication between authorities and introduces financial incentives to promptly assess and transfer patients. It is therefore premature to make an assessment

of the effectiveness of these new arrangements. I am not planning to introduce similar provisions in Northern Ireland for the reasons I have previously set out.

### Drug Use

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the work of Life Education Centres in prevention of drug use through education in Northern Ireland; and if he will make further funding available to enable the expansion of this work throughout Northern Ireland. [147381]

**Jane Kennedy:** An evaluation report based on a 3-school sample was received in April 2002.

Funding has been pledged which will allow the work of the first Life Education Centre to continue and funding has been secured to operate a second Centre until March 2004. Consideration is currently being given to continue this funding to March 2006. There are, however, no plans to extend the present provision of Life Education Centres in Northern Ireland.

### Health Services

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many MRI scans were performed in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [156322]

**Angela Smith:** This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### Homelessness

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many homeless people there are in Northern Ireland; and what the figures were for each of the past 10 years. [151207]

**Mr. Spellar:** At 31 December 2003, 5,133 households accepted by the Housing Executive as being statutorily homeless were on its waiting list to be permanently re-housed.

Over the last 10 financial years the numbers who presented to the Housing Executive as being homeless and those accepted by it as statutorily homeless are as follows:

| | *Number presented* | *Number accepted* |
|---|---|---|
| 2002–03 | 16,426 | 8,580 |
| 2001–02 | 14,164 | 7,374 |
| 2000–01 | 12,694 | 6,457 |
| 1999–2000 | 10,997 | 5,192 |
| 1998–99 | 11,552 | 4,997 |
| 1997–98 | 12,672 | 4,956 |
| 1996–97 | 11,092 | 4,708 |
| 1995–96 | 10,768 | 4,319 |
| 1994–95 | 10,068 | 4,014 |
| 1993–94 | 9,731 | 3,971 |

### Housing Executive Properties

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Housing Executive properties there were in each Northern Ireland housing district in each year since 2000; what steps he is taking to increase the number; and if he will make a statement. [157666]

**Mr. Spellar:** The following table sets out the number of Housing Executive properties in each of its district office areas at the end of each financial year since 2000.

| *District* | *31 March 2000* | *31 March 2001* | *31 March 2002* | *31 March 2003* | *31 January 2004* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Belfast 1 | 3,184 | 2,978 | 2,837 | 2,492 | 2,348 |
| Belfast 2 | 5,125 | 5,049 | 4,663 | 4,341 | 4,033 |
| Belfast 3 | 4,673 | 4,280 | 4,037 | 3,671 | 3,488 |
| Belfast 4 | 4,537 | 4,386 | 4,226 | 4,124 | 3,924 |
| Belfast 5 | 4,622 | 5,040 | 4,689 | 4,614 | 4,321 |
| Belfast 6 | 4,446 | 4,212 | 3,970 | 3,933 | 3,626 |
| Belfast 7 | 5,283 | 5,078 | 4,885 | 4,579 | 4,360 |
| Bangor | 3,656 | 3,551 | 3,420 | 3,266 | 3,092 |
| Newtownards | 5,223 | 5,052 | 4,848 | 4,646 | 4,447 |
| Castlereagh | 5,213 | 4,994 | 4,790 | 4,564 | 4,389 |
| Lisburn (Antrim St.) | 6,148 | 5,817 | 5,419 | 5,172 | 4,933 |
| Lisburn (Dairyfarm) | 3,060 | 2,912 | 2,698 | 2,410 | 2,221 |
| Downpatrick | 3,633 | 3,349 | 3,101 | 2,909 | 2,722 |
| Banbridge | 2,486 | 2,386 | 2,240 | 2,097 | 2,007 |
| Newry | 4,766 | 4,442 | 4,138 | 3,847 | 3,581 |
| Armagh | 2,832 | 2,671 | 2,489 | 2,335 | 2,206 |
| Lurgan | 3,978 | 3,723 | 3,559 | 3,345 | 3,137 |
| Portadown | 2,147 | 2,064 | 1,987 | 1,891 | 1,824 |
| Dungannon | 2,553 | 2,446 | 2,285 | 2,137 | 2,029 |
| Fermanagh | 2,958 | 2,794 | 2,644 | 2,481 | 2,354 |
| Ballymena | 4,269 | 4,010 | 3,790 | 3,579 | 3,391 |
| Antrim | 3,689 | 3,509 | 3,258 | 3,071 | 2925 |
| Newtownabbey 1 | 3,283 | 3,042 | 2,870 | 2,746 | 2,586 |
| Newtownabbey 2 | 3,017 | 2,830 | 2,716 | 2,597 | 2,516 |
| Carrickfergus | 2,933 | 2,799 | 2,670 | 2,444 | 2,260 |
| Larne | 2,233 | 2,135 | 2,088 | 1,890 | 1,806 |
| Ballycastle | 1,144 | 1,082 | 1,043 | 1,002 | 958 |
| Ballymoney | 1,968 | 1,879 | 1,784 | 1,707 | 1,644 |
| Coleraine | 4,159 | 4,000 | 3,828 | 3,665 | 3,549 |
| Waterloo (L'Derry) | 3,319 | 3,210 | 3,048 | 2,819 | 2,673 |
| Waterside (L'Derry) | 3,344 | 3,209 | 3,089 | 2,886 | 2,753 |
| Collon (L'Derry) | 3,454 | 3,321 | 3,184 | 2,978 | 2,783 |

| District | 31 March 2000 | 31 March 2001 | 31 March 2002 | 31 March 2003 | 31 January 2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Limavady | 2,050 | 1,930 | 1,841 | 1,725 | 1,653 |
| Magherafelt | 1,928 | 1,802 | 1,705 | 1,583 | 1,501 |
| Strabane | 3,141 | 2,976 | 2,855 | 2,670 | 2,515 |
| Omagh | 2,597 | 2,450 | 2,332 | 2,217 | 2,135 |
| Cookstown | 1,571 | 1,467 | 1,405 | 1,309 | 1,230 |
| Northern Ireland total | 128,622 | 122,875 | 116,431 | 109,742 | 103,920 |

Independent research commissioned by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and carried out by the University of Ulster/University of Cambridge estimates a need for between 1,400 and 1,500 new homes per annum. The responsibility for providing all new social housing in Northern Ireland now lies with Registered Housing Associations.

### Industrial Tribunals

**Mr. Peter Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many industrial tribunal applications were lodged against the Royal Ulster Constabulary and Police Service of Northern Ireland in each of the last five years; and what the outcome was in each case; [147220]

(2) how many contested applications in industrial tribunals resulted in awards against the Royal Ulster Constabulary and Police Service of Northern Ireland in each of the last five years; and how many of these were appealed to the Court of Appeal; [147221]

(3) what criteria the Police Service of Northern Ireland uses when determining whether or not to appeal an award made by the industrial tribunal; [147222]

(4) what costs were incurred by the Royal Ulster Constabulary and Police Service of Northern Ireland in defending the industrial tribunal application by Chief Inspector Shamoon at *(a)* the industrial tribunal, *(b)* the Court of Appeal and *(c)* the House of Lords. [147223]

**Jane Kennedy:** Records for the number of industrial tribunal applications are not available earlier than 2000–01. The following table sets out the number of applications and the current status of each case from 2000–04.

*Industrial tribunal applications and current status*

| | Lodged | Ongoing | Withdrawn | Dismissed | Settled |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2000–01 | 72 | 33 | 29 | 6 | 4 |
| 2001–02 | 57 | 30 | 19 | 2 | 6 |
| 2002–03 | 55 | 48 | 6 | 1 | 0 |
| 2003–04 | 50 | 49 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

Settlement in each of these cases was in favour of the applicant and none of the settlement awards were appealed.

The chief constable takes advice from counsel when determining whether or not to appeal an award made by an industrial tribunal. I am advised that an appeal would not be lodged unless counsel advised that it was justified.

The PSNI incurred costs of £28,442.05 in respect of the industrial tribunal application by Chief Inspector Shamoon. Costs in respect of the Court of Appeal and the House of Lords were awarded against Chief Inspector Shamoon.

### Joyriding

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were convicted of joyriding offences in Northern Ireland in each of the past five years; how many of these incidents resulted in *(a)* fatal and *(b)* non-fatal injuries; and what steps he is taking to reduce these figures. [144345]

**Jane Kennedy:** "Joyriding" is currently not a specific offence in law so the information is not available in the format requested. The table sets out the number of convictions for taking a motor vehicle without the owner's consent from 1997 to 2001 which is the most up to date information available.

| | Taking a motor vehicle without the owner's consent |
|---|---|
| 1997 | 453 |
| 1998 | 401 |
| 1999 | 294 |
| 2000 | 328 |
| 2001 | 350 |

The following tables set out details of collisions involving stolen vehicles and hit and run collisions but the identification of those specifically relating to "joyriding" could be obtained only at disproportionate expenses.

*Road traffic collisions involving stolen vehicles[1]; 1998–2002*

| | Fatal collisions | Serious collisions | Slight collisions | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1998 | 6 | 29 | 165 | 200 |
| 1999 | 3 | 25 | 196 | 224 |
| 2000 | 4 | 45 | 228 | 277 |
| 2001 | 6 | 50 | 231 | 287 |
| 2002 | 5 | 29 | 192 | 226 |

*Road traffic collisions involving hit and run vehicles[2] 1998–2002*

| | Fatal collisions | Serious collisions | Slight collisions | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1998 | 6 | 44 | 483 | 533 |
| 1999 | 9 | 54 | 550 | 613 |
| 2000 | 4 | 98 | 734 | 836 |
| 2001 | 4 | 83 | 738 | 825 |
| 2002 | 6 | 103 | 659 | 768 |

[1] Stolen vehicles only include those vehicles which are known by the police to be stolen

[2] Hit and run vehicles may include vehicles which are stolen

The PSNI are involved in a number of initiatives to reduce the number of vehicles taken without the permission of the owner. In West Belfast an Auto Crime Team has been established to specifically address this issue. While such initiatives can help reduce the incidence of vehicle crime it has been recognised that a long-term strategy is required and the PSNI are working in partnership with a number of agencies and groups, to tackle this problem as part of a multi-agency project. Each District Command Unit uses a range of resources and methods to target vehicle related crime in their area as effectively as possible.

In addition to these measures the Government will publish draft legislation for Northern Ireland for consultation by the end of January, aimed at tackling so-called "joy-riding" offences. The proposed legislation will introduce two new offences: "aggravated vehicle taking", attracting a maximum prison sentence of five years and "causing death or grievous bodily injury by aggravated vehicle taking", which will attract a maximum prison sentence of 14 years. These tough new measures are part of the Government's overall strategy to specifically target and punish so-called "joy-riders".

### Learning Disabilities Strategy

**Mr. McGrady:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made on the Strategy for People with Learning Disabilities; and when recommendations will be published. [156165]

**Jane Kennedy:** A great deal of work is being taken forward by the Department of Education in a range of areas to improve the levels of provision for children with learning difficulties, and in particular autism and dyslexia. While this represents a broad strategic approach, the Department is not engaged in a formal exercise to draw up a Strategy for People with Learning Disabilities.

In 2002, two Northern Ireland Education Task Groups published reports, with recommendations, on the future development of educational provision for children with autism and dyslexia. Following DE-led conferences on these areas in autumn 2002, Education and Library Boards (ELBs) have prioritised the reports' recommendations and consequently the Department has made £270,000 available in 2003–04 and up to £540,000 in 2004–05 to the ELBs to develop training needs and support measures in the field of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). An Inter Board ASD Group has been established, which will promote consistency of approach in relation to children with ASD across the five ELBs. A further £500,000 was allocated in 2003–04 to provide support and training for parents and staff in pre-school settings working with children with ASD.

DE led the collaborative North/South production of complementary parent and teacher videos/CD-ROMs and guidance material on autism. These were distributed widely across Northern Ireland in 2003. A dyslexia video/DVD ROM is also nearing completion by a joint North/South group and it is hoped to distribute this in the near future. The Education and Training Inspectorate is working to produce a "Dyslexia Friendly Schools" guide during 2004.

A Steering Group, comprising health and education authorities from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, are taking forward the development of the Centre of Excellence for children and young people with ASD at Middletown, Co. Armagh.

### Local Management of Schools

**Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the effect of the formula for funding local management of schools on primary schools' ability to fund full teaching costs. [157319]

**Jane Kennedy:** The cost of teaching staff is met from each school's budget. The number of teachers appointed and the management structure within a school is a matter for the Board of Governors of the school to determine, taking account of the school's policies, priorities and overall financial position.

In determining the amount to be made available for allocation to schools, account is taken of the likely change to the overall teacher salary bill arising from, among other things, pay settlements. Additional resources are made available for small schools with above average teacher salary costs.

### Medical Negligence

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many medical negligence cases are pending within each health trust. [157393]

**Angela Smith:** At 31 January 2004, the number of cases pending in each Trust was as follows:

| *Trust* | *Number of Cases* |
|---|---|
| Altnagelvin Hospitals HSS Trust | 216 |
| Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust | 37 |
| Belfast City Hospital Trust HSS Trust | 273 |
| Causeway HSS Trust | 90 |
| Craigavon and Banbridge Community HSS Trust | 15 |
| Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust | 167 |
| Down Lisburn HSS Trust | 145 |
| Foyle HSS Trust | 14 |
| Green Park HSS Trust | 53 |
| Homefirst Community HSS Trust | 19 |
| Mater Hospital HSS Trust | 103 |
| Newry and Mourne HSS Trust | 118 |
| Northern Ireland Ambulance Service HSS Trust | 1 |
| North and West Belfast HSS Trust | 9 |
| Royal Group of Hospitals and Dental Hospital HSS Trust | 482 |
| South and East Belfast HSS Trust | 9 |
| Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust | 112 |
| United Hospitals HSS Hospital Trust | 220 |
| Ulster Community and Hospitals HSS Trust | 291 |

### Mental Health

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the early indications of the effectiveness of *(a)* Assertive Outreach and *(b)* Crisis Response Teams in the practice of mental health locally. [151211]

**Angela Smith:** Assertive Outreach and Crisis Response Teams were established in the Northern and Southern Health and Social Services Boards in 2003. It is too early to assess the impact of these services in the Southern Board but initial indications from the

Northern Board show a degree of success. The Eastern Board plan to have Crises Response and Home Treatment Services operational by April 2004 and the Western Board have commissioned Foyle Trust to develop a Crises Response Out of Hours Pilot Service.

### Mobile Phone Masts

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many mobile telephone masts there are in each Northern Ireland constituency; and what the equivalent figures were for each year since 2000. [156939]

**Angela Smith:** Unfortunately, Planning Service is unable to provide the information of the number of mobile telephone masts in the format requested.

This is because Planning Service's computer system does not distinguish between constituencies, its records are categorised by Divisional Planning Office and Council Area. Additionally, although Planning Service has a record of applications for telecommunication equipment, which have been approved, once an application has been approved, we cannot advise if the mast has been erected or activated.

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many applications there have been to construct mobile telephone masts in Northern Ireland in each year since 2000; how many of these applications have been *(a)* granted and *(b)* refused; and what the reason for refusal was in each case. [156944]

**Angela Smith:** Details of applications including full planning applications and, prior to 21 June 2002, prior approval applications for telecommunications equipment approved and refused for each year since 2000 are set out in the table.

| | *Approved* | *Refuse* |
|---|---|---|
| 2000 | 396 | 52 |
| 2001 | 450 | 94 |
| 2002 | 307 | 37 |
| 2003 | 141 | 11 |
| Total | 1,294 | 201 |

As over 200 applications have been refused, it would be extremely time consuming and resource intensive to extract and identify the reasons for refusal in each case. It would therefore be at a disproportionate cost to Planning Service.

### Occupational Therapy

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients are awaiting occupational therapy assessment and how many have waited for more than six months; and what the figures were at each six-month interval over the past five years. [151214]

**Angela Smith:** The figures for persons awaiting assessment by a community occupational therapist in respect of priority cases, non-priority cases and total cases are shown in the following table, for the position at quarters ending September 1998 to September 2003 (the latest date for which such information is available).

*Number of persons waiting for assessment by community occupational therapists, and number waiting for six months or more*

| | *Priority* | | *Non-priority* | | *Total* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Quarter ending* | *Total* | *6 plus months* | *Total* | *6 plus months* | *Total* | *6 plus months* |
| September 1998 | 1,627 | 88 | 7,055 | 2,042 | 8,682 | 2,130 |
| March 1999 | 1,487 | 117 | 8,358 | 2,126 | 9,845 | 2,243 |
| September 1999 | 1,965 | 292 | 9,217 | 2,921 | 11,182 | 3,213 |
| March 2000 | 1,193 | 298 | 9,658 | 3,222 | 10,851 | 3,520 |
| September 2000 | 1,819 | 240 | 11,182 | 5,515 | 13,001 | 5,755 |
| March 2001 | 1,307 | 83 | 8,081 | 4,065 | 9,388 | 4,148 |
| September 2001 | 1,356 | 67 | 8,123 | 4,010 | 9,479 | 4,077 |
| March 2002 | 1,549 | 138 | 6,806 | 2,937 | 8,355 | 3,075 |
| September 2002 | 2,052 | 307 | 7,775 | 3,124 | 9,827 | 3,431 |
| March 2003 | 1,881 | 247 | 6,604 | 2,719 | 8,485 | 2,966 |
| September 2003 | 1,880 | 243 | 6,390 | 2,370 | 8,270 | 2,613 |

### Police Ombudsman's Office

**Mr. Peter Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many civilians officers from the Police Ombudsman's Office have arrested since the Office was set up. [156690]

**Jane Kennedy:** The Police Ombudsman has advised that one civilian has been arrested by her investigating officers since the setting up of the office.

**Mr. Peter Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he has received complaints from police officers regarding *(a)* actions by officers from the Ombudsman's Office and *(b)* investigations carried out by the Police Ombudsman. [156691]

**Jane Kennedy:** A number of officers have written to the Northern Ireland Office regarding the Ombudsman's Office. However, the Police Ombudsman's Office is operationally independent and the handling of investigations by the Ombudsman's staff is a matter for the Police Ombudsman's Office.

**Mr. Peter Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what powers he has to require explanations from the Police Ombudsman on *(a)* the actions of her officers and *(b)* investigations carried out by her office. [156692]

**Jane Kennedy:** The Secretary of State has no statutory powers to require explanations from the Police Ombudsman on the actions of her officers or the investigations carried out by her office.

### Police Service of Northern Ireland

**Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many serving members of the full-time Police Service of Northern Ireland Reserve have passed entrance examinations for full-time posts in the PSNI and have not been appointed because of restrictions arising from 50:50 appointment legislation. [152460]

**Jane Kennedy:** From competitions 1 to 4, 1,706 non-Catholic and 604 Catholic applicants have qualified for appointment to the Police Service of Northern Ireland. Of these, 530 of each community background have been appointed. Of the qualified Catholic candidates, all were offered appointment, but some withdrew in the time intervening between qualification for appointment and the time of appointment.

Appointments from competition 5 have started, although the pool is not yet finalised, and the pool for competition 6 is not expected to be ready until April this year.

The information on the number of candidates who have passed the entrance examinations (i.e. have been successful in becoming qualified candidates and reaching the merit pool) more than once is taking some time to collate. As soon as the figures are available, they will be forwarded.

### Prison Officers

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many prison officers in Northern Ireland have taken sick leave in each of the past 18 months on account of work-related stress; and how many of these officers have since returned to work. [156940]

**Jane Kennedy:** The information is as follows.

*Prison Officer Grades absent suffering from work-related stress between 1 February 2003 and 27 February 2004*

| | *Number of staff absent during month* | *Number of staff who have since returned to work* |
|---|---|---|
| February 2003 | 1 | 1 |
| March 2003 | 1 | 1 |
| April 2003 | 1 | 1 |
| May 2003 | 1 | 1 |
| June 2003 | 2 | 1 |
| July 2003 | 8 | 6 |
| August 2003 | 16 | 13 |
| September 2003 | 18 | 13 |
| October 2003 | 18 | 12 |
| November 2003 | 19 | 11 |
| December 2003 | 19 | 10 |
| January 2004 | 23 | 12 |
| February 2004 | 17 | 4 |

At the end of February 2004, 13 officers remained absent due to work related stress.

Figures were not obtainable prior to February 2003 for work related stress as the computer system at that time did not differentiate between stress and work related stress.

### Prisons

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the cost of maintaining prisons in the Province in 2003–04. [156319]

**Jane Kennedy:** The estimated cost of maintaining prisons in Northern Ireland in 2003–04 is £109,581,000.

### Rates

**Mr. Trimble:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what research has been conducted into the impact the removal of rates relief on manufacturing premises will have on manufacturing industries; and if he will make a statement. [156460]

**Mr. Pearson:** Our assessment on the likely impact of the phasing out of industrial derating on the manufacturing industry in Northern Ireland (NI) came from a variety of different sources; for example, studies by DTZ Pieda, Invest NI as well as evidence presented during the public consultation exercise in 2002 by the DETI and DFP Assembly Committees, the CBI and local economists. The policy paper published in April last year included the Regulatory Impact Assessment, New TSN and Equality Impact Assessments. All this evidence was summarised, analysed and considered objectively and the various options were discussed openly with representatives of the business community before a final decision was made.

**Mr. Trimble:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what research has been conducted into the impact levying rates on vacant buildings will have on investment in deprived areas; what proposals there are for exemptions; and if he will make a statement. [156461]

**Mr. Pearson:** The decision to rate vacant non-domestic property was informed by an analysis of the potential impact on deprived areas. It concluded that the impact is likely to be positive because such property tends to be concentrated in deprived areas and the effect of the measure will be to encourage owners to bring them back into use and occupation. This New TSN analysis was published with the policy paper in April 2003.

In line with the outcomes of the consultation exercise in 2002, the exemptions to the vacant rate will largely mirror those in the rest of the UK. They will cover the situation where the occupation or use of the property is restricted or prohibited in some way, or where the person would be liable only as a proxy for someone else. Property with a net annual value of less than £2,000, property vacant for less than three months, and other properties such as listed buildings will also be exempt. It is also intended to exempt industrial property, that is factories, mines and quarries, from the vacant rate. However, standalone warehouses will not be exempt because, unlike industrial property, they can be readily converted and put on the market for sale or letting to a range of buyers or tenants.

### Residential Disabled Parking

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what criteria are used in the allocation of residential disabled car parking spaces in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [157562]

**Mr. Spellar:** I have asked the Chief Executive of Roads Service to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question. A copy of the letter will be placed in the Library.

### Smuggling

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on smuggling by paramilitary organisations. [146308]

**Jane Kennedy:** There is no doubt that paramilitary organisations continue to engage in organised criminality including smuggling.

While cross-border co-operation between law enforcement agencies is already very good, the Government are fully committed to working with the Government in the Irish Republic to further improve that collaboration by developing strategies and structures to enable law enforcement agencies to maximise their effectiveness against the organised criminals who use the border to smuggle.

I pay tribute to the activity of law enforcement agencies against the smugglers, which has resulted in unprecedented successes against illegal drug importation and a second year of growth in the levels of legitimate deliveries of road fuel oils into Northern Ireland, after five years of decline.

### Translink

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average age of rolling stock in service with Translink is; and what progress has been made with the introduction of new rolling stock to the railway network in Northern Ireland. [157671]

**Mr. Spellar:** The following table gives a breakdown by type for the different locomotives and carriages used on the Northern Ireland Railways network. This information was supplied by Translink.

| | *Age (years)* |
|---|---|
| Two GM locomotives | 8 |
| 14 De Dietrich carriages | 7 |
| Three GM locomotives | 22 |
| 11 ex-Gatwick carriages | 31 |
| *80 class:* | |
| 20 power cars | 26 |
| 19 driving trailers | 28 |
| 17 intermediate trailers | 29 |
| *450 class:* | |
| Nine power cars | 17 |
| Nine driving trailers | 17 |
| Nine intermediate trailers | 17 |

Translink also advise that the first of the 23 new trains is scheduled to be delivered in April 2004 with the remainder being delivered progressively through the rest of 2004 and the first part of 2005. Translink expect that all the trains will be in service by the Autumn of 2005.

### Social Deprivation

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what wards are in the top *(a)* 15 per cent., *(b)* 20 per cent. and *(c)* 25 per cent. of wards in Northern Ireland ranked by social deprivation according to the Noble Index. [156623]

**Mr. Pearson:** The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures (commonly referred to as the Noble measures of deprivation) were published by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency in July 2001. I have placed details of those wards in the top 15 per cent., 20 per cent. and 25 per cent. as ranked by multiple deprivation measure score, in the Library.

### Unemployment

**Mr. Trimble:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the likely trends in unemployment in Northern Ireland in 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [157275]

**Mr. Pearson:** The Government does not produce forecasts for unemployment. The Northern Ireland economy has benefited from the stability generated by the UK's strong macroeconomic framework while the performance of the labour market in particular has proved resilient in the face of global economic uncertainty.

Current Labour Market Statistics show that employment is at record levels and claimant unemployment is at its lowest rates since the mid 1970s. According to the Labour Force Survey, however, figures for the period October to December 2003 show a rise in the rate to 6.3 per cent. (48,000 people) from 5.6 per cent. a year earlier. This is still 1.7 percentage points lower than the EU15 average.

### Unused Medications

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the cost of unused medications in the last 12 months. [157343]

**Angela Smith:** The cost of unused medicines in Northern Ireland is estimated at approximately £2 million per year. Further information is contained in "Making it Better—A Strategy for Pharmacy in the Community", which can be viewed on the Department's website at www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/publications/2004/makingitbetter.html.

## PRIME MINISTER

### Electoral Registration

**Mark Tami:** To ask the Prime Minister what guidance he provides to local authorities on voter registration. [156550]

**Mr. Leslie:** I have been asked to reply.

My Department provides regular guidance and information to local electoral registration officers (EROs) on policy issues and legislative changes relating to voter registration arrangements. Separately, the independent Electoral Commission is responsible for offering advice and guidance to EROs on the detailed requirements of these and other voter registration matters.

### Parliamentary Questions

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Prime Minister if he will assess his answering practices in relation to parliamentary questions against the *(a)* Open Government Code of Conduct and *(b)* Freedom of Information Act 2000. [157922]

**The Prime Minister:** Section 1 of the Ministerial Code provides guidance to ministers on answering Parliamentary Questions which takes account of the requirements of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information. The Freedom of Information legislation takes effect in January 2005.

## CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

### Adoption Orders

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many adoption orders have been set aside in each of the last 10 years. [156526]

**Mr. Lammy:** This information is not collected centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

An adoption order can only be set aside in wholly exceptional circumstances. Section 52 of the Adoption Act 1976 provides for the revocation of an adoption order where a person adopted by his father or mother alone subsequently becomes legitimate on the marriage of his parents. Section 53 provides for the annulment of overseas and Hague Convention adoptions on grounds of public policy. There is no other statutory basis for revoking a validly made adoption order.

### Child Custody

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many applications for orders relating to child custody were heard at each *(a)* Crown Court centre and *(b)* magistrates' court area in England in the last year for which information is available; what proportion were granted; how many were ex-parte applications; and what proportion of ex-parte applications were granted. [157609]

**Mr. Leslie:** Applications for child custody are made in the county courts and family proceedings courts and not the Crown Court. Figures showing the number of applications for a residence order and the number of orders made in the county courts and family proceedings courts in England for the year 2002 are provided in the table. No information is held centrally concerning those applications that were made ex-parte and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

*Applications and orders made in the family proceedings courts in England, 2002*

| *Family proceedings court* | *Applications made* | *Orders made* | *Percentage orders granted* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Aldridge and Brownhills | 11 | 8 | 74.8 |
| Ashby De La Zouch | 24 | 68 | 283.3 |
| Barnsley | 39 | 24 | 62.0 |
| Berwick upon Tweed | 3 | 3 | 100.0 |
| Bexley | 37 | 28 | 75.7 |
| Blackpool | 54 | 44 | 815 |
| Bolton | 29 | 26 | 89.7 |
| Bristol | 43 | 43 | 100.0 |
| Burnley | 40 | 32 | 80.0 |
| Burnley and Pendle | 40 | 24 | 60.0 |
| Bury | 37 | 45 | 121.6 |
| Canterbury and St. Augustine | 8 | 8 | 100.0 |
| Carlisle | 40 | 32 | 80.0 |
| Central Buckinghamshire | 8 | 10 | 125.0 |
| Chichester | 8 | 4 | 50.0 |
| Chorley | 12 | 5 | 41.7 |
| Cirencester/Fairford and Tetbury | 32 | 44 | 137.5 |
| City of Salford | 35 | 62 | 177.1 |
| Claro | 21 | 19 | 87.8 |
| Coquetdale | 2 | 1 | 50.0 |
| Crawley | 24 | 12 | 50.0 |
| Derby and South Derbyshire | 72 | 76 | 105.6 |
| Doncaster | 53 | 44 | 83.0 |
| East Retford | 272 | 288 | 105.9 |
| Exeter and Wonford (East Devon) | 36 | 28 | 77.8 |
| Folkestone and Hythe | 32 | 41 | 129.7 |
| Furness and District | 47 | 53 | 112.8 |
| Gateshead | 19 | 16 | 84.2 |
| Gloucester | 51 | 57 | 113.0 |
| Godstone | 16 | 4 | 25.0 |
| Great Yarmouth | 12 | 12 | 100.0 |
| Grimsby and Cleethorpes | 15 | 15 | 100.0 |
| Hastings | 22 | 16 | 72.7 |
| High Peak | 12 | 4 | 33.3 |
| Inner London Family Proceedings Co. | 448 | 263 | 58.6 |
| Kingston-on-Hull | 44 | 36 | 81.8 |
| Langbaugh East | 5 | 2 | 40.0 |
| Leicester | 57 | 85 | 149.7 |
| Leigh | 12 | 36 | 300.0 |
| Lincoln District | 12 | 10 | 83.3 |
| Liverpool | 85 | 44 | 51.8 |
| Loughborough | 20 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Manchester | 133 | 96 | 72.2 |
| Mansfield | 328 | 160 | 48.8 |
| Market Bosworth | 32 | 4 | 12.5 |
| Melton and Belvoir | 8 | 36 | 450.0 |
| Mid Sussex | 12 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Milton Keynes | 16 | 4 | 25.0 |
| Newcastle-upon-Tyne | 60 | 47 | 77.8 |
| North and East Hertfordshire 1888/9/75/ | 12 | 12 | 100.0 |
| North and East Surrey | 20 | 12 | 60.0 |
| North Avon | 12 | 13 | 108.3 |
| North Bedfordshire | 23 | 23 | 100.0 |
| North East Suffolk | 11 | 12 | 112.1 |
| North Oxfordshire | 8 | 20 | 250.0 |
| North Somerset | 30 | 23 | 76.7 |
| North Tyneside | 27 | 21 | 77.8 |
| North West Surrey | 2 | 6 | 300.0 |
| Norwich | 3 | 3 | 100.0 |
| Nottinghamshire | 198 | 196 | 99.0 |
| Oldham | 42 | 25 | 59.5 |
| Ormskirk | 21 | 16 | 76.2 |
| Oxford | 23 | 18 | 78.3 |
| Plymouth | 38 | 32 | 84.2 |
| Rochdale Middleton and Heywood | 60 | 74 | 123.3 |
| Rotherham | 18 | 21 | 116.7 |
| Scunthorpe | 33 | 16 | 48.0 |
| Sedgemoor | 24 | 16 | 66.7 |
| Sheffield | 48 | 53 | 110.4 |
| Slough | 8 | 4 | 50.0 |

*Applications and orders made in the family proceedings courts in England, 2002*

| Family proceedings court | Applications made | Orders made | Percentage orders granted |
|---|---|---|---|
| South East Cornwall | 72 | 36 | 50.0 |
| South East Hampshire | 31 | 9 | 29.0 |
| South East Northumberland | 52 | 22 | 42.3 |
| South East Surrey | 2 | 6 | 300.0 |
| South Ribble | 4 | 1 | 32.5 |
| South Somerset | 5 | 0 | 0.0 |
| South West Surrey | 1 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Spilsby and Skegness | 40 | 28 | 70.0 |
| Stafford | 124 | 124 | 100.0 |
| Staincliffe | 4 | 3 | 75.0 |
| Stockport | 40 | 34 | 85.0 |
| Stoke-on-Trent | 65 | 43 | 66.2 |
| Sutton | 14 | 11 | 78.6 |
| Tameside | 35 | 50 | 142.9 |
| Teesside | 98 | 119 | 121.4 |
| Thanet | 25 | 15 | 58.1 |
| Trafford | 19 | 7 | 36.8 |
| Walsall | 18 | 14 | 77.8 |
| Warwick | 100 | 36 | 36.0 |
| West Somerset | 30 | 24 | 80.0 |
| Whitehaven | 9 | 11 | 122.2 |
| Wigan | 41 | 11 | 25.9 |
| Willesden | 12 | 10 | 83.3 |
| Wimbledon | 9 | 8 | 88.9 |
| Wirrall (Birkenhead) | 10 | 6 | 60.0 |
| Worthing and District | 8 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Wycombe and Beaconsfield | 3 | 5 | 166.7 |
| York | 22 | 13 | 59.1 |

*Note:*

The orders made do not necessarily relate to the applications made due to the period between application and order. The figures contain imputed data.

### Court Proceedings (Adjournment)

**John Cryer:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make an assessment of the impact on victims of crime of repeated adjournments of court proceedings at crown and magistrates' courts. [157332]

**Mr. Leslie:** In the Crown court close management of ineffective trials by courts and other Criminal Justice System agencies has resulted in a reduction to 17.8 per cent. in January 2004 from the baseline of 23 per cent. set last year. Progress in the magistrates court has been slower, but is still 1.5 per cent. better than the baseline, at 29.4 per cent. in January.

Interviews with victims of crime have found that the inconvenience and emotional upheaval each adjournment causes reduces the likelihood that the victim will attend the next time.

The Government are addressing the problem of ineffective trials through the Effective Trial Management Programme, which will ensure cases are ready on the trial date. In addition, on 4 February the Government announced a £27 million award for the "No Witness, No Justice" Project. This project will ensure victims and witnesses needs are taken into account so that they are more likely to attend on the date of trial.

The impact of each is being assessed.

**John Cryer:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps he is taking to reduce the number of unnecessary adjournments of court proceedings. [157333]

**Mr. Leslie:** Adjournments and ineffective hearings in criminal cases are often caused by poor case preparation. The Department for Constitutional Affairs is working with the Home Office and Crown Prosecution Service to reduce the number of ineffective trials and improve case preparation and progression, including through the Effective Trial Management Programme. All criminal courts have been directed to address the rate of ineffective trials.

### Criminal Defence Services

**Mr. Garnier:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment he has made of the average cost per case of *(a)* defence counsel and *(b)* solicitors for the defence funded by the Criminal Defence Services in (i) 2001–02 and (ii) 2002–03. [149442]

**Mr. Lammy:** It is not possible to provide information in the form requested for the following reasons:

(a) work under the General Criminal Contract, carried out for hearings in the magistrates courts, is paid for by a different mechanism from hearings in the Crown court. Therefore there is no continuity of data which would readily enable us to identify total payments in cases heard in the magistrates court, and which are subsequently transferred to the Crown court and;

(b) standard fees in the magistrates courts paid to solicitors may include money subsequently paid by a solicitor to unassigned counsel for publicly funded work. Therefore is not possible to obtain average case costs split between solicitor and counsel.

### Emergency Protection Orders

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many applications were heard for emergency protection orders in each county in England in the last year for which information is available; what proportion were granted; how many were ex-parte applications; and what proportion of ex-parte applications were granted. [157610]

**Mr. Leslie:** Figures showing the number of applications for an emergency protection order and the number of orders made, by each county in England for the year 2002, are provided in the following table. No information is held centrally concerning those applications that were made ex-parte and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

*Emergency Protection Orders—applications and orders made, by county, 2002*

| County | Total applications | Total orders | Percentage orders granted |
|---|---|---|---|
| Avon | 40 | 38 | 95.0 |
| Bedfordshire | 50 | 28 | 56.0 |
| Berkshire | 15 | 10 | 66.7 |
| Buckinghamshire | 34 | 33 | 97.1 |
| Cambridgeshire | 5 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Cheshire | 0 | 0 | — |

*Emergency Protection Orders—applications and orders made, by county, 2002*

| County | Total applications | Total orders | Percentage orders granted |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cleveland and Darlington | 65 | 30 | 46.2 |
| Cornwall and Isles of Scilly | 37 | 20 | 54.1 |
| Cumbria | 19 | 15 | 78.9 |
| Derbyshire | 18 | 14 | 77.8 |
| Devon | 30 | 26 | 86.7 |
| Dorset | 0 | 0 | — |
| Durham | 16 | 4 | 25.0 |
| E Riding and N Lincolnshire | 4 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Essex | 6 | 1 | 16.7 |
| Gloucestershire | 29 | 24 | 81.9 |
| Greater London | 80 | 73 | 91.3 |
| Greater Manchester | 202 | 163 | 80.9 |
| Hampshire | 36 | 24 | 66.1 |
| Herefordshire and Worcestershire | 0 | 0 | — |
| Hertfordshire | 1 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Humberside | 57 | 50 | 87.7 |
| Kent | 26 | 28 | 707.8 |
| Lancashire | 74 | 47 | 63.5 |
| Leicestershire and Rutland | 32 | 20 | 62.5 |
| Lincolnshire | 22 | 17 | 77.3 |
| London | 364 | 274 | 75.2 |
| Merseyside | 28 | 21 | 75.0 |
| N. Somerset and S. Gloucestershire | 2 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Norfolk | 29 | 28 | 96.6 |
| North Yorkshire | 28 | 17 | 60.7 |
| Northamptonshire | 0 | 0 | — |
| Northumberland | 6 | 6 | 700.0 |
| Nottinghamshire | 134 | 119 | 88.8 |
| Oxfordshire | 35 | 32 | 91.4 |
| Shropshire | 1 | 1 | 100.0 |
| Somerset | 24 | 12 | 50.0 |
| South Yorkshire | 60 | 60 | 100.0 |
| Staffordshire | 144 | 125 | 86.8 |
| Suffolk | 9 | 3 | 33.3 |
| Surrey | 41 | 33 | 80.5 |
| Sussex | 90 | 84 | 93.3 |
| Tyne and Wear | 45 | 19 | 419 |
| Warwickshire | 44 | 44 | 700.0 |
| West Midlands | 72 | 49 | 68.7 |
| West Yorkshire | 71 | 7 | 9.9 |
| Wiltshire | 1 | 3 | 300.0 |
| National | 2,127 | 1,603 | 75.3 |

*Note:*

The orders made do not necessarily relate to the applications made due to the period between application and order. The figures contain imputed data.

### Family History Research

**Mr. Dhanda:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps his Department can take to enable individuals researching their family history to obtain more official documents, including censuses, online. [156817]

**Mr. Leslie:** In recent years the National Archives has developed many online services aimed at family historians, including the digitisation of wills from 1384 to 1858. This and other services are available on its website at: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk. It also operates a website which acts as a gateway for online family sources throughout the United Kingdom at www.familyrecords.gov.uk. The National Archives is determined to maintain this momentum through the development of its digitisation programmes and licensing agreements with commercial organisations.

**Mr. Dhanda:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will publish online the 1911 census. [157097]

**Mr. Leslie:** I refer the hon. Member to the answers I have given to the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland on 10 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 457W and on 18 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 1112W.

### Judicial Review

**Mr. Coleman:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what the average cost to public funds of a judicial review case was in each of the last three years; [156799]

(2) what the *(a)* average and *(b)* total cost was to public funds of judicial review cases relating to decisions under section 55 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Bill 2002 in 2003. [156801]

**Mr. Leslie:** The Administrative Court Office does not identify unit costs for judicial review claims.

It is not responsible for funding for "legal aid" for judicial review—that is the responsibility of the Legal Services Commission—and details of costs incurred by public authorities responding to claims are not kept by the Administrative Court Office.

The information requested therefore could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Coleman:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the average length to final determination was of a judicial review case in each of the last three years. [156800]

**Mr. Leslie:** The average waiting times for civil judicial review (issued after October 2000 when the new judicial review procedure was introduced) for the last three calendar years are as follows:

2001—20.9 weeks

2002—31.3 weeks

2003—31.1 weeks

The average waiting times include the periods in which cases were stood out of the list pending determination of test cases and any subsequent appeals in those matters.

**Mr. Coleman:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the average length of judicial review cases relating to decisions under section 55 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 was in 2003. [156809]

**Mr. Leslie:** In 2003 the average waiting time for such cases was 19.9 weeks including the time cases were 'stood out' pending decisions in lead cases and any subsequent appeals in those lead cases.

### Video Equipment in Courts

**Vera Baird:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make a statement on the quality of video equipment used in courts. [156312]

**Mr. Leslie:** All 78 Crown court have at least one set of VHS video playback equipment and some sites have this facility in each courtroom. There are currently 388 sets installed in a total of 521 courtrooms. 269 of these

courtrooms also have facilities to link to remote witness rooms so that witnesses can give evidence without attending the courtroom.

154 magistrates courts are equipped with videoconferencing facilities and video playback equipment. A total of 179 courtrooms have this facility and there are 133 rooms in which vulnerable and intimidated witnesses can give remote evidence.

10 county courts and nine Immigration Appellate Authority sites have been provided with modern "stand alone" video conferencing equipment.

This equipment has been installed in courts over the past 10 years and comprises a range of different makes and models. The vast majority of magistrates court equipment has been installed within the past three years and 20 per cent. of the Crown court installations have taken place in the past 12 months. This equipment includes VHS video and DVD players together with fixed plasma display screens.

All of the video equipment in place meets current business requirements and is being used on a regular basis during hearings and trials. A comprehensive maintenance contract ensures that any reported failure of equipment is attended to as a matter of urgency. Equipment is typically serviced twice per annum.

**Voter Participation/Registration**

**Mark Tami:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment has been made of participation rates in general elections in *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* other EU countries in the last five years. [156446]

**Mr. Leslie:** While the Government are aware of participation rates in general elections in the UK and other EU countries, they have not conducted any specific research. The independent Electoral Commission reported on the outcome of the 2001 general election and has conducted research on voting intentions for the European parliamentary and London's Mayoral and Assembly elections in June 2004.

**Mark Tami:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what research his Department has conducted on the implications of the introduction of compulsory participation in United Kingdom elections. [156447]

**Mr. Leslie:** None. However, the Government are aware that the independent Electoral Commission has indicated that it intends to conduct future research on the international use of compulsory voting.

**Mark Tami:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what research his Department has conducted on the use of *(a)* legal and *(b)* fixed penalties to encourage higher levels of voter registration. [156448]

**Mr. Leslie:** None. Electoral Registration Officers (EROs), appointed for the purpose by local authorities, are responsible for compiling the electoral register. It is already an offence punishable upon conviction by a fine not exceeding £1,000 for a person to fail to comply with a request for information from, or to provide false information to, an ERO who is seeking to carry out his duty to prepare an electoral register.

**Mark Tami:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what research his Department has carried out to ascertain why individuals do not register to vote. [156540]

**Mr. Leslie:** Research on why individuals fail to register to vote has not been carried out by this Department. However, the Government are aware that the independent Electoral Commission has published several research reports on voter engagement that have included coverage of levels of registration.

**Mark Tami:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps he is taking to encourage people to complete electoral registration forms. [156541]

**Mr. Leslie:** The Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001 introduced in February 2001 a number of changes to voter registration procedures aimed both at making it easier for persons to register to vote, and at achieving more accurate and up to date electoral registers. These changes included the introduction of 'rolling registration' and enabling persons without a conventional address to register to vote. The Government ran major public information campaigns at that time to publicise these changes.

The independent Electoral Commission is now responsible for raising public awareness of registration issues.

**Mark Tami:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what estimate he has made of the number of people who failed to register to vote in the UK in each of the last five years. [156542]

**Mr. Leslie:** The information requested has not been collected by the Government.

**Mark Tami:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many registered postal voters there were in each constituency in the UK at the 2001 general election. [156548]

**Mr. Leslie:** The independent Electoral Commission published in January 2002 'Postal votes, proxy votes and spoilt ballot papers at the 2001 general election', which provides this information. I understand that the Commission placed copies of that document in the Library of the House at the time of publication.

**Mark Tami:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment he has made of the impact of the introduction of a rolling register on levels of voter registration in the UK. [156537]

**Mr. Leslie:** The Government consider that 'rolling registration' has resulted in more accurate and up to date electoral registers. I understand that the independent Electoral Commission has commenced further research to assess the operation and impact of rolling registration on levels of voter registration. The Government will consider carefully any findings made by the Electoral Commission on this issue.

## HEALTH

### Genetically Modified Crops

**Mr. Simon Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what ruminant feeding trials have been conducted with T25 genetically modified fodder maize; whether such trials have been *(a)* published and *(b)* peer reviewed; and if he will make a statement on the implications of such trials for the commercialisation of T25 maize. [157752]

**Miss Melanie Johnson** *[holding answer 1 March 2004]*: Ruminant feeding studies are not routinely required as part of the regulatory approval process for the marketing of new genetically modified organisms. Information on the specific GM event is used, with compositional analysis, to demonstrate whether a GM plant is substantially equivalent to its conventional counterpart. We are not aware of any published or peer reviewed reports of ruminant feeding trials conducted with T25 genetically modified fodder maize.

### Alefacept

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on research into Alefacept use for treating psoriasis; and what plans he has to introduce this in Northern Ireland. [157337]

**Dr. Ladyman:** We have no plans to undertake research into the use of Alefacept for treating psoriasis. Alefacept does not have a United Kingdom Marketing Authorisation. As an unlicensed medicine, doctors may prescribe it on a named-patient basis, but it will only be available on the national health service if the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency grants it a licence.

Decisions on health policy in Northern Ireland are the responsibility of Ministers in the Northern Ireland Office whilst the institutions are suspended.

### Allergies

**Mr. Gordon Marsden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research his Department has carried out into the causes of the change in the number of people suffering from allergies. [157277]

**Dr. Ladyman:** A range of research projects on the epidemiology of allergies have recently been completed or are ongoing. The International Study of Asthma and Allergies in Childhood (ISAAC) was formed in 1991. Phase one measured the prevalence of childhood asthma, hay fever and atopic eczema for international comparisons. Phase two began in 1998 and involves more intensive studies in a smaller number of countries. The Department funded the United Kingdom contribution to phase two.

King's College London has led a £2.1 million European Commission-funded prospective study of the incidence and prognosis of allergy, allergic disease and low lung function in adults living in Europe. King's College is also participating in the Global Allergy and Asthma European Network, launched on 12 February 2004. In addition, the University of Manchester is leading a £1.2 million EC-funded investigation of the prevalence, pathogenesis, treatment and prevention of sun allergy across Europe. Sun-provoked skin reactions are one of the commonest forms of allergy.

This European and international research activity will contribute to evidence on the possible causes of the increase in allergy rates in the United Kingdom and other European countries.

**Mr. Gordon Marsden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans his Department has for extending specialised allergy services in *(a)* England and Wales, *(b)* the North West and *(c)* Blackpool. [157278]

**Dr. Ladyman:** It is the responsibility of primary care trusts, in partnership with other local stakeholders, to determine how best to use their funds to provide health services for their populations, including those with allergies.

**Mr. Gordon Marsden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* adults and *(b)* children have been recorded as suffering from allergies in (i) England and Wales, (ii) the North West and (iii) Blackpool in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [157279]

**Dr. Ladyman:** The information requested is not held centrally. Last year, in its report, "Allergy—the unmet need: a blueprint for better patient care", the Royal College of Physicians estimated that around one in six of the population is affected by allergy.

### Avian Influenza

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to protect the population from avian influenza; and whether a vaccine will be made available. [154446]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** As soon as avian influenza disease was reported by the Thai and United States authorities, the United Kingdom banned imports of fresh meat of poultry, poultry meat products, raw material for animal feed production, eggs for human consumption, live captive birds such as falcons and finches, unprocessed feathers and untreated game trophies, untreated poultry manure, ratites farmed and wild feathered game from those countries.

Various organisations worldwide are looking at producing a vaccine against avian influenza H5N1 including the National Institute for Biological Standards and Control in the UK. This work is estimated to take about six months.

### Cancer

**Mr. Baron:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the proportion of cancer cases which were preventable in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by type of cancer. [150232]

**Miss Melanie Johnson** *[holding answer 26 January 2004]*: There is no safe way to estimate the numbers of cancer cases that were preventable. Smoking, poor diet and lack of exercise all play their part in causing cancers but less controlable factors such as genetic make-up and environment make identifying preventable factors difficult.

### Care Homes (Deaths)

**Mr. Greg Knight:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many care assistants employed in care homes in England and Wales have confirmed the death of a resident in the past 12 months for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement; [153481]

(2) whether it is his policy to encourage doctors to train care assistants to confirm deaths that occur in care homes; and if he will make a statement. [153444]

**Dr. Ladyman** *[holding answer 11 February 2004]:* Under the Care Homes Regulations and the Care Homes (Wales) Regulations care home providers are required without delay to notify the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) and the Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales (CSIW) respectively that a resident has died, including the circumstances of the death. In practice, a member of staff working in the home will notify the regulator. The NCSC and the CSIW do not collect information about which member of staff in a care home has notified them of the death of a resident.

The doctor who attended the resident during his or her last illness is responsible for certifying the cause of death. If a doctor feels unable to complete the death certificate the death is referred to the coroner for investigation.

Care home providers are responsible for ensuring that the staff working in care homes have qualifications suitable to the work they are to perform and the skills and experience necessary for such work. Providers are also expected to arrange appropriate training for their staff. We would expect this to include all aspects of dealing with the death of a resident.

### Chiropody Services

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures he is taking to improve access to chiropody services. [157141]

**Dr. Ladyman:** It is for primary care trusts in partnership with strategic health authorities and other local stakeholders to determine how best to use their funds to meet national and local priorities for improving health, tackling health inequalities and modernising services. Their responsibilities include access to chiropody services locally.

### Causes of Death

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many deaths in people over 60 since 1997 were due to *(a)* cancer, *(b)* coronary heart disease and *(c)* falls; and if he will make a statement. [156647]

**Ruth Kelly:** I have been asked to reply.

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from John Pullinger to Mr. Paul Burstow, dated 2 March 2004:*

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking how many deaths in people aged over 60 since 1997 were due to *(a)* cancer, *(b)* coronary heart disease and *(c)* falls. (156647)

The latest year for which data are available is 2002. Figures for cancer, ischaemic (otherwise known as coronary) heart disease and falls in persons aged over 60 are shown in the attached table for each year from 1997 to 2002.

*Number of deaths from (a) cancer, (b) ischaemic heart disease, and (c) falls[1] in persons aged over 60[2], England and Wales, 1997 to 2002[3]*

| *Calendar year* | *(a) Cancer[4]* | *(b) Ischaemic heart disease* | *(c) Falls[5]* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1997 | 112,147 | 111,658 | 2,198 |
| 1998 | 112,678 | 110,425 | 2,112 |
| 1999 | 110,956 | 104,969 | 2,161 |
| 2000 | 109,564 | 98,862 | 2,460 |
| 2001[4] | 112,711 | 96,532 | 2,058 |
| 2002[4] | 113,552 | 93,578 | 1,967 |

[1] The cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9)for the years 1997 to 2000, and the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) for 2001 and 2002. The codes used are listed below:

Cancer—ICD-9 140–208; ICD-10 C00-C97;

Ischaemic heart disease—ICD-9 410–414; ICD-10 120–125;

Falls—ICD-9 E880-E888 excluding E887; ICD-10 W00-W19.

[2] Persons aged 61 years and over.

[3] Figures are based on deaths occurring in each calendar year.

[4] The introduction of ICD-10 for coding cause of death in 2001 means that data for cancer are not completely comparable with data for years before this date. The data should therefore be interpreted with caution. The effect of the change in classification in 2001 on deaths from cancer is described in a report published in May 2002.*

[5] The data for falls for 1997 to 2000 exclude fractures of unspecified cause (ICD-9 E887), so data for these years are comparable to those for 2001 onwards. The effect of the change in classification in 2001 on deaths from falls is described in an article published in August 2003.*

* Office for National Statistics. Results of the ICD-10 bridge coding study, England and Wales, 1999. "Health Statistics Quarterly" 14 (2002), 75–83.

** Griffiths C and Rooney C. The effect of the introduction of ICD-10 on mortality from injury and poisoning in England and Wales. "Health Statistics Quarterly" 19 (2003), 10–21.

### Correspondence

**Mr. Steen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Totnes dated 16 December 2003 concerning the interpretation of what constitutes a severe abnormality in relation to abortion laws. [155101]

**Miss Melanie Johnson** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* A reply was sent to the hon. Member on 6 February 2004.

### Cycling

**Mr. Nigel Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the benefits of cycling to the health of the nation. [156103]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The Department recommends that adults participate in at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity, at least five days a week and that young people participate in physical activity of at least moderate intensity for one hour per day. Leisurely cycling (around 10 miles per hour) represents one way of meeting these recommendations.

Regular cycling improves fitness significantly, reducing the risk of obesity, strokes, coronary heart disease, certain types of cancer, diabetes and osteoporosis. There are also benefits for mental health, with evidence of reduced depression and stress, improved self-esteem and confidence in performing physical tasks.

### Foundation Trusts

**Mr. Dobson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his Answer of 11 February, ref 153001, if he will place in the Library the guidance he issued to first wave NHS foundation trusts. [155601]

**Mr. Hutton** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* Copies of the guidance and the model rules for elections to the board of governors of national health service foundation trusts have been placed in the Library.

### GM Seed

**Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice his Department has *(a)* given to and *(b)* received from the UK delegates attending European Commission regulatory standing and management committees on GM seed. [153891]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer provided by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Environment on 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 140W.

### Health Services (Worcestershire)

**Sir Michael Spicer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the future of Malvern Community Hospital. [157972]

**Dr. Ladyman:** West Midlands South Strategic Health Authority (SHA) reports that South Worcestershire Primary Care Trust continues to be committed to the development of a new hospital in Malvern. The project team is currently working on a business case, which will be submitted to the SHA.

### Health Visitors

**Mr. Baron:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the vacancy rates are for health visitors in *(a)* Lambeth and *(b)* Sutton primary care trusts. [155447]

**Mr. Hutton** *[holding answer 24 February 2004]:* The information requested is shown in the table.

*Department of Health Vacancies Survey, March 2003: Vacancies in England and each specified NHS Trust for qualified health visiting staff, 3 month vacancy rates, numbers and staff in post*

| | | March 2003 | | September 2002 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *3 month vacancy rate (Percentage)* | *3 month vacancy (Number)* | *Staff in post (Whole-time equivalent)* | *Staff in post (Headcount)* |
| *England* | | 2.3 | 229 | 9,912 | 12,774 |
| *Of which:* | | | | | |
| 5LD | Lambeth PCT | 0.0 | 0 | 78 | 89 |
| 5M7 | Sutton and Merton PCT | 0.0 | 0 | 79 | 105 |

*3 month vacancy notes:*
1. Three month vacancy information is as at 31 March 2003.
2. Three month vacancies are vacancies which Trusts are actively trying to fill, which had lasted for three months or more (whole time equivalents).
3. Three month Vacancy Rates are three month vacancies expressed as a percentage of three month vacancies plus staff in post.
4. Three month Vacancy Rates for non-medical staff are calculated using staff in post from the Vacancy Survey, March 2003.
5. Percentages are rounded to one decimal place.

*Staff in post notes:*
1. Staff in post data is from the Non-Medical Workforce Census, September 2002.

*General notes:*
1. Vacancy and staff in post numbers are rounded to the nearest whole number.
2. Calculating the vacancy rates using the above data may not equal the actual vacancy rates.
3. Due to rounding, totals may not equal the sum of component parts.

*Sources:*
Department of Health Vacancies Survey, March 2003.
Department of Health Non-Medical Workforce Census, September 2002.

### Mercury Healthcare

**Mr. Wilshire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer, 10 February, to Question reference 153276, whether Mercury Healthcare *(a)* are still involved in the negotiations and *(b)* are still the selected contractor. [155185]

**Mr. Hutton** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* On Tuesday 17 February, the Department announced that preferred bidder status for the independent sector treatment centre 'spine chain'—of which the treatment centre at Ashford is an integral part—had been switched from Mercury Healthcare to the reserve bidder, Capio UK.

### Ministerial Travel

**Bob Russell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he last used a train in connection with his ministerial duties. [155160]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** As of Wednesday 25 February 2004:

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health last travelled by train during the course of his official duties on Monday 23 February 2004, from London Euston to Birmingham New Street.

My right hon. Friend the Minister of State for Health (Mr. Hutton) last travelled by train during the course of his official duties on Tuesday 10 February 2004, from London Waterloo to Southampton.

My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Health (Miss Johnson) last travelled by train during the course of her official duties on Wednesday 25 February 2004, from London St. Pancras to Sheffield.

My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Health (Dr. Ladyman) last travelled by train during the course of his official duties on Thursday 12 February 2004 from London Kings Cross to Grantham.

My noble Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Health (Lord Warner) last travelled by train during the course of his official duties on Wednesday 25 February 2004 from Birmingham New Street to London Euston.

I last travelled by train during the course of my official duties on Tuesday 6 January 2004 from Ashford to London Charing Cross.

All travel by Ministers on official business is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in 'Travel by Ministers'.

### Neurologically Impaired Children

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the Government's response to the recommendation in the Chief Medical Officer's consultation paper "Making Amends" that support and compensation should be available to neurologically impaired babies, but that children with genetic or chromosomal abnormality would be excluded; and whether the recommendation would result in a difference in the support available to neurologically impaired children and their carers dependent on the cause of their neurological impairment. [156403]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The Department is currently analysing the many responses that were received to the consultation on "Making Amends". These responses and discussions with key stakeholders are informing the development of detailed policy, which we are aiming to publish later this year.

### Nurses (London Boroughs)

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the proportion of nurses per head of population was in each borough of London in each year since 1992. [155092]

**Mr. Hutton** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* Data on the proportion of nurses per head of population is not held at borough area level. Data at strategic health authority area level from 1996 is shown in the table. This is the nearest alternative.

*NHS hospital and community health services: Qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff including Practice Nurses employed by Unrestricted Principals and equivalents (UPEs)[1] in England, the London[2] area and each specified Strategic Health Authority area per one thousand of the population as at 30 September[3] each specified year*

*headcount per 1,000 population*

| | *1996* | *1997* | *1998*[4] | *1999*[4] | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| England | 6.6 | 6.6 | 6.6 | 6.7 | 6.9 | 7.1 | 7.4 |
| *of which:* | | | | | | | |
| London[2] | 7.6 | 7.6 | 7.7 | 7.9 | 7.7 | 7.9 | 8.2 |
| Q04 North West London SNA | 8.1 | 8.2 | 8.4 | 9.1 | 8.0 | 8.6 | 8.9 |
| Q05 North Central London SHA | 10.3 | 10.0 | 10.0 | 9.6 | 9.8 | 10.1 | 10.0 |
| Q06 North East London SHA | 6.4 | 6.4 | 6.3 | 6.2 | 6.0 | 6.3 | 6.5 |
| Q07 South East London SHA | 7.3 | 7.5 | 7.9 | 7.5 | 7.9 | 8.0 | 8.9 |
| Q08 South West London SHA | 6.4 | 6.4 | 6.1 | 7.4 | 7.4 | 6.9 | 7.1 |

[1] UPEs include QMS Unrestricted Principals, PMS Contracted GPs and PMS Salaried GPs.
[2] Figures for London are based on each specified Strategic Health Authority area.
[3] Practice nurse figures are as at 1 October for 1997–99
[4] Headcount Practice Nurse figures are estimated for these years.
*Note:*
The Royal Marsden NHS Trust has been included with South West London Strategic Health Authority. 1996–2001 data is estimated based on 2002 organisational structure. Figures are rounded to one decimal place
*Source:*
Department of Health Non-Medical Workforce Census
Department of Health General and Personal Medical Services Statistics
Office for National Statistics (ONS)

### Nursing Care Contributions Fees

**Mr. Burns:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to publish the first annual review of registered nursing care contributions fees; and for what reason the review has not yet been published. [156318]

**Dr. Ladyman:** The revised monetary values attached to national health service-funded nursing care from April 2004, depending on level of need, are as follows:

Low band—£40 per week (remains the same).

Medium band—£77.50 per week (increased from £75 per week).

High band—£125 per week (increased from £120 per week).

On a case-by-case basis, primary care trusts will be able to agree an amount between £40 per week and the medium band, depending on the individual's needs.

### Out-of-hours Service

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the operation of out-of-hours work for general practitioners from 1 April in North Yorkshire. [155970]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** In common with primary care trusts (PCTs) nationally, PCTs in North Yorkshire are currently working with their local general practitioners and other organisations to develop new arrangements for out of hours services in line with the new general medical services contract and which meet the needs of their local population for a high quality, sustainable out-of-hours service.

### Pension Schemes

**Mr. Laurence Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what rights exist for NHS employees to transfer their pensions from schemes run by previous employers to the NHS pension scheme; what restrictions exist, with particular regard to length of remaining service with the NHS; and if he will make a statement. [155502]

**Mr. Hutton** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* Members of the national health service pension scheme may transfer pension benefits from a previous pension scheme into the NHS scheme. Members wishing to do so must make an application within 12 months of joining the NHS pension scheme and before age 60.

### School Nurses

**Mrs. Shephard:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health: what part in community nursing teams is played by school nurses. [153899]

**Mr. Hutton** *[holding answer 9 February 2004]:* School nurses deliver health services to the school aged population with a focus on health promotion and preventing ill health. They are generally employed by primary care trusts and work closely with visitors, child health services, social care and education.

Alongside their community nursing colleagues, school nurses will identify the health needs of the population and deliver public health and health care interventions that address local and national priorities.

### SunSmart Scheme

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how he intends to increase the profile of *(a)* the issue of skin cancer and *(b)* methods of effective sun protection through the SunSmart scheme; [155280]

(2) how much funding will be provided for the SunSmart campaign for summer 2004; [155281]

(3) what account the SunSmart campaign will take of tanning shops. [155282]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** A new sun awareness initiative, the SunSmart campaign, was launched in March 2003, funded by United Kingdom Health Departments and run by Cancer Research UK.

The campaign is based on the successful SunSmart campaign in Australia. The campaign has received interim funding of £50,000 this year from the UK Health Departments. Decisions on further funding for SunSmart will be made in due course.

The campaign's aim is to increase the profile of the issue of skin cancer and methods of effective sun protection. The key objectives are to increase knowledge of the causes of skin cancer, to increase awareness of actions that can be taken to prevent skin cancer and to influence positively attitudes to sun protection.

Wide dissemination of SunSmart messages will be achieved through the media and by supporting education and health professionals locally. The campaign is working with the Department for Education and Skills and teachers to develop guidelines to encourage schools to adopt their own SunSmart policies and curricular activities.

Tanning shops and the potential dangers involved in the use of sunbeds will be the subject of a meeting of experts and industry hosted by SunSmart on 29 March. The campaign will review the latest scientific evidence and to develop practical recommendations for better self-regulation.

SunSmart achieved mass media coverage for skin cancer issues in 2003, reaching 76 per cent. of UK adults, and will use similar techniques this spring/summer to keep skin cancer high profile with the public.

In addition to the SunSmart campaign, we continue to fund the Meteorological Office to provide the Ultra-Violet index in the media (television, radio, Meteorological Office website).

The Department also provides core funding to the National Radiological Protection Board, which has expertise on ultra-violet radiation issues relevant to the public health aspects of the prevention of skin cancer.

### Tuberculosis

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many new cases of tuberculosis were diagnosed in London in each year since 1995. [155093]

**Mr. Hutton** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* The information requested is shown in the table.

Data on tuberculosis notifications are available from the Health Protection Agency at http://www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/tb/epidemiology/table5.htm.

| | *Tuberculosis notifications in London* |
|---|---|
| 1995 | 2,042 |
| 1996 | 2,190 |
| 1997 | 2,411 |
| 1998 | 2,444 |
| 1999 | 2,493 |
| 2000 | 2,834 |
| 2001 | 2,886 |
| 2002 | 2,850 |

## EDUCATION AND SKILLS

### Skilled Workers

**Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate his Department has made of the supply of skilled workers in key areas, with particular reference to *(a)* the construction industry, *(b)* plumbing, *(c)* the NHS and *(d)* the education system. [157586]

**Mr. Miliband:** The Skills Strategy (published in July 2003) set out our plans for identifying skill needs across the economy.

In relation to the particular areas highlighted:

*The construction industry and plumbing*

Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) are being established to identify and define the skills that employers need to raise productivity in all major sectors of the economy. Construction is one of four sectors pioneering new Sector Skills Agreements to deliver on this agenda.

Construction was highlighted as a priority curriculum area in "Success for All: Our Vision for the Future" the Government's strategy for reforming further education and training published in November 2002.

The 2003 National Employers Skills Survey shows the construction sector as having a relatively high number of skill shortage vacancies per employee in comparison to other sectors.

Forecast future requirements in the construction sector are of an annual net requirement between 2003 and 2007 of 54,000 construction workers and 6,000 plumbers. This is to replace both an ageing workforce and to meet an expansion of the sector.

Supply is expected to meet this increased future demand. In 2001/02 there were 49,000 vocational awards for construction and 11,000 for plumbing while the number of first-year construction trainees increased for the fifth year running in 2002/03.

*The NHS*

The NHS Plan acknowledged that shortages in human resources were the biggest constraint facing the NHS and set ambitious targets for increasing the NHS workforce. By March 2004 there will be 7,500 more consultants, 2,000 more GPs, 20,000 more nurses and 6,500 more therapists and other health professionals employed in the NHS than in 1999.

Furthermore, "Delivering the NHS Plan" included expected increases in the NHS work force. Between 2001 and 2008, we expect there to be increases of 35,000 nurses and midwives, 15,000 consultants and GPs and 30,000 therapists and scientists.

*The education system*

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills is responsible for ensuring an adequate supply of school teachers. Since 1997 there has been an increase of nearly 25,000 regular teachers in maintained schools in England. Recent improvements in recruitment to initial teacher training and innovative ways of remodelling the work force—with support staff helping teachers to use their professional skills to greatest effect—mean that supply is expected to continue to be sufficient. Alongside rising teacher numbers, there is also evidence of improving teacher quality.

The DfES liaises regularly with the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to ensure that the supply of teaching and learning is not adversely affected by labour shortage.

In addition, the DfES has responsibility—following the publication of the Green Paper, "Every Child Matters"—for children's services more broadly, including social care, and is currently developing its evidence base on the wider children's work force.

**Adult Learning**

**Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding has been made available for adult learning in further education colleges for each year since 1997. [154234]

**Alan Johnson:** The information requested is set out in the following table:

*Adult participation funding (including additional learning support)*

| | £ million |
|---|---|
| 1997–98 | 1,296 |
| 1998–99 | 1,321 |
| 1999–2000 | 1,346 |
| 2000–01 | 1,485 |
| 2001–02 | 1,608 |
| 2002–03 | 1,733 |

These figures represent allocations made to further education colleges funded by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) until 2000–01, and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) from 2001–02.

**Business Skills Education**

**Ms Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what his Department's policy is on teaching business and entrepreneurial skills to primary school children; and if he will make a statement; [155587]

(2) what funding his Department is giving to *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in (i) Staffordshire and (ii) Stoke-on-Trent to improve the business skills of school pupils; and if he will make a statement; [155588]

(3) what his Department's funding for business and entrepreneurial skills has been for each of the last 10 years in *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools; and if he will make a statement; [155589]

(4) what his Department's budget is in 2003–04 for the funding of business skills education in primary education; and if he will make a statement; [155590]

(5) what his Department's future programmes are for improving business and entrepreneurial skills in *(a)* primary school children and *(b)* secondary school children; and if he will make a statement. [155592]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** Business and enterprise are covered within the Citizenship curriculum, which is compulsory in secondary schools. For example, 14 to 16-year-old pupils are taught about how the economy functions, including the role of business and financial services.

The non-statutory framework for Personal, Social and Health Education, provides for personal finance education to be taught in both primary and secondary schools, allowing teachers to cover the wide range of topics as set out in the Department's "Financial Capability through Personal Financial Education" guidance for schools. This helps to provide children with the skills they need to move into adulthood, confident in

their ability to deal effectively with a range of financial decisions. We do not disaggregate the funding schools spend on different elements of curriculum subjects.

From 2005/06 a new £60 million Enterprise Education entitlement will provide all Key Stage 4 pupils with the equivalent of five days enterprise activity which will develop enterprise capability—including personal financial capability as well as business understanding. 151 Pathfinder projects began in nearly 400 secondary schools in September 2003. They will help DfES to develop additional guidance including case studies and lesson plans. Fair Oak High School, Walton High School in Staffordshire and Blurton High School in Stoke-on-Trent, are Enterprise Pathfinder schools, receiving some £34,000 between them in the financial year 2003–04.

### Child Removals

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills further to the Appeal Court judgment in the R *v.* Cannings case, what specific action he has initiated to review the cases of children removed from their parents in the family courts which have involved expert witness testimony from *(a)* Professor Sir Roy Meadow and *(b)* others on the expert witness list for (i) their expertise in Munchausen's syndrome by proxy and (ii) causing child death by shaking. [152136]

**Margaret Hodge:** I made a statement to the House on 23 February 2004, following the Appeal Court's judgment in the appeal against the conviction of Angela Cannings. In this statement I announced the action that I have asked local authorities with social services responsibilities to take.

First, for them to consider those cases which are affected by the Attorney-General's Review. In those cases, councils should stand ready to act in the light of the outcome of that review.

Secondly, within the next four weeks, for councils to identify and make their best efforts to review current cases. These are cases where they have commenced care proceedings in relation to a child and where the court has not yet made a final care order. In these cases councils should consider with their lawyers the implications, for those proceedings, of the Court of Appeal's judgment in the Cannings case.

Thirdly, within the next 12 weeks social services should, together with their lawyers, identify those cases where a final care order was made in the past, which involved harm to the child or a sibling, and where the making of the care order depended, exclusively or almost exclusively, on a serious disagreement between medical experts about the cause of the harm. In such cases, councils should again consider, with their lawyers, whether there are now doubts about the reliability of the expert medical evidence. If that is so and, in the light of the child's current circumstances and current best interests, they should then consider whether to apply to the court for the care order to be discharged, or whether to support any application that may be made by the parents or the child. Councils, when reviewing cases, will also need to take into account any fresh case law judgments from the appeal court that may be relevant.

Where applications to the court are made, whether by the local authority, the parents or the child it will be for the court to decide, in all cases, if the care order should be discharged.

My statement set out a route forward for the period ahead within the limits of my ability to act. With this review and with the current and forthcoming judgments in both care proceedings and appeal cases in the courts we will ensure that we are acting in the best way possible to protect the interests of children both today and in the future.

### Children Act

**Mr. Chope:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when he will publish his final response to the Children Act Sub-Committee Report, "Making Contact Work"; and what the reasons are for the delay in publishing the response. [156574]

**Margaret Hodge** *[holding answer 26 February 2004]:* The Children Act Sub-Committee published its report "Making Contact Work" in February 2002. The then Lord Chancellor's Department published its interim response in August 2002. Following the Machinery of Government changes last year, I now have lead responsibility for child contact issues.

I have, together with my hon. Friends in the Department for Constitutional Affairs, been working carefully to consider how the family justice system and related children's services can better meet the needs of all children and their parents following relationship breakdown. We want to ensure that better outcomes are achieved for children by, where possible, helping parents agree contact arrangements without the intervention of the courts. We have also consulted widely with stakeholders and drawn on their expertise. I expect to publish the Government's response in March.

### Children's Fund

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) by what amount the Children's Fund was over-committed in financial year 2003–04; [155634]

(2) how much he estimates the Children's Fund will be over-committed in *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06; [155635]

(3) how much money has been saved by reductions to the *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06 allocations to the Children's Fund. [155636]

**Margaret Hodge:** The Children's Fund was over-committed by £14.6 million in 2003–04 on an allocation of £150 million. It had a projected over-commitment of the same amount for 2004–05 and 2005–06.

We have not made cuts to the Children's Fund in 2004–05 and 2005–06, indeed I expect to have spent more than the £450 million set aside for the Children's Fund by the end of 2005–06. Following discussions with the Children's Fund advisory forum of key stakeholders in the programme, we have agreed revised allocations to partnerships for 2004–05, together with a package of flexibilities that will ensure that the programme lives within its financial limits while honouring its commitments. We will be having a comprehensive dialogue about 2005–06 with partnerships and key

partners in the programme over the next few weeks, with final decisions to be taken in autumn 2004 informed by that dialogue and the outcome of the Spending Review.

### Class Sizes

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average class size in English primary schools is; what estimate he has made of the cost of introducing a maximum average class size of 25; and if he will make a statement. [156699]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** The average class size in English primary schools at January 2003 was 26.3. This relates to one teacher classes only.

The Department has not made any estimate of the cost of introducing a maximum average class size of 25.

### Connexions

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the progress of the Connexions service towards meeting its target of reducing by one tenth the number of 16 to 18-year-olds not in education, employment or training by one tenth by November 2004. [154781]

**Margaret Hodge:** The Connexions Service is making good progress towards the target of reducing the proportion of 16 to 18-year-olds not in education, employment or training. In November 2003, Connexions Partnerships estimated that the proportion of 16 to 18-year-olds not in education, employment or training had fallen by 8 per cent. in established phase 1 and 2 Partnership areas, and 3 per cent. overall taking the new phase 3 areas into account, during the past year.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many 16 to 18-year-olds not in education, employment or training there were in each month since the Connexions service was established. [154782]

**Margaret Hodge:** The number of 16 to 18-year-olds known not to be in education, employment or training in each month since the Connexions Service was established is shown in the following table. The year-on-year increases in numbers recorded as being not in education employment or training change because of the phased roll out of Connexions Partnerships in 2002–03. The national data increases as each Partnership becomes operational. In November 2003, Connexions Partnerships estimated that the proportion of 16 to 18-year-olds not in education, employment or training had fallen by 3 per cent. overall during the previous year.

*Number of 16 to 18-year-olds known by the Connexions Service not to be in education, employment or training*

| | *2001* | *2002* | *2003* |
|---|---|---|---|
| January | — | 45,215 | 133,089 |
| February | — | 44,808 | 130,399 |
| March | — | 45,628 | 126,684 |
| April | 24,747 | 61,502 | 103,543 |
| May | 23,331 | 60,329 | 97,479 |
| June | 24,794 | 62,577 | 87,808 |
| July | 28,737 | 64,865 | 88,017 |
| August | 30,469 | 65,284 | 87,091 |
| September | 45,692 | 118,081 | 117,487 |

*Number of 16 to 18-year-olds known by the Connexions Service not to be in education, employment or training*

| | *2001* | *2002* | *2003* |
|---|---|---|---|
| October | 44,989 | 130,083 | 114,687 |
| November | 44,095 | 131,906 | 109,198 |
| December | 44,164 | 126,423 | 101,771 |

*Notes:*

1. Connexions Partnerships were rolled out over two years, with the first 15 Partnerships going live in 2001; 13 becoming operational between April and June 2002 and 16 between September and November 2002. The three remaining Partnerships became operational in 2003.
2. Data for April 2001 to March 2002 is for 16 to 19-year-olds. Data for 16–18 year olds was not available.
3. The number of 16 to 18-year-olds not in education, employment or training increases in September each year as summer school leavers enter the labour market for the first time.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether it is his Department's policy to assess the impact of the Connexions service upon previously existing services for young people. [154783]

**Margaret Hodge:** The impact of Connexions on previously existing services has been tested through a survey of 'stakeholders'—individuals and representatives of partner organisations on the Connexions Partnership Boards and Local Management Committees (e.g. local authorities, the police, health and social services, voluntary and community organisations and employers).

The survey of local partners in January 2003 found that a large majority (83 per cent.) believed that the objectives of Connexions were consistent with those of their own organisation and over 60 per cent. agreed that Connexions helped their organisation meet its own targets and objectives. Nearly eight out of 10 local partners thought that joint working between agencies providing services to young people in their areas was effective compared with 40 per cent. prior to the establishment of Connexions Partnerships.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many Connexions clients there are, broken down by *(a)* social class and *(b)* ethnic origin. [154793]

**Margaret Hodge:** Information on the social class of Connexions clients is not collected by Connexions Partnerships.

Information on the ethnic origin of Connexions clients of compulsory education age (i.e. those in school years 8–11) is not collected by Connexions Partnerships. Information on the ethnic origin of those Connexions clients who have completed school year 11 in 2003 or earlier is collected by Partnerships and is shown in the following table.

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Connexions clients who are of post compulsory education age (December 2003) | 2,300,364 |
| *White total* | 1,699,787 |
| White British | 1,545,354 |
| White Irish | 5,464 |
| Other white background | 59,824 |
| White not known | 89,145 |
| White and black Caribbean | 7,129 |

| | Number |
|---|---|
| *Mixed race total* | 24,009 |
| White and Black African | 2,683 |
| White and Asian | 5,317 |
| Other mixed background | 8,880 |
| *Black or black British total* | 74,018 |
| Black Caribbean | 28,869 |
| Black African | 27,335 |
| Other black background | 17,814 |
| *Asian or Asian British total* | 132,021 |
| Indian | 51,182 |
| Pakistani | 49,063 |
| Bangladeshi | 19,467 |
| Other Asian background | 12,309 |
| Chinese | 8,643 |
| Other | 44,876 |
| No ethnic information | 317,010 |

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total cost of marketing the Connexions service has been in each year since its establishment. [154808]

**Margaret Hodge:** Since the establishment of the Connexions service in April 2001, the breakdown of spend on marketing and advertising for each year of its existence is as follows:

| | [1]*Marketing and advertising* |
|---|---|
| 2001–02 | 889,073 |
| 2002–03 | [2]3,266,489 |
| 2003–04 (total committed to beginning February) | [3]3,241,000 |

[1] i.e. radio, cinema, TV advertising, campaign extension, Connexions publications, conferences)
[2] Includes £226,850 for Connexions Direct
[3] Includes £60,317 for Connexions Direct

This breakdown is for central budgets only. Data is collected centrally on the broad areas of Partnerships' expenditure but not at a level detailed enough to enable identification of how much has been spent on marketing and advertising.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many staff are employed by the Connexions service, broken down by *(a)* job title and *(b)* area partnership. [154809]

**Margaret Hodge** *[holding answer 12 February 2004]:* The following table shows the total number of staff employed by each Connexions Partnership in December 2003. Information on the number of staff employed by each Connexions Partnership by job title is not available.

Figures are expressed as "full-time equivalent" posts.

| | Total |
|---|---|
| *England* | 14,071.1 |
| *South East* | 2,163.2 |
| Berkshire | 157.6 |
| South Central | 862.1 |
| Kent | 268.7 |
| Milton Keynes Ox and Bucks | 261.2 |
| Surrey | 140.6 |
| Sussex | 473.0 |
| *London* | 1,691.3 |
| Central London | 390.5 |
| North London | 250.6 |
| South London | 229.0 |
| East London | 455.8 |
| West London | 365.4 |
| *East of England* | 1,060.2 |
| Bedfordshire and Luton | 123.7 |
| Cambs and Peterborough | 163.6 |
| Essex Southend and Thurrock | 293.5 |
| Hertfordshire | 198.8 |
| Norfolk | 134.0 |
| Suffolk | 146.6 |
| *South West* | 1,146.1 |
| Bournemouth Dorset and Poole | 128.8 |
| Cornwall and Devon | 362.3 |
| Gloucestershire | 102.6 |
| Somerset | 138.3 |
| West of England | 302.1 |
| Wiltshire and Swindon | 112.0 |
| *West Midlands* | 1,901.3 |
| Birmingham and Solihull | 457.4 |
| Black Country | 372.9 |
| Coventry and Warwick | 285.2 |
| Hereford and Worcester | 296.3 |
| Shropshire Telford and Wrekin | 160.2 |
| Staffordshire | 329.3 |
| *East Midlands* | 1,096.4 |
| Derbyshire | 284.9 |
| Leicestershire | 222.5 |
| Lincolnshire and Rutland | 188.1 |
| Northamptonshire | 135.9 |
| Nottinghamshire | 265.0 |
| *Yorks and Humber* | 2,043.7 |
| Humber | 329.4 |
| York and North Yorkshire | 132.2 |
| South Yorkshire | 417.3 |
| West Yorkshire | 1,164.8 |
| *North West* | 2,092.7 |
| Cheshire and Warrington | 249.6 |
| Cumbria | 201.6 |
| Greater Manchester | 816.8 |
| Greater Merseyside | 401.3 |
| Lancashire | 423.4 |
| *North East* | 876.2 |
| County Durham | 168.5 |
| Northumberland | 89.4 |
| Tees Valley | 245.0 |
| Tyne and Wear | 373.3 |

*Source:*
NEXUS Data at December 2003.

### Consultants

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list the consultants being used in the current financial year to assist in the implementation of his schools strategy. [157289]

**Mr. Miliband:** This information could be supplied only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list the consultants used by his Department in 2002-03 where the expenditure exceeded £1,000,000. [157290]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]:* This information could be supplied only at disproportionate cost.

### Criminal Records Bureau

**Mr. Willis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what procedures are in place for carrying out Criminal Records Bureau checks on *(a)* overseas teachers and *(b)* other overseas workers coming to work in schools in the UK; and if he will make a statement. [153725]

**Margaret Hodge** *[holding answer 9 February 2004]:* My Department's guidance to employers in the education service about pre-appointment checks on teachers and other workers in schools advises that, if a person who they intend to appoint to work in a school has never lived in the UK, no purpose will be served by asking them to apply for a disclosure when they come to this country.

The Criminal Records Bureau is not able to obtain details of a person's criminal record from overseas. A limited number of overseas convictions are recorded on the Police national computer, but the data is not comprehensive.

The Bureau's Overseas Information Service provides advice to employers on the availability of criminal record information from overseas. The service currently covers 17 countries (Denmark, France, Germany, Irish Republic, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Poland, Canada, Jamaica, South Africa, Malaysia, Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, Italy (excluding Vatican City) and Finland). The CRB is in discussions with the 10 accession countries to the European Union and aims to provide information through the Overseas Information Service about the criminal record information available from these countries within the next few months.

Where criminal record information is not available, we recommend that employers take extra care in taking up references and carrying out other checks on a person's background.

### Drugs Education

**John Mann:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what letters of concern his Department has received from the Home Office on the issue of personal advisers on drugs education; [156026]

(2) what assessment he has made of the provision of drugs education in schools in 2004 following the abolition of the standards fund; [156027]

(3) what meetings on drugs education Ministers in his Department have held with ministerial colleagues from the Department of Health and the Home Department since September 2003; [156028]

(4) how many personal advisers working on drugs education in secondary and primary schools are to be made redundant owing to the removal of the standards fund; and what plans there are to replace their specialist input; [156029]

(5) how many personal advisers work in the classroom on drugs education; and what the figures were in 2002. [156030]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg** *[holding answer 25 February 2004]:* In line with Exemption 2 of the Code of Practice, confidential communications between Departments is not made public. It is not normal practice of Governments to release details of specific meetings or their content as some of these discussions may have taken place on a confidential basis.

The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) will continue to be responsible for evaluating and reporting on the school's polices and practice in drug education within personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship provision as part of the school inspection process. In addition, Ofsted surveys the quantity and quality of drug education in schools on behalf of the Department. The next data collection exercise will take place during the Summer Term 2004 and report in the Autumn.

The Department does not collect data on the number of School Drug Adviser redundancies or how many school Drug Advisers work in the classroom on drug education. Their principal role is to support schools in planning and implementing effective policy and practice on drug issues rather than direct classroom delivery.

From April 2004, our main focus will be on supporting teachers' professional development. The PSHE certification programme, which sets standards for the teaching of PSHE and certificates those who meet the standards, will be rolled-out to 3,000 teachers.

Young people will continue to receive advice and support on drug issues from schools, the Connexions Service and a range of local agencies.

### Early Years Education

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions he has had with local authorities on meeting the statutory requirement to provide free early education for each three and four-year-old by April and the role of private day nursery providers in this; and if he will make a statement. [155823]

**Margaret Hodge:** Funding has been made available for expanding three year old provision since 1999, building to universal provision by April 2004. During this period local authorities have been encouraged, through published guidance, to grow provision taking into account local demand and social need and using a mixture of maintained, independent, voluntary and private providers to support parental choice.

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether it is his policy to phase out private providers for the nursery education grant scheme; and if he will make a statement. [R] [155826]

**Margaret Hodge:** This Government greatly values the contribution made by the thousands of private, voluntary and independent sector providers and is determined that they should continue to play a full part in the provision of early years education and child care.

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what action he will take to ensure the continuity of provision of private sector nursery education for 3 and 4-year-olds, under the nursery education grant scheme in relatively isolated

communities which currently have a single private provider, where that provider withdraws as a result of the withdrawal of the ring-fencing of funds to local authorities. [R] [155828]

**Margaret Hodge:** From 1 April 2004 local authorities will be under a statutory duty to provide sufficient nursery education for all three and 4-year-olds in their area. Local authorities have been encouraged through published guidance, to grow provision using a mixture of Maintained, Independent, Voluntary and Private providers to support parental choice and take into account the needs of children and families.

### Education Funding

**Mrs. Humble:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money was spent on school buildings in the Blackpool, North and Fleetwood constituency in each year since 1997, broken down by school. [157503]

**Mr. Miliband:** The majority of capital support is allocated to schools and local education authorities (LEAs) by formula, and they decide how to invest it in line with the priorities of their asset management plans. The Department does not, therefore, have complete information about capital investment in individual schools. This information should be held locally. However, the following table shows the total capital support made available by this Government for school buildings in Blackpool LEA since 1998–99 when Blackpool became a unitary authority.

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1998–99 | 2.6 |
| 1999–2000 | 4.0 |
| 2000–01 | 6.9 |
| 2001–02 | 8.3 |
| 2002–03 | 6.6 |
| 2003–04 | 17.0 |

We have to date also allocated indicative funding for future years worth approximately £14.4 million in 2004–05, and £5.8 million in 2005–06.

**Mrs. Fitzsimons:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what capital funding has been received by Rochdale Council Education Department since 1996; which schools benefited from additional capital investment in each year; how much funding each school received; and how the funding has been spent. [157504]

**Mr. Miliband:** The majority of capital support is allocated to schools and local education authorities (LEAs) by formula, and they decide how to invest it in line with the priorities of their asset management plans. The Department does not, therefore, have completeinformation about capital investment in individual schools. This information should be held locally. However, the following table shows the total capital support made available by this Government for school buildings in Rochdale LEA since 1996–97.

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1996–97 | 1.0 |
| 1997–98 | 2.9 |
| 1998–99 | 4.7 |
| 1999–2000 | 2.8 |
| 2000–01 | 6.1 |
| 2001–02 | 7.1 |
| 2002–03 | 7.9 |
| 2003–04 | 12.0 |

We have to date also allocated indicative funding for future years worth approximately £69 million in 2004–05 including £56 million of PFI credits, and £4.4 million in 2005–06.

### Educational Achievement

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of pupils achieved three grade As or above at A-level in each of the last five years. [155425]

**Mr. Miliband:** The percentage of 16 to 18-year-old A-level candidates achieving at least three A grades at A-level over the last five years in all schools and colleges in England:

| | *Percentage of 16 to 18-year-old A-level candidates achieving at least three A grades at A-level* |
|---|---|
| 1999 | 7.0 |
| 2000 | 7.4 |
| 2001 | 7.4 |
| 2002 | 7.9 |
| 2003 | 8.3 |

### EU Accession Countries

**Glenda Jackson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when the children of citizens of EU accession countries working in the United Kingdom will *(a)* be permitted to attend without charge state (i) schools, (ii) colleges and (iii) universities, *(b)* qualify for free school meals, *(c)* qualify for assistance with travel costs to and from school and *(d)* qualify for assistance in providing school uniforms. [156978]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** Children of citizens of EU accession countries working in the UK will have access to schools when their parents enter the UK.

Generally, students from the accession countries in colleges and universities will be entitled to receive education at the home student fee rate from the beginning of the 2004/05 academic year, in the same way as current EU students. Young people aged 16–19 in further education with home fee status are exempt from tuition fees.

Registered pupils in schools maintained by a local education authority, whose parents are in receipt of the following support payments, are entitled to receive free school meals:

Income Support (IS);

Income Based Job Seekers Allowance (IBJSA);

support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;

Child Tax Credit provided they do not receive Working Tax Credit and have an annual income (as assessed by The Inland Revenue) which does not exceed £13,230.

Children who receive IS or IBJSA in their own right are also eligible to receive free school meals.

*(c)* Free transport is always necessary for a pupil of compulsory school age (5–16) who attends the nearest suitable school if it is beyond statutory walking distance. These are two miles for pupils aged up to eight and three miles for those aged eight and over. This is measured by the shortest route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, may walk with reasonable safety.

*(d)* The payment of grants for uniform or clothing is at the discretion of each local education authority, and they determine the eligibility criteria and the amount of any such support.

### Family Courts

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Educaiton and Skills what the *(a)* average and *(b)* longest waiting time is for care proceedings in family courts. [156527]

**Mr. Leslie:** The average time taken for a care case to pass through a Care Centre, which deals with the more complex cases, was 52.5 weeks in December. The average time taken for a care case to pass through a Family Proceedings Court (FPC), which deals with about half of all cases of this type, is lower. Centrally held data does not record the longest waiting time. More complete and accurate figures for both FPCs and Care Centres will be available by the end of March.

### Home Assessment Visits

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average waiting time is in Gloucestershire for a home assessment visit by Ofsted when a person in receipt of child tax credit or working tax credit needs their home to be assessed as this is the place where their children are being looked after rather than the home of the child minder. [156391]

**Margaret Hodge:** The Home Childcarer Scheme allows registered childminders to gain an additional approval to care for children in the children's home. This approval process does not involve an assessment of the children's home, where the carer is already registered by Ofsted as a child minder.

### Information Sharing

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has for new information referral and tracking systems; and how these will work sub-regionally to allow for effective information sharing on children and families who move across different local authorities. [155073]

**Margaret Hodge:** The Queen's Speech said that a Bill will be introduced to improve services designed to protect children. This will implement proposals contained in the Children's Green Paper "Every Child Matters", and, subject to consideration of responses to the Green Paper consultation, will include proposals for information sharing systems to enable practitioners to share early information about children and young people where this will enable better services to be provided to them and their families.

Information sharing systems must have the capacity to link together to ensure that children moving between local authority areas do not slip through the net. The Government have provided £1 million each to ten trailblazers, involving 15 local authorities, to test new ways of information sharing. The trailblazers are examining the important issue of linking databases and their experiences will inform subsequent developments.

### Minister for Children

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills for which funding schemes the Minister for Children is responsible. [155933]

**Margaret Hodge:** Table A which sets out funding schemes where I have responsibility is as follows. It has been drawn from last year's Departmental Report and includes Sure Start, which is a cross-government programme where I work closely with Baroness Catherine Ashton who is the Minister for Sure Start in both the Department for Education and Skills and the Department for Work and Pensions. Table B is an extract from the Local Authority Social Services Letter, LASSL (2003) 7, and sets out the schemes that have transferred from the Department of Health to become my responsibility. In addition to these schemes the Home Office has transferred Family Grants, including Parentline, The Department for Constitutional Affairs has transferred Marriage and Relationship Support (MARS) grants, and Treasury have transferred the Parenting Fund.

*Table A: Extract from Table 3.2 in the Departmental Report 2003*

| | |
|---|---|
| Early Years and Child Care | |
| | Sure Start |
| Support for Young People | |
| | Connexions Service Neighbourhood Support Fund Millennium Volunteers |
| | Youth Services Children's Fund |

*Table B: Extract from the Local Authority Social Services Letter, LASSL(2003)7 Local Authority provided Children's Services*

| | |
|---|---|
| Unhypothecated Revenue | |
| | Formula Spending |
| | Safeguarding Children |
| Ring fenced Revenue Grants | |
| | Quality Protects |
| | Adoption Support and Special Guardianship |
| | Choice Protects |
| | Children's Trusts |
| | Teenage Pregnancy Local Implementation |
| | Regional Development Workers |
| | Secure Accommodation (Bed Bank) |
| Capital | |
| | SCE(R) Single Capital pot |
| | Secure Accommodation Grant |
| | Children's Services |

### Munchausen's Syndrome

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when he was first informed of children being wrongfully removed from their parents owing to misdiagnosis of Munchausen's syndrome by proxy; and when he was first informed that Munchausen's syndrome by proxy was responsible for serious miscarriages of justice. [152113]

**Margaret Hodge** *[holding answer 30 January 2004]:* We are not aware of any such situations. Local authorities have a duty to make inquiries where a child is thought to be at risk of significant harm, following Government guidance "Working Together to Safeguard Children".

Where a local authority should seek a Care Order in respect of a child, it will be for the courts to decide if this is appropriate.

However, I would refer you to the statement that I made to the House on 23 February 2004, in which I set out the action that I asked local authorities with social services responsibilities to take following the Appeal Court's judgment in the appeal against the conviction of Angela Cannings.

### North Korea

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps he is taking to promote academic links between the United Kingdom and North Korea. [157540]

**Alan Johnson:** The Department for Education and Skills has no plans to promote academic links with North Korea.

### Postgraduate Education

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people *(a)* applied for places on Post Graduate Certificate in Education courses, *(b)* were offered a place on a course and *(c)* successfully completed the course; in each year since 1990. [157493]

**Mr. Miliband:** Data on the number of people offered places on Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) courses is not collected. The following table shows the numbers of PGCE applicants in each year since 1991/92 and the number of candidates who accepted the offer of a place in each year since 1996/97. These are the earliest years for which this information is available. The number of entrants to PGCE courses is also shown.

| | *Applications*[1] | *Acceptances*[1] | *Entrants*[2] |
|---|---|---|---|
| *England and Wales* | | | |
| 1990/91 | — | — | 11,960 |
| 1991/92 | 24,870 | — | 15,050 |
| 1992/93 | 31,130 | — | 16,500 |
| 1993/94 | 33,650 | — | 17,690 |
| 1994/95 | 31,640 | — | 19,090 |
| 1995/96 | 33,250 | — | 19,330 |
| 1996/97 | 33,240 | 18,000 | 19,720 |
| 1997/98 | 33,300 | 20,430 | 19,480 |
| 1998/99 | 31,640 | 19,020 | 18,790 |
| 1999/2000 | 33,060 | 19,770 | 18,880 |
| 2000/01 | 34,860 | 20,990 | 21,190 |
| *England* | | | |
| 2001/02 | 37,960 | 20,040 | 21,260 |
| 2002/03 | 42,570 | 22,710 | 23,320 |
| 2003/04 | 46,710 | 25,350 | 25,780 |

*Source:*
[1] Graduate Teacher Training Registry
[2] DFE Recruitment Survey 1990/91 to 1993/94; HESES 1994/95; TTA Survey of ITT Providers 1995/96 to 2003/04
*Note:*
Excludes Fast Track—Data for these years not available

The number of candidates who successfully completed PGCE courses in each calendar year from 1990 to 2002, the most recent available, is shown in the following table.

| *Year of completion* | *Completers* |
|---|---|
| *England and Wales*[1] | |
| 1990 | 9,600 |
| 1991 | 10,380 |
| 1992 | 13,460 |
| 1993 | 15,110 |
| 1994 | 16,130 |
| 1995 | 17,330 |
| 1996 | 16,900 |
| 1997 | 17,780 |
| 1998 | 17,150 |
| 1999 | 16,500 |
| 2000 | 16,160 |
| *England*[2] | |
| 2000 | 14,850 |
| 2001 | 16,150 |
| 2002 | 16,940 |

*Source:*
[1] DfES Database of Teacher Records
[2] TTA Performance Profiles

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps his Department is taking to widen participation in postgraduate education. [157495]

**Alan Johnson:** The government are already investing significant sums in widening access to higher education, which will also increase the supply of potential postgraduate students. The additional funding available for science and research (up £1.25 million by 2005/06 compared to 2003/04) will also increase the volume of research and opportunities for postgraduate study. Financial support for postgraduate study is available through the Career Development Loan Scheme which is administered by my Department.

### Pre-School Play Groups

**Mr. Cameron:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many women are employed in the management and operation of pre-school play groups; and if he will make a statement. [156276]

**Margaret Hodge** *[holding answer 26 February 2004]:* According to the latest available data in the 2001 Childcare Workforce Survey, there were 79,800 paid employees in playgroups and preschools. Of these 14,000 were managers, 18,340 supervisors with 47,460 other workers.

99 per cent. of paid employees were female. We do not know the gender split for managers and supervisors.

### Random Drug Testing

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations he has received supporting the drugs testing of school children; and if he will make a statement. [157356]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** The Department has received a number of representations supporting the drug testing of pupils.

"Drugs: Guidance for Schools" highlights drug testing as one of a range of options available to headteachers to tackle drugs. The guidance spells out the issues schools should consider before employing drug testing, including gaining appropriate consent. The guidance will be sent to all schools on 9 March.

### Retention Measures

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures are in place to encourage retention of workers in the *(a)* engineering and *(b)* manufacturing fields. [156981]

**Jacqui Smith:** I have been asked to reply.

The Government's Manufacturing Strategy, which we developed in partnership with industry, trade unions and other stakeholders, aims to create a high value manufacturing sector in the UK with a highly skilled and well paid workforce, moving away from competing on the basis of low skill and low wages. We are continuing to develop a range of initiatives under the Skills Strategy such as employer training pilots, modern apprenticeships, the growing network of Sector Skills Councils and other measures to better deploy and retain skills to improve business performance.

Where there are significant redundancies in the manufacturing sector, the Rapid Response Service works to move people quickly into new jobs, preventing them from becoming detached from the labour market. Although a trend to declining manufacturing employment has been a feature of advanced economies over the last 30 years, new jobs are still being created all the time. Around 250,000 manufacturing vacancies were reported to Jobcentre plus in the last year. Overall the UK labour market is performing well, with total employment rising by nearly 1.7 million since Spring 1997, and unemployment falling in every region in Britain over the past year.

### School Meals

**Mr. Willis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school pupils in England are (i) eligible for and (ii) taking up free school meals, broken down by region. [156068]

**Mr. Miliband** *[holding answer 26 February 2004]:* The data requested have been placed in the House of Commons Library.

### School Sports Facilities

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what submissions have been made by his Department to the Activity Co-ordination Team regarding making school sports facilities accessible to the community during school holidays. [155350]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** The Department for Education and Skills is a full and active member of the Activity Co-ordination Team. The Department is responsible for developing the education strand within the team's action plan. This will seek to maximise the benefits from opening up school sports facilities for community use, including during school holidays. The Activity Co-ordination Team will publish its action plan later this year.

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps his Department is taking to encourage schools to extend access to their sports facilities through the extended schools programme. [155351]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** The Department for Education and Skills published extended schools guidance in October 2002. The guidance covers a range of practical issues, including information and advice on providing community access to sports facilities. A copy has been placed in the House of Commons Library.

The Department has made funding available to support local coordination and management of extended services in schools, and to create up to 240 full service extended schools, with at least one in each LEA area, by 2006. These schools will provide a prescribed core range of extended services and facilities, including sports and arts facilities.

In addition, the national PE, School Sport and Club Links strategy aims to increase the percentage of five to 16-year-olds who spend a minimum of two hours each week on high quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum to 75 per cent. by 2006. The strategy promotes the extended use of school sports facilities, for example the Sport Partnerships programme is delivering increased out of school hours sports opportunities. Schools benefiting from the £686 million investment in the New Opportunities for PE and Sport and the Space for Sport and the Arts capital programmes are required to demonstrate how the new school sports facilities can be shared with other schools and opened up for community use.

**James Purnell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many schools have specialist sports status; and how they are being monitored to ensure they open their sports facilities to the wider community out-of-hours; [157764]

(2) which specialist schools open their sports facilities to the wider community out-of-hours. [157769]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** There are 228 Specialist Sports Colleges across the country. We also have three Sports Academies with another one opening in September. A further 30 Sports Colleges have been approved already for this year, and we are expecting more applications for Sports College status in the March application round.

All Specialist Schools have a community plan which spells out their commitment to their wider communities. Sports Colleges generally include the provision of out-of-hours and weekend coaching and club sports events, and these are monitored through the regular submission of progress reports to this Department. In addition, the Youth

Sport Trust commissions in-depth annual reports on Sports Colleges which survey their community activities as well as their curricular and whole-school performance.

**James Purnell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which universities allow use of their sports facilities by the wider community. [157768]

**Mr. Caborn:** I have been asked to reply.

All universities allow the use of their sports facilities by the wider community, although the degree to which they do so varies enormously. Sport England have commissioned a piece of research into sports provision in higher education institutions which will cover community usage of university sports facilities. The 'Audit of Sports Provision in the Higher Education Sector' will be launched on 23 March 2004.

### Special Educational Needs

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment the Government has made of the cost of education of children with special education needs *(a)* with and *(b)* without statements. [157071]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]:* Figures for the costs of education of children with special education needs (SEN) with and without statements are not collected separately. However, it is possible to provide information about the overall expenditure on the education of children with SEN and to show the split of that expenditure between mainstream and special schools.

The total estimated cost of providing special needs education in 2003–04 is £3,464,836,204. Of this, it is estimated that £1,717,253,601 will be spent on pupils in mainstream schools, in addition to their normal place funding. An estimated £1,511,349,567 will be spent on pupils in special schools. This includes pupils in maintained special schools and fees for pupils in independent and non-maintained special schools. In addition, an estimated £236,233,036 will be spent in this financial year on centrally funded SEN activities. These include the costs of educational psychology services, assessment and statementing, parent partnership services and the provision of information.

### Specialist Schools (Sponsorship)

**Mr. Willis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will estimate the average amount of support that a specialist school receives through corporate and charitable sponsors. [156140]

**Mr. Charles Clarke:** On average a school applying for specialist status will receive £33,500 (67 per cent.) of the required £50,000 sponsorship from corporate and charitable sources (based on figures from the October 2003 application round). This includes an element of corporate and charitable sponsorship raised through the new Partnership Fund, which was introduced in 2002 to support schools in raising sponsorship. Schools raise the rest of the required amount through a combination of fund-raising, charitable donations from parents and other activities.

### Student Finance

**Chris Grayling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate the Student Loan Company has made of the number of graduates who were in receipt of income contingent loans who are currently overseas; and what proportion of these have continued to make loan repayments. [155456]

**Alan Johnson** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]:* Repayments from borrowers who live overseas are made directly to the Student Loans Company (SLC). 4,700 people who should be repaying their income-contingent loan are currently living overseas. 56 per cent. of these have made no repayments because their income is below the repayment threshold of £10,000 per year; 32 per cent. have made repayments. The remainder are people who have not yet provided sufficient evidence in order for the SLC to assess their liability to repay their income-contingent loan.

### Sure Start

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people have been affected by the new rules requiring accreditation by Sure Start because their childminder looks after children in the children's home. [156392]

**Margaret Hodge:** I should clarify the situation regarding the Home Childcarers Scheme to which this question refers. The scheme was launched in April 2003 to extend eligibility to tax credits to families using childcare in their own homes. It does not impose a new accreditation requirement on home based carers—seeking approval is entirely voluntary. Prior to the introduction of this scheme if a family needed to use childcare in their own home it was not possible to have this approved, or to access the childcare element of the Working Families Tax Credit.

Currently there are 124 Home Childcarers who have been approved, by Ofsted, to care for children in the children's home. Home Childcarers can be employed by more than one family so the number of families using a Home Childcarer is unknown.

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many parents have lost their entitlement to the childcare element of Child Tax Credit or Working Tax Credit because they did not possess accreditation by Sure Start of the childminder operating in the parents' home. [156393]

**Margaret Hodge:** No parents have lost their entitlement to tax credits under this scheme. The purpose of the Home Childcarer Scheme is to extend the availability of tax credits rather than to restrict it.

Prior to the Home Childcarers Scheme parents using childcare in the child's home were not eligible to claim the childcare element of the Working Families Tax Credit (now replaced by the Working Tax Credit). The introduction of this scheme has enabled some parents to claim tax credits when before they were unable to do so.

This Government are committed to extending the Home Childcarers Scheme to carers other than registered childminders and to enable more parents to benefit from the help available through tax credits. We are committed to holding a consultation on the options for an extension in spring 2004.

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions he has held with Her Majesty's Treasury on debt problems faced by parents who have lost Child Tax Credit or Working Tax Credit because of the new Sure Start accreditation arrangements; and if he will make a statement. [156394]

**Margaret Hodge:** As the purpose of the Home Childcarer Scheme is to extend the availability of tax credits rather than to restrict it no parents have faced debt problems as a result of its introduction.

### Taiwanese Students

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many Taiwanese nationals study at universities in the UK; [151274]

(2) what he estimates the total amount in fees paid by Taiwanese nationals at UK universities was in the last academic year for which figures are available. [153124]

**Alan Johnson:** In 2002/03 there were 4,248 Taiwanese nationals enrolled on higher education courses at UK higher education institutions.

Estimates of the total amount of fees paid by overseas nationals are not held centrally.

### University Attendance

**Mr. Hepburn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people attended university from *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside local education authority and *(c)* the United Kingdom in each year since 1996. [148448]

**Alan Johnson:** Figures at constituency level are not held centrally. The available information at local education authority level covers accepted applicants to full time first degree and HND courses through the Universities and College Admissions Service (UCAS).

*Accepted applicants of all ages to full-time undergraduate courses via the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) from South Tyneside LEA and England*

| *Year of entry* | *South Tyneside LEA domiciles* | *English domiciles*[1] |
|---|---|---|
| 1996–97 | 497 | 220,891 |
| 1997–98 | 644 | 251,904 |
| 1998–99 | 618 | 245,914 |
| 1999–2000 | 596 | 249,883 |
| 2000–01 | 623 | 254,472 |
| 2001–02 | 655 | 269,447 |
| 2002–03 | 665 | 274,345 |

[1] Accepted applicants with unknown English domicile are excluded from the figures.

*Source:*
Universities and College Admissions Service (UCAS)

**Mr. Hepburn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many school leavers attended university from *(a)* Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside local education authority and *(c)* the United Kingdom in each year since 1996; and what percentage these were of the total number of school leavers in each of these years. [148449]

**Alan Johnson:** Figures at constituency level are not held centrally. The available information at local education authority level covers accepted applicants to full time first degree and HMD courses through the Universities and College Admissions Service (UCAS).

*Number of 18 year olds accepted for entry to full-time undergraduate courses via the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) from South Tyneside LEA and England*

| *Year of entry* | *South Tyneside LEA domiciles* | | *English domiciles*[1] | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Number of 18 year olds accepted to HE courses* | *Percentage of 18 year olds in LEA* | *Number of 18 year olds accepted to HE courses* | *Percentage of 18 year olds in England* |
| 1996 | 239 | 13.7 | 109,646 | 19.9 |
| 1997 | 318 | 15.7 | 123,065 | 20.5 |
| 1998 | 299 | 14.8 | 124,077 | 20.0 |
| 1999 | 307 | 15.2 | 122,607 | 20.0 |
| 2000 | 330 | 16.7 | 123,596 | 20.6 |
| 2001 | 336 | 17.2 | 131,200 | 21.5 |
| 2002 | 353 | 17.4 | 134,727 | 22.0 |

[1] Accepted applicants with unknown English domicile are excluded from the figures.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Asylum Seekers

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seeking households containing children or pregnant women were placed in bed and breakfast accommodation by the National Asylum Support Service under legislation other than the Housing Act 1996 and are as a consequence not included in the provisions of the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2003 in each of the last five years. [152333]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer 2 February 2004]:* The general practice of the National Asylum Support Service is that households containing children or pregnant women are not placed in bed and breakfast accommodation in dispersal areas.

However, NASS grant funds six voluntary sector agencies to provide emergency accommodation, which is temporary accommodation provided pending dispersal, who provide a mixture of accommodation which may include bed and breakfast accommodation.

I am unable to provide the requested information and could only do so at disproportionate cost.

**Glenda Jackson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answers of 25 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 277, to the hon. Member for Ross, Skye and Inverness West, (1) with which countries the Government is in negotiations, other than Tanzania, on how to process claims for asylum nearer to the country of origin; [158114]

(2) whether such claims would be for recognition of refugee status in *(a)* Tanzania and *(b)* the UK; [158115]

(3) whether the processing of such claims for non-Tanzanian nationals would be carried out in Tanzania. [158286]

**Beverley Hughes:** Apart from Tanzania, we have not yet started any negotiations with other countries. These partnerships are not about processing asylum claims nearer to the country of origin. Rather the Tanzanians are helping us to establish whether certain failed asylum seekers in the United Kingdom who claimed as Somali are in fact Tanzanian. We are also seeking to help them better manage their own refugee caseload.

### Animal Welfare

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his Answer of 20 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1205W, on animal welfare, ref 147328, with reference to recommendation 14, when the Inspectorate will be reviewed; and by whom. [155934]

**Caroline Flint:** In its report, published in July 2002, the House of Lords Select Committee on Animals in Scientific Procedures recommended that the Home Office Animals (Scientific Procedures) Inspectorate should be subject to periodic review, by a body other than the Inspectorate itself. The Committee went on to describe the Inspectorate as a "trustworthy, professional body" and also acknowledged the valuable role that it has played in creating a culture of care in establishments licensed under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.

In the Government's response, published in January 2003, we welcomed the Select Committee's endorsement of the integrity of the Inspectorate and of the important contribution that it has made to the welfare of animals in designated establishments. However, we recognise that public awareness of the valuable job done by the Inspectorate is poor and agree that this needs to be remedied. We have, therefore, concluded that there would be value in the Inspectorate publishing an annual report on its work. The Inspectorate's first annual report will be published in the autumn of 2004.

As to the periodic review of the Inspectorate, under Section 18 of the 1986 Act, Inspectors are responsible directly to the Secretary of State who is, in turn accountable to Parliament for their work. Inspectors are all medical or veterinary practitioners, as well as being civil servants, and are bound by medical or veterinary codes of professional conduct. In addition, in common with other Home Office staff, the Chief Inspector and members of the Inspectorate are subject to the civil service code and annual performance reviews as part of routine personnel management arrangements. In the light of these comprehensive arrangements, we do not believe that any further form of performance review is necessary. Members of the Inspectorate are highly professional and dedicated and have the complete confidence of Government Ministers.

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his Answer of 20 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1205W, on animal welfare, ref 147328, with reference to recommendation 11, which Government department is taking the lead on the systematic and visible search for 3Rs methods in toxicology; where that Department's progress can be viewed; and if he will make a statement. [155971]

**Caroline Flint:** In its report, published in July 2002, the House of Lords Select Committee on Animals in Scientific Procedures recommended that the Government and the scientific community should engage in a systematic and visible search for methods involving the 3Rs—the replacement of animal use, reduction of the number of animals used and the refinement of the procedures involved to minimise suffering—in toxicology and that the Government should nominate one department to take the lead on this.

In the Government's response to the Select committee's report, published in January 2003, we agreed that a systematic and visible effort is required. As a first step, the Home Office is currently leading a review of the scope for improving the application of the 3Rs and promoting research into alternatives through the Inter-Departmental Group on the 3Rs. Membership of the Inter-Departmental Group is drawn from the Home Office, the Department of Health, the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Department of Trade and Industry, the Office of Science and Technology, the Health and Safety Executive and other agencies.

The work of the group includes exploration of the case for a United Kingdom centre for research into the 3Rs, which was also recommended by the House of Lords Select Committee, a review of the implementation of the Inter-Departmental Data-Sharing Concordat, announced in August 2000, and the review and revision of the Guidelines on Regulatory Toxicology and Safety Evaluation Studies, published in February 2001, and the statement of principles concerning animal welfare endorsed by the Home Office and other regulatory authorities in 1999—Annex 1 to the Regulatory Toxicology Guidelines.

I am currently considering the Inter-Departmental Group's further advice on the proposed United Kingdom centre for research into the 3Rs. I expect to receive the findings of the Inter-Departmental Group on the other two issues shortly and will then consider what further steps are required.

Minutes of the meetings of the Inter-Departmental Group are published on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs2/interdept3rs.html.

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 20 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1205W, on animal welfare, with reference to recommendation 12, what steps the Government have taken to urge EU member states to make replacements a priority. [155972]

**Caroline Flint:** In its report, published in July 2002, the House of Lords Select Committee on Animals in Scientific Procedures recommended that the United Kingdom Government should use their influence to urge the European Union to make the development and validation of replacements for animal experiments a priority, particularly in toxicology.

In our response, published in January 2003, the Government noted the Select Committee's view and agreed that replacement should be the ultimate goal. We also explained that we do not believe that it should be made a priority at the expense of reduction or refinement, as these are where progress can be made more quickly. We are instead fully committed to the furtherance of all of the

3Rs—the replacement of animal use, reduction of the number of animals used and the refinement of the procedures involved to minimise suffering.

United Kingdom Government Departments and agencies are involved in a number of specific initiatives in the European Union to develop, validate and incorporate more advanced test methods into regulatory practice. The Government also continue to support the work of the European Centre for the Validation of Alternative Methods (ECVAM) and the head of the Home Office Animals Scientific Procedures Division is now the United Kingdom representative on the ECVAM Scientific Advisory Committee and is contributing to discussions about the future direction of ECVAM's work. The Government also warmly welcome the liaison between ECVAM and its United States counterpart, the Interagency Co-ordinating Committee for the Validation of Alternative Methods (ICCVAM), as a means of achieving greater progress, more quickly and ensuring commitment from more than one economic region. Quick gains cannot necessarily be expected, but we shall continue our efforts to persuade other member states of the importance of progress on the 3Rs.

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 20 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1205W, on animal welfare, what factors underlay the decision not to invite expert scientific opinion opposed to primate experimentation to take part in the forum, with particular reference to *(a)* Animal Aid and *(b)* Europeans For Medical Advancement. [156017]

**Caroline Flint:** The aim of the stakeholder forum, which was held on 9 January 2004, was to hold informed debate on the recommendations contained in the Animal Procedures Committee's (APC) report entitled "The use of primates under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986—analysis of current trends with particular reference to regulatory toxicology". This in turn was to assist preparation of a ministerial response to the issues which the APC has raised.

The Home Office and the APC agreed that, in order to hold a focused debate, attendance at the forum should be limited to organisations with practical experience in the use of primates in scientific procedures, or with other particular expertise relevant to the report's recommendations.

Consequently, invitees included holders of related project licences issued under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, from both the commercial and academic sectors, as well as individuals from funding and regulatory organisations and other Government Departments. Groups with expertise in alternatives to animal experiments were also invited to send representatives.

It was decided that representatives from animal protection organisations such as Animal Aid and Europeans For Medical Advancement should not be invited to comment through this forum. Places at the forum were limited and the Home Office and the APC primarily wanted to test the technical basis and the practicalities of the recommendations with those experts in the use of primates best placed to contribute to such an exercise.

A report on the forum will be placed on the Home Office and APC websites in the near future, and I would be pleased to receive informed comments from any other source before I further consider all the issues raised.

### Asylum and Immigration

**Mr. Pope:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers there are in *(a)* the constituency of Hyndburn and *(b)* the County of Lancashire. [156725]

**Beverley Hughes:** The information is not available in the form requested.

Statistics on the location of asylum seekers in the United Kingdom are linked to the available information on the support that the asylum seeker receives. Asylum seekers currently in the United Kingdom are either in receipt of support from the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) or from local authorities, or are supporting themselves. Statistics regarding the location of asylum seekers not in receipt of NASS support are unavailable.

The table gives data on the number of asylum seekers supported by NASS in the constituency of Hyndburn, as at the end of December 2003 (including dependants):

| | *December 2003* |
|---|---|
| In NASS accommodation | 5 |
| In receipt of subsistence only support from NASS | 5 |

*Note:*
Figures are rounded to the nearest five.

The table gives data on the number of asylum seekers supported by NASS in the County of Lancashire, as at the end of December 2003 (including dependants):

| | *December 2003* |
|---|---|
| In NASS accommodation | 6,345 |
| In receipt of subsistence only support from NASS | 745 |

*Note:*
Figures are rounded to the nearest five.

**Mr. Malins:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department with which countries from which more than 1,000 asylum seekers have come to the UK within the last five years the UK *(a)* has and *(b)* does not have a readmission agreement; how many nationals from each of those countries remain in the UK; what their status is; and whether readmission agreements allow for the return of undocumented asylum seekers. [156768]

**Beverley Hughes:** There are 47 countries from which more than 1,000 applications have been made in the United Kingdom between 1999 and 2003. The countries and their numbers are contained in the list below. Of these countries, the United Kingdom has negotiated formal bilateral readmission agreements with Albania and Romania, which are currently being ratified. In addition, negotiations have commenced with Poland and will start shortly with Serbia and Montenegro. The European Commission has been mandated to negotiate Community readmission agreements on behalf of member states with Sri Lanka (negotiations have

been concluded and the agreement is being ratified), China, Turkey, Pakistan, Algeria, Albania, Russia and Ukraine. Bilateral and Community readmission agreements set out the process and evidence required for the re-documentation of returning nationals.

In addition, where it is our experience that a lack of documentation presents a barrier to removal to particular countries, the United Kingdom is working with the authorities of those countries to facilitate the process of identification and re-documentation of persons. These countries include Sri Lanka, India, Turkey, Somaliland, the Democratic Republic of Congo and China. Since October 2003 the United Kingdom has had a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding in operation governing returns to Afghanistan and very recently agreed with the Coalition Provisional Authority to effect returns to Iraq.

*Applications[1,2] received for asylum in the United Kingdom, excluding dependants, for nationalities from which the UK has received more than 1,000 asylum applications within the last five years*

| *Nationality* | *1999–2003* |
|---|---|
| Iraq | 34,575 |
| Somalia | 30,575 |
| Afghanistan | 27,945 |
| SAM[3] | 23,835 |
| Sri Lanka | 20,870 |
| China | 16,135 |
| Iran | 15,850 |
| Turkey | 15,760 |
| Zimbabwe | 14,315 |
| Pakistan | 12,950 |
| India | 9,480 |
| Democratic Republic of Congo | 7,375 |
| Romania | 7,300 |
| Sierra Leone | 5,935 |
| Algeria | 5,755 |
| Albania | 5,605 |
| Czech Republic | 5,260 |
| Nigeria | 4,710 |
| Angola | 4,640 |
| Poland | 4,570 |
| Eritrea | 3,830 |
| Burundi | 3,360 |
| Bangladesh | 3,280 |
| Jamaica | 3,250 |
| Uganda | 3,065 |
| Rwanda | 3,030 |
| Ethiopia | 2,820 |
| Russia | 2,715 |
| Sudan | 2,670 |
| Vietnam | 2,655 |
| Ukraine | 2,650 |
| Other Yugoslavia | 2,630 |
| Colombia | 2,515 |
| Congo | 2,430 |
| Nepal | 2,235 |
| Cameroon | 2,090 |
| Moldova | 2,035 |
| Croatia | 1,970 |
| Lithuania | 1,870 |
| Kenya | 1,820 |
| Ecuador | 1,770 |
| Nationality not known | 1,620 |
| Ivory Coast | 1,620 |
| Belarussia | 1,500 |
| Liberia | 1,425 |
| Macedonia | 1,280 |
| Ghana | 1,270 |
| Latvia | 1,205 |

[1] Figures are provisional and rounded to the nearest 5.
[2] May exclude some cases lodged at Local Enforcement Offices between January 1999 and March 2000.
[3] Serbia and Montenegro (SAM) replaced Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) from 5 February 2003, SAM comprises the Republic of Serbia, the Republic of Montenegro, and the Province of Kosovo (administered by the UN on an interim basis since 1999).

Information on how many nationals from each of these countries are currently in the United Kingdom is not available. This could be obtained only at disproportionate cost by examination of individual case records. In addition some applicants may leave the United Kingdom without informing the Immigration Service.

**Mr. Coleman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers were refused support under section 55 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 in 2003; and how many who were refused support appealed in the High Court. [156805]

**Beverley Hughes:** The information is not available in the form requested.

Data on numbers of asylum seekers refused under Section 55 are as follows. Data is not available on the number of asylum seekers who were refused support under Section 55 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 that subsequently appealed in the High Court.

Section 55 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 came into force on 8 January 2003, restricting the availability of National Asylum Support Service support to those asylum seekers who make an asylum application as soon as reasonably practicable.

Figures in respect of asylum seekers refused under Section 55 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 in 2003 are.

| *2003* | *Number of cases refused under Section 55 of the NIA Act 2002* |
|---|---|
| Quarter 1 | 2,850 |
| Quarter 2 | 1,830 |
| Quarter 3 | 2,810 |
| Quarter 4 | 1,925 |
| Total | 9,415 |

**Mr. Coleman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of asylum applications were made in-country in each of the last three years. [156806]

**Beverley Hughes:** The table shows the proportion of asylum applications made in country for each of the last three years.

*Asylum applications[1] received in the United Kingdom, excluding dependants, 2001–03*

| | *2001* | *2002[2]* | *2003[3]* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 71,025 | 84,130 | 49,370 |
| Port | 24,865 | 26,560 | 13,810 |
| Port percentage | 35 | 32 | 28 |
| In country | 46,160 | 57,570 | 35,560 |
| In country percentage | 65 | 68 | 72 |

[1] Figures (other than percentages) are rounded to the nearest five
[2] Revised data
[3] Provisional data

Information on the number of asylum applications is published in quarterly web pages and in the annual statistical bulletin Asylum Statistics United Kingdom. Copies of these publications and others relating to general immigration to the United Kingdom are available from the Library and from the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate web site at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost of accommodation contracted for by the National Asylum Support Service was in each year of the dispersal scheme; and if he will estimate the cost in the current year. [157046]

**Beverley Hughes:** The information requested is as follows:

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 2000–01 | 115 |
| 2001–02 | 247 |
| 2002–03 | 319 |
| 2003–04[1] | Not available |

[1] Payments for 2003–04 are expected to be broadly in line with 2002–03 but are expected to fall thereafter, as the recent fall in new applications for NASS support feeds through.

### Criminal Assets

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the cash seizures that have been effected by the Assets Recovery Agency since its inception; what the value seized in each case was; and whether the order was enforced. [155962]

**Caroline Flint:** The Assets Recovery Agency has no power to seize and forfeit cash under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002. This power is reserved to the police and Her Majesty's Customs and Excise. As at the end of January 2004 a total of 1,219 cash seizures with a total value of £55.68 million had been made in England and Wales since the powers came into force in December 2002. Cash seized can only be forfeited when a forfeiture order has been made by a magistrates' court. A total of 64 cash forfeitures have been made under the Act with a total value of £2.98 million. Details of individual cash seizures and forfeitures are not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

At present the minimum amount of cash which can be seized is £10,000. The threshold is to be reduced to £5,000 under The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (Recovery of Cash in Summary Proceedings: Minimum Amount) Order 2004 which was laid before Parliament on 24 February.

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* confiscation and *(b)* restraint orders have been made under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002; and what the recoverable amount was in each case. [155963]

**Caroline Flint:** The confiscation and restraint powers in the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 are triggered by offences committed after the provisions were brought into force on 24 March 2003. It will therefore be some time before confiscation cases are dealt with by the Crown Court in numbers.

As at the end of January 2004 the information available is as follows:

(a) 58 confiscation orders had been made under the Act with a total value of £1,089,849.

(b) 59 restraint orders had been made of which 40 orders have a total value of £6,276,737. Information on the value of the other 19 orders is not currently available.

In addition, the Assets Recovery Agency has 20 civil recovery cases subject to freezing orders with a total value of £12.7 million.

### Criminal Injuries Compensation

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of those who apply for compensation from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority was refused on the grounds that they have a criminal conviction, in the last year for which figures are available. [155959]

**Paul Goggins:** The Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority advise that in the 2002–03 financial year 79,248 applications were resolved. Of these 42,283 resulted in a monetary award, and 36,965 cases were rejected, of which 2,946 were rejected because of the applicant's criminal convictions. As a proportion, that is 3.7 per cent. of the resolved applications.

### Democratic Republic of the Congo

**Mr. Chaytor:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum applications there were from the Democratic Republic of the Congo in each of the last six years; and what number and percentage of applications were accepted. [144741]

**Beverley Hughes:** The table, which has been placed in the Library, gives asylum applications and initial decisions from 1997 to September 2003 for nationals of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Decisions do not necessarily relate to applications made in the same period.

Information on the number of asylum applications and initial decisions is published quarterly on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html The next quarterly publication, covering the fourth quarter of 2003 and provisional full year data, will be published on 24 February 2004.

### Departmental Security

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the staff complement of the Security Services is; what the range of payment for serving security officers is; and what proportion of security officers speak Arabic. [156638]

**Mr. Blunkett:** There are currently over 2,000 staff in the Security Service. Starting salaries range from £14,500 for administrative staff to a maximum of £26,000 for some technical specialists. The top salary is of course that of the Director General (Permanent Secretary pay range £120,000-£124,999 at 31 January 2003). For operational reasons it would be inappropriate for me to comment on the number of Arab speakers available to the service.

### Detention and Removal Centres

**Mr. Gerrard:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what access people detained in detention and removal centres have to independent monitoring boards. [157445]

**Beverley Hughes:** People detained at immigration removal centres are able to submit a request or complaint to the Independent Monitoring Board at any time and members of the board should make themselves available to detainees whenever they are carrying out one of their regular visits. In addition, a member of the Independent Monitoring Board is obliged to visit any detainee who is subject to removal from association (Rule 40), temporary confinement (Rule 42) or special control or restraint (Rule 43) within 24 hours of the person being subjected to these rules.

### Drugs Testing and Treatment

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many drugs testing and treatment orders have been issued in *(a)* North Yorkshire and *(b)* the Vale of York. [156870]

**Caroline Flint:** The information requested, for the years 2000 to 2002, is contained in the table.

*Persons sentenced to drug treatment and testing orders in North Yorkshire and the Petty Sessional Area of York, 2000–02*

| | *In North Yorkshire* | *of which, in York PSA* |
|---|---|---|
| 2000[1] | — | — |
| 2001 | 61 | 33 |
| 2002 | 73 | 27 |

[1] From October.

Statistics for 2003 will be published in the autumn of this year.

### EU Accession States

**Annabelle Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to remove from the UK citizens of EU accession states working within the UK when they cease employment, from 1 May onwards. [156790]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]*: An accession state national that ceases employment in the United Kingdom will continue to have a right of residence in the United Kingdom provided that they are self-sufficient. If they are unable to support themselves and are an unreasonable burden on the state they will be liable for removal.

**David Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what evidence his Department has collated on the number of nationals from *(a)* Poland and *(b)* other EU accession states who have already arranged transportation to the UK following 1 May; and if he will make a statement. [157075]

**Beverley Hughes:** No reliable information on the numbers of nationals from Poland or other EU accession states booking transport to travel to the United Kingdom for a visit or any other purpose after 1 May is available.

### Firearms Certificates

**Mr. Todd:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are being taken to publicise *(a)* the need, under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 for existing owners of air weapons and imitation firearms to apply for a firearm certificate before 30 April and *(b)* the implications of not doing so. [157996]

**Caroline Flint:** Section 37 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 gives the police the power to arrest someone carrying an air weapon (whether loaded or not) or an imitation firearm in a public place without lawful authority or reasonable excuse. There is no requirement for them to obtain a firearms certificate.

Section 39 brings into force a specific ban on the sale, purchase, transfer, acquisition and manufacture of air guns using a self-contained gas-cartridge system. Existing owners will be able to retain possession provided they obtain a firearms certificate for the gun, and have until 30 April 2004 to do so.

We have publicised these measures through "A Guide to the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003", which was included in the "TOGETHER Campaign Pack" issued on 20 February 2004. Guidance to the police was also issued in Home Office Circular 01/2004, which was sent out on 14 January 2004. Both of these documents and other relevant information are available on the Home Office website at www.homeoffice.gov.uk.

In addition, the Home Office has produced a number of posters and leaflets which explain what people must do if they want to keep any guns they already have which use the self-contained gas cartridge system. These have been sent to all police forces for display and further distribution as they see fit. After discussion with the relevant trade organisations they have also been sent to dealers together with a special sticker to put on tins of air gun pellets as a reminder to their customers.

We are continuing to work with the police and other interested parties with a view to securing further local publicity.

### Gun Crime

**Ms Abbott:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much Government funding, broken down by local authority area, is given to community groups working to combat gun crime. [149787]

**Caroline Flint:** In the current financial year, the Government are providing £1.5 million from recovered criminal assets specifically to support community action to help tackle gun crime and gun culture. £300,000 of this has been allocated to Disarm Trust, an independent organisation that raises money and provides support for community groups working to reduce gun crime, supports victims of gun crime and provides help for witnesses. The remainder is being distributed by eight of the Government Offices for the Regions to support community action. The funding is not broken down by local authority areas. The allocations to the eight Government Offices are set out as follows.

| Government Office | £ |
|---|---|
| London | 400,000 |
| West Midlands | 200,000 |
| South West | 75,000 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 75,000 |
| South East | 100,000 |
| North West | 200,000 |
| East Midlands | 75,000 |
| East of England | 75,000 |

In addition, we are providing funding for community-based programmes to tackle gun crime through the Street Crime Initiative in a number of areas. This money is in addition to other funding provided through the Government Offices, for example, to support regeneration and to tackle deprivation and social exclusion, which help to address the factors that can give rise to criminality, including gun crime.

### Health Tourism

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what measures are *(a)* in place and *(b)* being researched or considered by his Department to combat health tourism. [156091]

**Beverley Hughes:** Immigration Rules (HC 395 as amended) provide for anyone to be refused entry clearance or leave to enter to the United Kingdom who seeks entry for a purpose not covered by the Rules. The Rules provide for entry for the purpose of private medical treatment but not for NHS treatment. They further provide for an Immigration Office to take account of a Medical Inspector's assessment of the likely course of treatment in deciding whether a person seeking entry for private medical treatment has sufficient means at his disposal.

Immigrants who seek NHS treatment after entry to the United Kingdom may be liable to charges for such treatment in accordance with the National Health Service (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 1989 (S.I. 1989 No.306) as amended. My right hon. Friend the Minister of State for Health has recently announced proposals to amend these Regulations to remove certain loopholes that have been exploited by health tourists. In particular anyone who has no legal basis to remain in the United Kingdom will be liable to be charged for NHS treatment, except for emergencies or conditions for which they were already receiving treatment before the final determination of their status.

The Government have been undertaking a comprehensive interdepartmental review of the issues surrounding immigration and healthcare. The review is ongoing and final decisions remain to be taken.

As announced by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, *Official Report*, 23 February 2004, columns 23–25), from 1 May the Government will be requiring workers from the European Union (EU) accession countries (except Malta and Cyprus) to register with the Home Office. In accordance with EU Regulations, any resident of an EU member state will be entitled to receive free of charge treatment for which the need arises during a visit to the United Kingdom—the cost is met by their home country. But to be fully exempt from charges for routine hospital treatment for a pre-existing condition, patients from elsewhere in the EU will need to prove—just as for any other overseas visitor—that they meet one of the exemption criteria in the National Health Service (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations, for example the exemption for those employed in the United Kingdom. This will apply to registered workers from the accession states. The Government will continue to take every step to ensure that our benefit and healthcare system is not open to abuse.

### Local Authority Asylum Costs

**Mr. Gale:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) when the audit of Kent county council's claim relating to asylum seeker costs will be completed; and if he will make a statement on its delay; [155027]

(2) when his Department will publish the grant rules for asylum costs for the current year; [155028]

(3) what asylum costs were paid by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* Kent county council; and if he will make a statement. [155029]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* The audit of Kent county council's claims relating to asylum support costs is the responsibility of the District Auditor. Audit work on the claim for 2002–03 was delayed initially by work required to finalise the lists of asylum seekers eligible for support during the year. The due date for the completion of the 2002–03 audit has been set at 31 March 2004. At present the council are also investigating the exact amount of the outstanding balance for 2002–03 and this may also delay the completion of the audit.

The instructions for 2003–04 relating to Adults and Families were published in June 2003. The instructions for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children (UASC) were published in January 2004.

The Home Office reimburses local councils for asylum support costs via a series of interim payments during the year. Kent county council submitted four interim claims in 2002–03 and three for the year to date in 2003–04. These have all been paid. The outstanding balance for 2002–03 is subject to investigation as mentioned above. If it is agreed that a significant amount has not been covered by the interim claims in 2002–03 then the Home Office is prepared to make a further payment against the final audited claim.

### Malawi (Work Permits)

**Tom Brake:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many work permits have been issued to health workers from Malawi since January 2003. [156186]

**Beverley Hughes:** The number of work permits issued to Malawi health workers in the calendar year 2003 was 142.

### Mr. T. Umbalan

**Chris Grayling:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what grounds he is considering a further application from Mr.T Umabalan of Epsom, Surrey, to remain in the UK; and if he will make a

further statement on the contents of his letter to the hon. Member for Epsom and Ewell on 10 June 2002 in relation to this case. [156181]

**Beverley Hughes:** Mr Umabalan has applied for settlement based on his long residence in the United Kingdom and for leave to remain on Human Rights grounds.

### Removals

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons were removed from the UK in each year since 1997. [156095]

**Beverley Hughes:** The number of people removed from the United Kingdom in each year from 1997 to 2002 (the latest available year) is shown in the table.

*Persons removed from the United Kingdom 1997 to 2002*[1]

| | *Total persons removed*[2] |
|---|---|
| 1997 | 31,145 |
| 1998 | 34,920 |
| 1999 | 37,780 |
| 2000 | 46,645 |
| 2001 | 49,135 |
| 2002[3] | 65,460 |

[1] Under sections 3(5), 3(6) of the Immigration Act 1971, or under section 10 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

[2] Including persons departing "voluntarily" after enforcement action had been initiated against them.

[3] Provisonal figures.

Information on the total number of people removed each year from the United Kingdom is published annually in the Home Office Statistical Bulletin "Control of Immigration: Statistics United Kingdom" and in the Command Publication of the same name. These are available from the Home Office website: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html and from the Library. Information on the total number of people removed from the United Kingdom in 2003 is due to be published in the aforementioned statistical bulletin on the Home Office website towards the end of August 2004.

### Speed Cameras

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much money was raised in fines from speed cameras in each year since their inception in the Lancashire police force area. [156498]

**Caroline Flint:** Information on the revenue raised from speed offences detected by camera is not available.

Available information on the number of fixed penalties and court fines ordered to be paid for offence of 'speeding detected by camera' in the calendar years 1997 to 2001 is shown in the table for the Lancashire police force area.

Information for 2002 will be available in the spring.

Not all fines and fixed penalties will have been paid.

*Fixed penalty and court proceedings data for speeding offences detected by cameras*[1,2] *in the Lancashire police force area, 1997–2001*

| | *Fixed penalties* | | *Court Proceedings*[3] | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Offence and year* | *Number of tickets* | *Estimated revenue (£)* | *Number of fines* | *Total amount of fine (£)* | *Average fine*[4] |
| 1997 | 5,600 | 224,800 | 480 | 37,100 | 78 |
| 1998 | 14,700 | 588,900 | 880 | 96,000 | 109 |
| 1999 | 22,300 | 892,600 | 1,200 | 120,200 | 101 |
| 2000 | 18,400 | 796,100 | 930 | 79,800 | 86 |
| 2001 | 21,400 | 1,283,500 | 1,400 | 90,800 | 65 |

[1] Automatic cameras until 1998, all camera types from 1999.

[2] Offences under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and The Motor Vehicles (Speed Limits on Motorways) Regulations 1973.

[3] Includes cases where fixed penalty notices were originally issued but not paid and subsequently referred to court.

[4] Estimate based on £40 fixed penalty charge to October 2000. From November 2000 the penalty was raised to 60.

*Note:*

Reliable data only available from 1997 onwards for speeding offences detected by camera.

### Yarl's Wood

**Alistair Burt:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will publish in full the two reports of the Prisons Ombudsman, concerning the Yarl's Wood Detention Centre in North East Bedfordshire when he receives them; and if he will make a statement; [157105]

(2) when he expects to receive the reports from the Prisons Ombudsman, on *(a)* the circumstances surrounding the fire at Yarl's Wood on 14 February 2002 and *(b)* the allegations of racism among security staff at Yarl's Wood. [157106]

**Beverley Hughes:** I can confirm that both reports will be published in full, once I have the opportunity to consider carefully their contents.

With regard to Stephen Shaw's inquiry into the events at Yarl's Wood on 14/15 February 2002 there is an expectation that it will be submitted to me this summer.

I can confirm that a draft of Stephen Shaw's separate report into allegations of racism at Yarl's Wood has now been received. Stephen Shaw has yet to finalise the report in a form suitable for publication. When he has done so and I have considered its contents, I will make arrangements for its publication as soon as possible.

# Written Answers to Questions

*Wednesday 3 March 2004*

## LEADER OF THE HOUSE

### Parliamentary Questions

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Leader of the House how many Parliamentary Questions have been tabled to him since 1 January 2003, broken down by *(a)* Ordinary Written and *(b)* Named Day; what percentage in respect of *(a)* were answered within 10 working days; and what percentage in respect of *(b)* were answered by the specified date. [157743]

**Mr. Hain:** Ministers have an obligation to Parliament to ensure that Members receive a substantive response to their Named Day question on the named day and to endeavour to answer an Ordinary Written question within a working week of it being tabled. Ministers and their Departments should make every effort to ensure that the live load of questions still awaiting a substantive reply should be kept to a minimum at all times.

From 1 January 2003 to Friday 27 February 2004:

102 Ordinary Written Questions were tabled, of which 100 per cent. were answered within 10 working days.

49 Named Day Questions were tabled, of which 96 per cent. were answered by the specified date.

## TREASURY

### Child Benefit

**Mr. Goodman:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost to his Department of administering Child Benefit was *(a)* in total and *(b)* per claimant in the last year for which figures are available. [158077]

**Dawn Primarolo:** Child Benefit is administered by the Child Benefit Office which only became a part of the Inland Revenue on 1 April 2003 so figures for a full year are not available.

### Contraband/Counterfeit Goods (Northern Ireland)

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the *(a)* quantity and *(b)* monetary value of (i) illegal fuel, (ii) cigarettes and (iii) counterfeit goods seized over the last year in Northern Ireland. [157390]

**John Healey:** The latest published seizure figures for illegal fuel in Northern Ireland are contained in HM Customs and Excise Annual Report 2002–03 (HC 52) and for other commodities in the Northern Ireland Organised Crime Task Force, Strategic Response 2002–03, which is available from their website at www.octf.gov.uk.

### National Statistics

**Mr. Meacher:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the level of real personal disposable income was in each year since 1980; and what the percentage change was in each year compared with the previous year. [157407]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Meacher, dated 3 March 2004:*

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question on the level of real personal disposable income. I am replying in his absence. (157407)

The information available is shown in the table. The data are presented as annual values for 1980 to 2002. Annual data for 2003 are not published until 26 March 2004.

The households' series used for these data are for the combined household and non-profit institutions serving households (NPISH) sectors. The accounts for the household and NPISH sectors are currently combined: separate estimates are not available.

*UK real households' disposable income[1]: 1980–2002*

| | *Real households' disposable income (£ billion)* [1] | *Percentage change, year-on-year* |
|---|---|---|
| 1980 | 372 | 1.7 |
| 1981 | 371 | -0.5 |
| 1982 | 369 | -0.3 |
| 1983 | 377 | 2.0 |
| 1984 | 391 | 3.7 |
| 1985 | 404 | 3.4 |
| 1986 | 421 | 4.1 |
| 1987 | 436 | 3.7 |
| 1988 | 460 | 5.5 |
| 1989 | 482 | 4.7 |
| 1990 | 499 | 3.5 |
| 1991 | 509 | 2.0 |
| 1992 | 523 | 2.8 |
| 1993 | 537 | 2.8 |
| 1994 | 545 | 1.5 |
| 1995 | 558 | 2.3 |
| 1996 | 571 | 2.4 |
| 1997 | 595 | 4.1 |
| 1998 | 597 | 0.3 |
| 1999 | 616 | 3.3 |
| 2000 | 655 | 6.2 |
| 2001 | 685 | 4.7 |
| 2002 | 696 | 1.6 |

[1] Chained volume measures, with reference year 2000.

*Source:*

UK National Accounts (ONS).

### Independent Brewers

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent meetings he has had with representatives of independent brewers. [157688]

**John Healey:** Treasury Ministers and officials hold meetings on a regular basis with a wide range of representative bodies. I met the Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA) on 6 February 2004 and discussions have been held with SIBA on the Customs and Excise document "Small Breweries' Relief: A Call for Evidence" published on 29 July 2003.

### Occupational Physiotherapy

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he is taking to address the different tax treatment of in-house occupational physiotherapy and a contracted service. [157853]

**Ruth Kelly:** The Government keeps all taxes under review and any changes will be considered as part of the normal Budget process. There is currently no specific employment benefit tax relief for the cost of private health care; employees will generally be chargeable on the cost of this treatment, whether provided directly by the employer or via payment to a health provider.

Treatment provided by physiotherapists that are registered with the Health Professionals Council is exempt from VAT, whether provided in-house or purchased on a contract basis. This service remains free to patients when provided on the NHS.

### Office of Government Commerce

**Ms Walley:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what annual records are kept on Government Department purchases from portfolio contract holders by the Office of Government Commerce; and if he will make a statement. [158097]

**Mr. Boateng:** Portfolio contract holders are required to submit to OGCbuying.solutions on a quarterly basis the total value of contract sales arising from purchases made by Central Government, the Ministry of Defence, HM Prison Service and the National Health Service.

This information relates to sales totals only, and the OGCbuying.solutions does not receive or keep records of individual purchasing transactions.

### Parliamentary Questions

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many parliamentary questions have been tabled to his Department since 1 January 2003, broken down by *(a)* ordinary written and *(b)* named day; what percentage in respect of *(a)* were answered within 10 working days and what percentage in respect of *(b)* were answered by the specified date. [157739]

**John Healey:** 84.4 per cent. of the 3,489 ordinary written questions tabled to the Chancellor of the Exchequer between January 2003 and February 2004 were answered substantively within 10 working days; and in the same period, 70.2 per cent. of the 544 named day questions were answered on the nominated day.

### PFI/PPP Contracts

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* public finance initiative and *(b)* public private partnership contracts have been signed for Lancashire projects in each of the last three years, broken down by *(a)* contract amount and *(b)* project. [157693]

**Mr. Boateng:** Information on signed private finance initiative projects is submitted to the Treasury by departments. A spreadsheet of these data, which were last submitted in July 2003, is available from the HM Treasury website at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/documents/public_private_partnerships/ppp_pfi_stats.cfm

The spreadsheet can be searched by date of signature, capital value and region.

### Small Business Taxation

**Mr. Pickthall:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he has had with representatives of small and medium enterprises on changes to the taxation of small businesses. [157849]

**Dawn Primarolo:** Treasury Ministers meet regularly with business leaders and others to discuss a wide range of subjects, including the taxation of small business, and to consider the role the Government can continue to play in fostering enterprise, improving productivity and ensuring a competitive economy.

### Stamp Duty

**Mr. Redwood:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost to public funds would be of making 2 per cent. the highest rate of stamp duty levied above existing thresholds. [157570]

**Ruth Kelly:** The revenue cost of restructuring stamp duty on property transactions according to the scheme described, which applies a 1 per cent. rate on transactions values above £60,000 and a 2 per cent. rate above £250,000, is estimated to be £1.8 billion in 2004–05. This does not include any allowance for behavioural changes.

### Tax Credits

**Mr. George Osborne:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from *(a)* the Child Poverty Action Group and *(b)* other charities regarding (i) the administration of the Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit since 6 April 2003 and (ii) take-up rates of tax credits. [158266]

**Dawn Primarolo:** Officials from the Inland Revenue, HM Treasury and the Department for Work and Pensions meet the Child Poverty Action Group and other interest groups regularly to discuss a range of tax credits issues.

### Income Tax

**Mr. Redwood:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost to public funds would be of reducing the standard rate of income tax to 21 per cent. [157571]

**Dawn Primarolo:** I refer the hon. Member to table 1.6 "Direct effects of illustrative tax changes" on the Inland Revenue website www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/tax_expenditures/ table-16.pdf.

### Thalidomide Trust

**Mr. Soames:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the current draft agreement between the Inland Revenue and the Thalidomide Trust. [158750]

**Dawn Primarolo:** The tax affairs of the Thalidomide Trust, like those of all taxpayers, are confidential and a matter for the trustees and the Inland Revenue. If the

trustees wish to make a statement about any discussions they have had with the Inland Revenue that is for them to decide.

### UK Presidencies (G8/EU)

**Tom Brake:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he has had with ministerial colleagues in the last 12 months on the priorities the Government intend to pursue when the UK assumes the presidencies of the *(a)* G8 and *(b)* EU. [156182]

**Dawn Primarolo:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer my hon. Friend the Minister for Europe gave him on 26 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 483W.

## INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Bangladesh

6. **Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what contribution his Department is making to the development of education in Bangladesh. [157876]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** My right hon. Friend approved a grant of £100 million over six years as the UK contribution to a sector-wide programme for primary education in Bangladesh which I was able to announce during my visit to Bangladesh in January. This is the largest single grant that DFID has ever made to Bangladesh. Its purpose is to help increase access to education for 2 to 3 million extra children. In addition, DFID also supports two other Government programmes and a number of education programmes run by NGOs aimed specifically at providing education to hard to reach children who would otherwise miss out, for example working children.

### Haiti

7. **Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on aid to Haiti. [157877]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** A Small Grants Scheme finances development activities in basic sanitation, HIV/AIDS and rural livelihoods. Haiti also benefits from projects financed by the DFID Civil Society Challenge Fund.

The UK's main support to Haiti is provided through the European Union. The UK finances approximately 13 per cent. of the European Development Fund budget (Haiti's allocation under the latest EOF is frozen pending political progress). The UK also provides support to Haiti through its membership of the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank; the latter resumed lending to Haiti in 2003.

DFID will consider the imminent United Nations Flash Appeal when launched.

### Democratic Republic of Congo

8. **Norman Lamb:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has held with the Department of Trade and Industry concerning the involvement of UK companies in the Democratic Republic of Congo. [157878]

**Hilary Benn:** I have raised the issue with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and we will be discussing it further later this month.

### India

9. **Julie Morgan:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what plans he has to increase aid to India. [157879]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** DFID provided £161 million of bilateral development assistance to India in 2002–03. In the New Delhi Declaration of January 2002 the two Prime Ministers, Tony Blair and Atal Bihari Vajpayee, looked forward to expenditure of over £300 million. We are making progress towards this budget and expect to be able to disburse some £200 million in 2003–04.

### Doha Trade Round

10. **Mr. Quentin Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the significance for developing countries of completing the Doha trade round. [157880]

**Hilary Benn:** The benefits of the Doha round for developing countries will depend on the final outcome at the conclusion of the negotiations. This was originally scheduled for January 2005 but it is unlikely with the collapse of the WTO ministerial at Cancun that this deadline will be met. It is widely acknowledge that multilateral trade reform can have significant benefits for developing countries. For example, the World Bank estimates that eliminating all barriers to trade in goods would generate an extra US$250 billion to US$620 billion in global income, up to half of which would go to developing countries. In terms of poverty reduction, this could lift over 300 million people out of poverty by 2015.

Nonetheless, while the reforms may lead to aggregate gains in a country's economic welfare, they inevitably create losers. As well as undertaking studies on the effects of trade reform on livelihoods and food security of the poor segments of the population in developing countries, DFID is working with a number of developing country partners and through the multilateral system to link the trade agenda within countries' own development strategies. The intention is to ensure that liberalisation is accompanied by other policies to help maximise the economic opportunities for all and mitigate adverse impacts on poor households.

### Uganda

11. **Valerie Davey:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the extent is of collaboration with other EU donors to ensure that humanitarian aid to Uganda is effective. [157881]

**Hilary Benn:** DFID works closely with other European Union partners and the European Commission to ensure that humanitarian assistance provided to northern Uganda is as effective as possible. European Union Heads of Mission and technical advisers based in Kampala meet regularly to consider the latest developments on the ground and to coordinate assistance to all affected areas. On a number of occasions EU donors have made joint assessment visits

to the north. The DFID office in Uganda stays in close touch with the European Community Humanitarian Office for East Africa based in Nairobi, Kenya.

Collaboration between EU member states is part of wider arrangements for coordination of humanitarian assistance to northern Uganda. In this context EU member states, as a group, work particularly closely with UN agencies and other donors.

**Mr. Blizzard:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the humanitarian crisis in northern Uganda; and what action he is taking to address it. [157614]

**Hilary Benn:** The humanitarian impact of the conflict in northern Uganda is severe. About 1.4 million people have been displaced across the region. Over the past 18 years, more than 20,000 children have been abducted by the brutal Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

While the conflict persists, we will continue to play a strong role in addressing its humanitarian consequences. Over the last year we have provided £8.4 million of humanitarian assistance, which has been channelled through the World Food Programme, UNICEF and the Uganda Red Cross Society. In addition, we are supporting a number of programmes responding to the plight of children affected by the conflict. With our help, UNICEF and Save the Children Fund are improving the conditions for the large number of unaccompanied children who are sleeping in town centres at night to avoid abduction. We are helping to re-integrate ex-LRA child combatants with their families and local communities.

Along with other colleagues in the donor community including UN agencies and NGOs, we continue to monitor and assess the humanitarian impact of the situation and to consider what more we can do to assist those affected.

### Commonwealth

12. **Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what proportion of his Department's budget will be spent in Commonwealth countries in 2003–04; and what percentage change upon the budget for 1998–99 this represents. [157882]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** Of the proportion of the DFID programme which goes to specific geographical destinations, Commonwealth countries received £624 million (65 per cent.) in 1998–99 and £877 million (59 per cent.) in 2002–03. This is a 40 per cent. increase in cash terms. Figures for 2003–04 are not yet available.

### HIV/AIDS

13. **Jim Dobbin:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what action his Department is taking to tackle HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. [157883]

**Hilary Benn:** DFID recognises that HIV/AIDS is a terrible human catastrophe and is one of the most important development challenges facing Africa. The UK is the second largest bilateral donor of HIV/AIDS assistance in the world. In 2002–03 UK spend to address HIV/AIDS and sexual health globally amounted to over £270 million. This Department has HIV/AIDS investments in most of our 16 focus countries in sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, indirect support is being provided to address HIV/AIDS through budget support. We have committed over £25 million to support the International Partnership Against AIDS in Africa (IPAA) initiative—a regional, Africa-led initiative, and $280 million over 8 years to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria. We will make reducing the vulnerability of poor people to HIV and to the impact of AIDS a priority for the extra resources the UK will be providing to Africa in 2006.

Considerable additional financial support continues to be provided through institutions such as WHO, UNAIDS, UNFPA, and NGOs and civil society organisations in a coherent effort to combat the disease and support those already living with it.

But we are committed to doing more. The Government has published a Call for Action on HIV/AIDS. This is the first stage in an intensified effort on HIV/AIDS, and a new UK strategy will be published later in the year. The Call for Action highlights the need for: better funding, better donor co-ordination, better HIV/AIDS programmes and stronger political support. The UK has pushed for HIV to be a focus issue for the Africa Partners Forum. HIV remains a high order issue for the G8 Africa Action Plan. The UK will prioritise HIV/AIDS and Africa during the UK Presidency of the G8 in 2005.

15. **Vera Baird:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on his Department's contribution to the global campaign to tackle AIDS. [157885]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** The UK is the second largest bilateral donor of HIV/AIDS assistance to developing countries. Our bilateral funding has increased seven-fold, from £38 million in 1997–98 to more than £270 million in 2002–03. The UK was instrumental in setting up the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria and has committed US$ 280 million over seven years to ensure it has long term stability of funding. The Government published its Call for Action on HIV/AIDS on World AIDS Day, which emphasises the UK's commitment to AIDS and highlights the need for stronger political direction; better funding; better donor coordination and better HIV/AIDS programmes.

### Ethiopia

14. **Tony Baldry:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on development assistance to Ethiopia. [157884]

**Hilary Benn:** As I saw during my recent visit, the problems facing Ethiopia are immense. Almost one half of its 70 million people live below the national poverty line. Hunger, HIV/AIDS and the need to provide basic services pose enormous challenges.

The time is right for the international community to play a much larger role in helping Ethiopia meet these challenges. This is what the UK intends to do. On current plans, UK development assistance will increase from £19 million this financial year to £57 million in 2005–06. This will include substantial direct budget support. We will also support the Ethiopian Government's own plans to tackle the roots of hunger.

At the same time, we will continue to respond to immediate humanitarian needs. This year, despite the good harvest, some 7.2 million people will still need support to stay alive. The reason is not a shortage of food as a whole in Ethiopia—it is poverty. During my visit, I agreed to provide immediate further assistance of £10 million to meet both food and non-food needs, including water, sanitation and health. We will continue to keep the situation under very close review.

### Employee Ownership

**Mr. Reed:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether his Department provides support to governments actively to develop employee ownership of business units programmes. [157794]

**Hilary Benn:** DFID provides support to governments both directly and indirectly to develop programmes that promote employee ownership of business units. In South Africa, for example, DFID is providing a range of assistance to Government to support employee ownership of privatised enterprises. This has included assistance to the Department of Public Enterprises to incorporate employee share ownership schemes in its programme to divest the state-owned forestry company's holdings. DFID is also providing support to the Government of Serbia to implement its privatisation programme, which allows for employees to bid for up to 30 per cent. of the shares in the companies.

DFID also contributes indirectly to promoting employee ownership of business through its membership of major international financial institutions such as the World Bank Group and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, which actively promote employee share ownership in restructuring and privatisation programmes in a number of countries. DFID has not received requests from governments to help develop employee ownership of existing business units in the private sector.

**Mr. Reed:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what support his Department provides to governments undertaking privatisation programmes to enable employees to buy and run businesses. [157795]

**Hilary Benn:** Few governments have as a policy objective privatisation programmes aimed specifically at enabling employees to buy and run businesses. However, DFID provides extensive support to governments to develop the micro, small and medium enterprise sector. Our support includes assistance to governments to improve the legal and regulatory framework for enterprise; the development of financial institutions to increase the availability of finance needed to establish and operate businesses; and programmes to strengthen local management skills and business support services. These support programmes encourage and enable all entrepreneurs in the community to buy and run businesses, including employees of state-owned enterprises.

In China, for example, DFID's support to the enterprise sector combines support for state-owned enterprise reform with an enterprise development programme to promote the development of small, private businesses. This programme includes consulting and training services and a credit guarantee scheme to increase bank finance for small enterprise and is open to employees of state-owned enterprises and to the wider entrepreneurial community.

### CDC

**Gregory Barker:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the airline travel policy for the directors of *(a)* CDC and *(b)* Actis is in respect of (i) European and (ii) inter-continental flights. [157826]

**Hilary Benn:** The existing CDC airline travel policy will apply to both CDC and Actis and covers all staff, including directors.

Economy class travel will be used for all flights of less than six hours duration, while business class travel is allowed for flights of over six hours duration or for overnight flights. First class travel may only be used in special circumstances such as intra-continental travel where business class is not available and is subject to prior approval.

**Gregory Barker:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate he has made of the total cost of the reorganisation of CDC and Actis. [157828]

**Hilary Benn:** Our estimate of the total costs of the reorganisation of CDC is £11.5 million. This is made up as follows:

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| DFID Advisory costs | 3.5 |
| CDC Advisory and staff costs | 5.6 |
| CDC Implementation costs | 2.4 |

Both CDC and DFID have statutory duties and duties of due diligence to discharge. These have to be carried out fully and thoroughly and need properly qualified professional expertise. It was also important to find the right corporate model and to achieve the best value for money. The costs are commensurate with the degree of care and attention needed in the restructuring of a £1.1 billion enterprise.

### Chad

**Dr. Tonge:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance has been given to Chad to deal with displaced people from Darfur, Sudan. [158593]

**Hilary Benn:** The United Nations estimates that there are 110,000 Sudanese refugees in Eastern Chad, displaced by the fighting in the Darfur region of Sudan.

We contributed £1 million to UN High Commissioner for Refugees' work in Chad in October last year. We are currently considering some further contributions to international agencies working with Sudanese refugees.

## GM Crops

**Joan Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what GM crops are being grown in developing countries; and what the advantages over the comparable non-GM crops are of these crops, as cited in peer-reviewed research. [156804]

**Hilary Benn:** The bulk of GM crop production in developing countries is commercial. Of the six countries responsible for 99 per cent. of global crop production by area in 2003, four were developing countries: Argentina (21 per cent.), Brazil (4 per cent.), China (4 per cent.) and South Africa (1 per cent.). Almost all of Argentina's soybean production is now GM, while GM cotton now accounts for 58 per cent. of China's total cotton area[1]. The International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications publication "Global Status of Commercialized Transgenic Crops: 2003" provides more information.

A recently published report by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics contains a number of case studies detailing the actual and potential benefits of GM crops for developing countries. These are not necessarily related to yield increases but may, for example, involve reduced farmer inputs.

GM technology has the potential to provide commercial farmers in developing countries with new opportunities to increase the yield or quality of their crops. In particular, GM technology may enable farmers to protect their crops from environmental stresses and attacks from pathogens and insects.

GM technology also has the potential to improve the yield and quality of smallholder crops, where the emphasis is on increasing production without the need for increased inputs.

Decisions about the use of GM crops are, of course, a matter for developing country Governments to take.

[1] *Source:*
ISAAA, "Global Status of Commercialized Transgenic Crops: 2003"

## Iraq

**Harry Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what contracts have been placed by *(a)* the United States of America, *(b)* the United Kingdom and *(c)* other countries and institutions for the clearing of unexploded ordnance in Iraq; what the values of these contracts are; whom they are with; what the requirements are for which the contractors are being paid; whether sub-contracting to do the actual clearance work is provided for in the main contracts; what relationship is expected between the contractors and military forces stationed in the country, non-governmental organisations and Iraqis; and if he will make a statement. [157138]

**Hilary Benn:** DFID is supporting de-mining and the clearance of unexploded ordnance in Iraq both through non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the UN.

DFID has signed contracts with the NGO Mines Advisory Group for work in northern Iraq (£781,639) and southern Iraq (£1,201,263). These contracts cover direct de-mining activities utilising a combination of expatriate staff and locally recruited de-miners.

In addition, DFID has funded humanitarian mine action through the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS). The total provided to UNMAS is £4,357,358, including a grant of £357,358 for the purchase of plastic explosives for use in unexploded ordnance disposal. UNMAS has subcontracted the actual de-mining under these contracts to a number of international NGOs and commercial de-mining companies.

DFID expects the relationship between NGO contractors, commercial de-miners and the military to be one of close cooperation. On the military side, relevant engineer specialists of the British Battle Group have been particularly involved in this. We also encourage a focus on capacity building of Iraqi de-miners as much as possible.

Information on de-mining work funded by the US, including the establishment a 110-strong 'Iraqi Mine/UXO Clearance' NGO, can be found at www.cpa-iraq.org/pressreleases/20031213a_mines.htm.

## IT Companies (Working Conditions)

**Helen Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking to encourage IT firms to ensure that all their sub-contractors in developing countries provided decent working conditions for their employees; and if he will make a statement. [157354]

**Hilary Benn:** The Government's commitment to supporting improvements in labour standards is firmly based on the International Labour Organisations' Declaration on the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and the core labour standards that it incorporates. The Government calls on IT firms and other businesses sourcing goods from developing countries to follow the OECD Guidelines for National Enterprise, which set out principles for responsible business conduct including labour standards.

Effective and well-judged implementation of labour standards can play an important part in the reduction of global poverty by promoting broad based economic, social and political development. The Government supports initiatives that promote corporate social responsibility in ways that reduce poverty and support growth. The Department for International Development is providing practical support to the development of socially responsible business practice through the Ethical Trading Initiative. This is an alliance of business, trade unions and non-governmental organisations committed to improving working conditions in the supply chains of its corporate members. DFID helped to establish the ETI in 1998 and our current partnership is worth £1,300,000 over three years.

## Middle East

**Dr. Iddon:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what plans his Department has to assist economic development in the Middle East. [157756]

**Hilary Benn:** Promoting economic growth that benefits all people in a sustainable way is one of four objectives of our Regional Assistance Plan for the Middle East and North Africa. It is also a primary

objective of our Interim Country Assistance Plan for Iraq. Copies of both papers have been placed in the Library of the House of Commons. We are working with the European Commission to help improve the effectiveness of their programmes in the region, for example by funding studies to help them strengthen trade links and private sector development. We strongly support European Investment Bank efforts to assist small and medium-sized enterprises, which are engines of growth in the region.

In Iraq, we are providing technical expertise in economic transition to the Coalition Provisional Authority, strengthening economic management capacity within Iraqi ministries, and supporting the development of small and medium-sized enterprises. We also provide bilateral assistance to Yemen and Palestine, some of which has a specific focus on economic development. Most recently, we have been working closely with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and HM Treasury to help develop plans for the G8 group of countries and the EC to further promote economic development in the region.

### North Korea

**Mr. Bercow**: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate he has made of the scale of the movement of refugees from North Korea to China since 1995. [157545]

**Hilary Benn:** There is no accurate figure of the number of North Koreans in China because they tend to remain hidden for fear of discovery and repatriation to North Korea. Estimates vary greatly. The Ministry of Reunification in South Korea estimates that there are 10,000 long-term migrants in China. Some NGO groups estimate there are 300,000 North Koreans in China, based on surveys of villages in the border region.

The Chinese Government says that, by United Nations definitions, North Koreans who enter China illegally are economic migrants, not refugees. The UK regularly raises the question of North Korean border crossers at our biannual UK/China Human Rights Dialogue.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on his policy on development aid to North Korea. [157553]

**Hilary Benn:** The Department for International Development (DFID) does not give development assistance to North Korea; nor do we have any plans to start a bilateral programme there. DFID policy is to focus its human and financial resources on a manageable number of key country programmes where the UK has comparative advantage and expertise.

Since 1997, DFID has provided £3,298,000 in humanitarian assistance to North Korea. Most recently, DFID approved a grant of £1,023,000 to support UNICEF's work in 2004, in primary health care (including provision of essential medical supplies such as vaccinations) and improvements to the water and sanitation systems. In 2002–03 DFID provided £200,000 to the International Federation of the Red Cross for its flood prevention work, and in 2001–02 the Federation also received £75,000 for emergency assistance to flood victims and £800,000 to support the health care system through the distribution of drugs and basic medical equipment. In the same year, DFID channelled £1,200,000 through the United Nations Children Fund to support its primary health care programme.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of energy supplies in North Korea; and what steps his Department is taking to improve them. [157554]

**Hilary Benn:** Insufficient energy supplies impact on the humanitarian crisis in North Korea. Power shortages prevent effective operation of water pumping stations, thereby reducing the overall supply of water. The diminishing supplies of fuel wood compounds this problem as families are unable to boil water before use, which in turn increases the prevalence of water borne diseases and diarrhoea and malnutrition worde. Fuel wood is also used for heating and cooking.

Nevertheless, energy is only one factor in the overall humanitarian crisis in North Korea, and the Department for International Development seeks to target its assistance in a way that will have the greatest impact. DFID is currently supporting the strengthening of water and sanitation, health care and disaster mitigation. This approach is in accordance with our assessment of the situation and follows discussions with the United Nations Resident Representative for North Korea.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much emergency *(a)* medical and *(b)* food aid was provided by the United Kingdom to North Korea in each of the last 10 years. [157555]

**Hilary Benn:** The financial figures available go back as far as 1996, when the United Kingdom gave £23,907 to Save the Children and the World Food Programme (WFP) for a nutrition assessment, £100,000 to the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) for the procurement and distribution of food for those still dependent on food aid following the 1995 flood, and another £100,000 for supplementary food for flood victims. The WFP also received £100,000 for supplementary food and project management costs for flood victims.

In 1997 we provided £80,000 to the IFRC for relief to provinces affected by floods following a tidal wave, and a further £495,000 for supplementary food needs for 139,000 beneficiaries.

In 1999 the Department for International Development (DFID) provided £131,459 to a pilot project run by CONCERN to increase food security and channelled £200,000 through World Vision to improve food security and promote sound agricultural practices, £120,000 through Save the Children to improve nutrition and early childhood development at national and village level, £158,437 through Oxfam to treat the public water supply in order to reduce the prevalence of water-born diseases and £625,000 to the United Nations Development Programme for its Geographic Information System and policy reform work including a micro-credit system.

In 2000, DFID provided £50,000 to the IFRC for emergency assistance to storm victims.

In 2001–02 DFID provided £1,200,000 to support UNICEF's primary health care programme, as well as £75,000 to the IFRC for emergency assistance to flood victims and £800,000 for its programme to support the health care system through the distribution of drugs and basic medical equipment.

In 2002–03 The Department provided £200,000 to the IFRC for its flood prevention work and recently approved a grant of £1,023,000 to support UNICEF's work, in 2004, in primary health care, including improvements to the water and sanitation systems as well as essential medical supplies such as vaccinations.

It should be noted that the European Commission provided approximately £37.5 million in humanitarian assistance to North Korea since 1995, of which the UK has contribution is around £6.4 million.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of food supplies in North Korea; and what steps his Department is taking to improve them. [157557]

**Hilary Benn:** Owing to the environment of secrecy and restrictions on agencies operating there, it is difficult to be certain of figures regarding the situation in North Korea. A joint study between the Government and the United Nations Children's Fund showed that 42 per cent. suffer from chronic, or stunting malnutrition and 9 per cent. of the population suffer acute malnutrition (compared with 16 per cent. of children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo). The Food and Agriculture Organisation estimates that the North Korean food output falls short of need by 944 thousand tonnes.

While significant improvements in nutrition rates have been observed through food aid and improved harvests, the international response has been marked by breaks in supply that leave aid beneficiaries vulnerable. Following a recent delay, food distribution has restarted and all but 600,000 core beneficiaries will receive cereal rations up until June.

It is important to tackle the problem of malnutrition through a balanced approach to its causes. Both DFID and the European Commission Humanitarian Office, are concerned that food aid currently accounts for 90 to 95 per cent. of requested assistance, while poor water and sanitation increases the prevalence of water-born diseases and diarrhoea, which in turn worsens malnutrition. A significant proportion of the population of 22 million have poor quality water and sanitation and only 52 per cent. have access to safe drinking water.

DFID has recently agreed to provide £1.023 million in support of UNICEF's work in water, sanitation and primary health care (e.g. vaccinations and other essential medical supplies).

The European Commission is funding targeted food aid through the WFP and other organisations. In January it agreed to give 5 million Euros. The UK contributed £3,338,000 to this.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with the Government of North Korea about its plans to install *(a)* broadband, *(b)* internet technology and *(c)* mobile phone networks. [157550]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** None.

## TRANSPORT

### Air Passengers (Firearms)

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what rules apply to passengers transporting guns on air journeys *(a)* departing from, *(b)* arriving at and *(c)* passing through British airports. [157607]

**Mr. McNulty** *[holding answer 1 March 2004]:* Passengers must surrender firearms or any dangerous articles before entering the restricted zone (RZ) of the airport and cannot regain possession of them in circumstances which would enable them or others to take them onto an aircraft or undermine the security of the airport. Thus departing passengers must surrender any firearms they wish to transport to airport or airline staff prior to undergoing security screening and entering the RZ. Arriving passengers are handed back firearms upon completion of their journey in the presence of a Customs Official or police officer. Transit and transfer passengers do not regain possession of their weapons in the RZ.

HM Customs and Excise are responsible for the checking of firearms licenses and certificates at the airport.

### Chorley Railway Station

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much the Government are contributing towards improving Chorley Railway Station. [157716]

**Mr. McNulty:** Chorley Station is benefiting from £137,000 of grant through the "Rail Passenger Partnership" scheme, administered by the Strategic Rail Authority.

### Heathrow

**Mr. Meacher:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many aircraft movements there were in each period from November to October since 1980 at Heathrow. [157409]

**Dr. Howells:** The available information is as follows:

*Air transport movements (ATMs)* [1] *at Heathrow airport: calendar years 1980 to 2002*

*Thousand*

| | *ATMs* |
|---|---|
| 1980 | 277 |
| 1981 | 250 |
| 1982 | 255 |
| 1983 | 265 |
| 1984 | 278 |
| 1985 | 288 |
| 1986 | 294 |
| 1987 | 308 |
| 1988 | 330 |
| 1989 | 347 |
| 1990 | 368 |

*Air transport movements (ATMs)* [1] *at Heathrow airport: calendar years 1980 to 2002*

| | *Thousand* |
|---|---|
| | *ATMs* |
| 1991 | 362 |
| 1992 | 388 |
| 1993 | 396 |
| 1994 | 409 |
| 1995 | 419 |
| 1996 | 427 |
| 1997 | 429 |
| 1998 | 441 |
| 1999 | 449 |
| 2000 | 460 |
| 2001 | 458 |
| 2002 | 460 |
| 2003[2] | 420 |

[1] All scheduled movements (whether loaded or empty) and loaded charter movements, but excluding empty positioning flights by scheduled aircraft, and empty charter movements.
[2] January to November 2003.
*Source:*
Civil Aviation Authority.

### Local Government Finance

**Jim Knight:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what grants were awarded to local authorities in Dorset by his Department in financial year 2003–04 that fall outside the revenue support grant. [156204]

**Mr. McNulty:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right. hon. Friend the Minister for Local Government and the Regions (Mr. Raynsford) on 1 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 750W.

### Lorry Road User Charge

**Mr. Damian Green:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received on the net cost to hauliers of the introduction of the Lorry Road User Charge; and if he will make a statement. [157040]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The Government have established a Lorry Road User Charge sub-group of the Road Haulage Forum, through which it conducts a dialogue with representatives of the haulage industry on a wide range of issues relating to the development and introduction of a charging scheme.

The Government have made clear their intention that the Lorry Road User Charge will be broadly revenue neutral for the UK haulage industry. That position has not changed. The extra revenue raised through the charge will be offset by reductions in fuel duty.

### M1

**Mr. Tony Clarke:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what further developments are planned to improve the *(a)* safety and *(b)* capacity of (i) junctions and (ii) carriageways on the M1 between junctions 15 and 16 to cope with the increase in traffic use arising from the Milton Keynes/Northampton sustainable communities plan. [157441]

**Mr. Jamieson:** We have no current plans for major improvements to this section of the M1. Following publication of the draft Milton Keynes and South Midlands (MKSM) Sub-Regional Strategy, the Highways Agency, together with the three affected Regional Assemblies, looked at the strategic transport impacts of the growth proposals on the highway network. Their report has been put in the Library for the public examination of the MKSM Sub-Regional Strategy which begins on 23 March 2004. We will respond to the findings of the public examination in due course.

**Mr. Greg Knight:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for what reasons carriageway closures are in place between junction 1 and junction 2 of the M1 motorway; when this stretch of motorway was last subject to carriageway closures; and for what reasons these works and those previously undertaken were not carried out at the same time. [157924]

**Dr. Howells:** The M1 between junctions 1 and 2 is currently being resurfaced because the road surface is coming to the end of its useful life and needs to be replaced. The opportunity is also being taken to carry out other major repairs to the infrastructure along this stretch of the motorway.

This section was last subject to significant carriageway closures at the end of 2001 for essential repairs to lighting columns and for advance drainage works in preparation for the current resurfacing scheme. A period of time was needed on this project between drainage works and resurfacing to allow the ground to dry out and settle.

### M6

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the purpose of the planned four-lane M6. [157717]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The West Midlands to North West Multi-Modal Study produced a long-term strategy for the M6 corridor aimed at improving road, rail and other public transport links within the corridor over the next 20 to 30 years. The study clearly demonstrated that some road widening is a necessary component of a strategy aimed at tackling congestion on the M6 motorway. The Secretary of State confirmed his support for the study's recommendation, including widening the motorway from dual 3 to dual 4 lanes between junctions 11a and 19, in his announcement of December 2002.

### Ministerial Speeches

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many speeches he made between 9 June 2003 and 1 February 2004; and where a copy of each speech can be obtained. [156149]

**Mr. McNulty:** The Secretary of State has made speeches on a range of transport issues, many of which are available on the departmental website at www.dft.gov.uk.

### PowerShift Project

**Mr. Greg Knight:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the PowerShift project; and if he will make a statement. [157925]

**Dr. Howells:** The PowerShift programme, which provides grants to encourage the purchase of low emission vehicles, has had its most successful year to date in 2003–04, with all the funding being fully committed. It is estimated that the programme will support the purchase/conversion of 4,200 vehicles in 2003–04 compared with a total of 2,139 in 2002–03 (figures from the Energy Saving Trust).

**Mr. Greg Knight:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the status of the PowerShift project is; how many new applications have been processed this year; how many new applications are being dealt with; and if he will make a statement. [157926]

**Dr. Howells:** The PowerShift programme will begin accepting applications for 2004–05 shortly. The Energy Saving Trust expects to process applications for 4,200 vehicles in 2003–04. We expect applications to continue at a high level next year.

### Road Transport Directive

**Mr. Damian Green:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he plans to publish the draft regulations implementing the Road Transport Directive. [158225]

**Mr. Jamieson:** We expect to publish the draft regulations implementing the Road Transport Directive by the end of May. My officials are currently analysing responses from our consultation exercise and the results of this will be published shortly.

### Speed Cameras

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many challenges there have been to speed camera fines in the last 12 months. [148941]

**Mr. Jamieson:** I am advised by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary that information is not held centrally on the number of people prosecuted for speeding offences who elect to challenge a fixed penalty notice.

**Mr. Baron:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the costs were of *(a)* purchasing and *(b)* operating speed cameras in Essex in each of the last six (i) financial and (ii) calendar years for which figures are available. [152476]

**Mr. Jamieson** *[holding answer 3 February 2004]*: We do not hold information centrally on the costs of local and police authorities' camera operations prior to the establishment of the Safety Camera Programme in April 2000. The information on the costs of the Essex Partnership for 2000–01 and 2001–02, which is compiled by financial year, is in the following table. Capital expenditure includes the purchase of camera equipment. Revenue expenditure covers the cost of administration of the prosecution process by conditional offer fixed penalty.

£

| | *2000–01* | *2001–02* |
|---|---|---|
| *Essex* | | |
| Capital | 612,027 | 1,036,298 |
| Revenue | 1,234,453 | 2,967,465 |
| Total | 1,846,480 | 3,003,763 |

The figures for 2002–03 will be contained in the report of the third year of the safety camera cost recovery scheme, which is to be published shortly. The results of the two-year trial of the programme demonstrate that safety cameras, covering sites with known problems of speed-related accidents, reduce collisions and road injuries. The third-year report will update the data on the road safety benefits of safety cameras.

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take steps to remove speed cameras from non-hazardous sections of road. [156503]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The rules of the Safety Camera Programme require Partnerships to place cameras at sites or on routes with a history of speed related accidents, to review their sites regularly and to adjust enforcement strategies accordingly.

## CABINET OFFICE

### Ministerial Travel

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will list the Ministers who have travelled to Big Conversation meetings in their ministerial cars. [158124]

**Mr. Alexander:** I refer the honourable Gentleman to the answer provided by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 4 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 113W. Guidance on the use of official cars is set out in "Travel by Ministers". Detailed information relating to the use of cars by individual Ministers is not held centrally.

### Civil Service Bill

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what steps are being taken to introduce a Civil Service Bill in this session of Parliament. [158122]

**Mr. Alexander:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to my statement of 21 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1341–49.

### Departmental Buildings

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many of the buildings for which his Office has responsibility are vacant. [158047]

**Mr. Alexander:** The Cabinet Office is responsible for one office building that is currently vacant, and for which the lease expires in December 2004. There is one small residential property on the Centre for Management and Policy Studies' Sunningdale Park site that is also currently vacant.

### Local Government Finance

**Jim Knight:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what grants were awarded to local authorities in Dorset by his Department in financial year 2003–04 that fall outside the revenue support grant. [156202]

**Mr. Alexander:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the member for Greenwich and Woolwich (Mr. Raynsford) on 1 March 2004, *Official Report* column 750W.

### Online Services

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office which Government services are available online. [158046]

**Mr. Alexander:** Departments report quarterly to the Office of the e-Envoy (OeE) on the progress made towards getting their services available online. Details of the services that are currently available online are published on the OeE website. The URL for the most recently published data is: http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/00/62/72/04006272.rtf

### Public Appointments

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many appointments to public bodies were of people with party political affiliations in each of the last three years; and what those appointments were. [158121]

**Mr. Alexander:** Details of the number of appointments and re-appointments to public bodies of people who have declared political activity are published in the Commissioner for Public Appointments Annual Report. Summary details for the last three years are:

| | *Conservative* | *Labour* | *Liberal Democrats* | *Other*[1] | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *2000-01* | | | | | |
| Number | 150 | 452 | 79 | 55 | 736 |
| Percentage | 3.9 | 11.7 | 2.0 | 1.4 | 19.0 |
| *2001-02* | | | | | |
| Number | 94 | 502 | 87 | 44 | 727 |
| Percentage | 2.7 | 14.3 | 2.5 | 1.3 | 20.7 |
| *2002-03* | | | | | |
| Number | 111 | 407 | 74 | 55 | 647 |
| Percentage | 3.2 | 11.7 | 2.1 | 1.6 | 18.6 |

[1] Other includes Plaid Cymru, Scottish National Party, Northern Ireland political parties, Green Party, independents etc.

The term political activity encompasses activity, undertaken on behalf of a political party or candidate, that is already in the public domain. Examples include standing for political office, acting as a political agent or canvassing on behalf of a political party. Information on political affiliation is not collected.

Neither political activity (nor political affiliation) is a criterion for appointment, except in a very few number of cases where statute dictates specific representation. Details of an individual's declared political activity is published with the announcement of the appointment by the relevant sponsoring department. This information is not held centrally.

### Special Advisers

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many special advisers occupy offices maintained at public expense. [158123]

**Mr. Alexander:** At 1 March, there were 77 special advisers in post.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### Animal Testing

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many animals will be tested as a result of the proposed EU REACH legislation on chemicals; and if she will set out the basis for her estimate. [155857]

**Alun Michael:** The EU proposal on REACH requires information to be gathered on chemicals in order to provide the basis for protecting human health and the environment. This information may come from a number of sources, one of which is animal testing. The Commission has estimated that this draft Regulation will require data to be gathered on approximately 30,000 chemicals. Of these, 20,000 are thought to be produced or imported in quantities of less than 10 tonnes. At this tonnage the current Commission proposal requires 25 animals per chemical. It should be remembered that in most cases the tests are expected to demonstrate that the chemical concerned is safe and therefore involves no threat to humans or animals.

The Commission proposal would require further data as tonnage increases to reflect the greater potential human and environmental exposure. Under a worst case scenario, over 1,500 animals may be needed per chemical for those produced at over 1,000 tonnes (estimated from the testing requirements of the Regulation and OECD guidelines). The tests performed need to comply with the relevant requirements for the protection of laboratory animals set out in Directive 86/609/EEC where, among other things, methods used must be refined in such a way as to minimise the amount of suffering caused to the animals concerned. Further, the chemical industry already has some of this data and there are other sources of information such as modelling of data and grouping of chemicals to read-across data from one chemical to another, all of which will reduce the amount of new testing that will be required. If recent experience from a major testing programme in the USA were to be duplicated in Europe, the number of new animal tests that will need to be undertaken will be significantly lower than the number given above.

It is an overall objective, for the UK Government, in negotiating this Regulation, to ensure that animal testing is kept to the minimum necessary to protect human health and the environment. One of the ways we aim to do this is by applying an intelligent approach to testing.

### Agriculture and Fisheries Council

**Mr. Salmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress has been made with the renegotiation of the December Fisheries Council; and whether the issue of the impact of force majeure on days at sea has been addressed. [157068]

**Mr. Bradshaw** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]:* The Government has been pressing the European Commission to bring forward urgently amendments to the haddock permit scheme agreed at the December Fisheries Council. We expect to receive a proposal from the Commission for such changes in the next few days. We have also pressed the Commission to add a force

majeure provision to the measure for limiting fishing effort. We understand that the Commission are sympathetic to inserting such a provision into the legislation.

### Animal By-Products Regulations

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1558W, on Animal By-products Regulations, what assessment has been made of whether adequate protection from rodents and birds might be achieved using suitable netting instead of solid walls in intermediate reception centres. [156614]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** One of the requirements of the Regulation is that Intermediate Plants must have appropriate arrangements for protection against pests such as insects, rodents and birds. While netting may offer adequate protection against birds, it is not clear how it could offer sufficient protection against insects and rodents. However, we are prepared to consider in individual circumstances if an operator can demonstrate that it does offer such protection.

### Animal Welfare

**Mr. Grogan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she will respond to the Farm Animal Welfare Council report of June 2003 on welfare at slaughter; and if she will make a statement. [155936]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** We expect to issue shortly for public consultation our draft response to the Farm Animal Welfare Council's report on the welfare of red meat animals at slaughter or killing. The public consultation exercise will be widely publicised. Allowing time for comments to be considered, we expect to issue the final response document around the middle of the year.

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what position her Department is taking in discussions within the European Union on maximum journey times for animals destined for slaughter. [156343]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** At the 24 February Agriculture Council the Secretary of State confirmed the Government's preference for replacing the long distance transport of animals for slaughter with a trade in meat. Until that can be achieved journey times for slaughter animals should be reduced, taking account of animal husbandry and geography.

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the levels of antibiotics being fed to animals; and what the figures were 10 years ago. [156874]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** There are no comprehensive figures available on the usage of veterinary antibiotics in the UK. However since 1998 the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) has published figures on the annual UK sales of all veterinary antimicrobial products from 1993 onwards. These have been published in a series of five reports, the most recent of which, published in November 2003, details reported sales between 1998 and 2002. All of these reports are available on the VMD website (www.vmd.gov.uk) or as hard copy direct from the VMD. It is generally accepted that the pattern of reported sales of veterinary antimicrobials directly relates to the pattern of their usage in the UK.

Due to a change in the methodology VMD used to calculate these figures, reported sales before 1998 are not directly comparable with those after 1998. However taken as a whole these figures provide a baseline of sales of antimicrobials over a 10-year reporting period. They show that over the last 10 years the total reported sales of therapeutic antimicrobials have remained broadly constant (ranging between 392 tonnes and 495 tonnes of active ingredient) except for a peak in 1996 (553 tonnes). Total reported sales in 2002 amounted to 457 tonnes of active ingredient, a slight reduction from 2001 (459 tonnes) and 2000 (462 tonnes).

Reported sales of antimicrobial growth promoters have reduced from their peak of 122 tonnes in 1995 to between 23 tonnes (1999) and 46 tonnes (1998) of active ingredient over the last five years. (It is known that there are some missing data for some years so changes may not be as significant as they appear.) This reduction probably partly reflects a reduction since 1999 in the number of active ingredients authorised for use as antimicrobial growth promoters. Reported sales in 2002 amounted to 27 tonnes, compared to 43 tonnes in 2001.

**Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary legislation prohibits (i) a farmer and (ii) any other person from (A) purchasing, (B) transporting, (C) owning and (D) being legally responsible for the welfare of farm animals in circumstances where they have previous convictions for mistreating farm animals; and if she will make a statement. [157101]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Section 3 of the Protection of Animals Act 1911 allows a court to disqualify a person convicted of causing unnecessary suffering to an animal from having custody of any animal for such a period as it thinks fit. This can mean a lifetime ban from keeping animals. This legislation applies equally to farmers and other persons responsible for looking after animals.

Article 9 and Schedule 12 of The Welfare of Animals (Transport) Order 1997, as amended, set down the conditions under which authorisations may be granted for the transport of animals. In considering whether an applicant is a fit person to hold an authorisation the Minister may have regard to any relevant circumstances, including any offences involving animal welfare.

We are considering a new system of three tiers of offences under the proposed Animal Welfare Bill. The most serious offence would refer to those involved in the fighting of animals, the second would maintain the current offence of cruelty, whilst the third would impose a statutory duty to promote the welfare of animals kept by man. In addition, we intend to increase the effectiveness of the courts' power to disqualify.

## Livestock Movements

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will lift the six-day rule which applies to auction marts and slaughterhouses. [156883]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Livestock moving to auction markets and slaughterhouses do not trigger a six-day standstill on arrival.

**Mr. Steen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many calves have been refused passports because they have not been registered within 27 days in each of the last three years. [156043]

**Alun Michael:** The number of passports refused over the last three years because of late registration has been:

| | *Total passport applications received* | *Passports initially refused as late* | *Passports issued after appeal* | *Net passports refused* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2001 | 2,998,238 | 2,035 | 775 | 1,260 |
| 2002 | 2,885,188 | 1,011 | 646 | 365 |
| 2003 | 2,952,404 | 3,982 | 570 | 3,412 |

## Cetaceans

**Andrew Mackinlay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what projections she has made of the future population of *(a)* dolphins and *(b)* porpoises within (i) British waters and (ii) European Union waters; and if she will make a statement. [156213]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** The Secretary of State has made no projections to date on the future populations of dolphins and porpoises in British and European Union waters.

However, the Government is supporting new survey work to be undertaken in 2004–05 by a consortium of international researchers, co-ordinated by the Sea Mammal Research Unit, on the distribution and abundance of small cetaceans—particularly harbour porpoises (Phocoena phocoena), bottlenose dolphins (Tursiops truncatus) and common dolphins (Delphinus delphis)—in the shelf waters of the Atlantic margin, the North Sea and adjacent waters. This work will include the development of methods of monitoring abundance and identifying population trends between major decadal surveys, and recommendations for monitoring protocols by individual species and areas.

International funding is being sought in support of this work and the UK has pledged £275,000 towards it.

**Andrew Mackinlay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the *(a)* dolphin and *(b)* porpoise populations within (i) British waters and (ii) European Union waters; what the estimate was for these species 20 years ago; and if she will make a statement. [156214]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Obtaining population estimates for cetaceans is difficult. There is a wide margin of error around most abundance estimates and the geographical limits of most biological populations of dolphin species are not known.

To date, major surveys of cetacean distribution or abundance have not been carried out at regular intervals. The following table gives figures from the 2002 report of the Advisory Committee on Ecosystems of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) illustrating the latest information on the populations and abundance of small cetaceans occurring in UK waters. The populations are given in terms of ICES areas or geographical locality. A map showing the ICES areas has been placed in the Libraries of the House.

A consortium of international researchers, co-ordinated by the Sea Mammal Research Unit, is planning to carry out a survey of the distribution and abundance of small cetaceans—particularly harbour porpoises (Phocoena phocoena), bottlenose dolphins (Tursiops truncatus) and common dolphins (Delphinus delphis)—in 2004–05. The survey area is intended to cover the shelf waters of the Atlantic margin, the North Sea and adjacent waters. International funding is being sought in support of this work and the UK has already pledged £275,000 towards it.

Reliable estimates for dolphin abundance in British and European Union waters in 1984 are not available.

*2002 Report of the Advisory Committee on Ecosystems of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)*

| *Species Year* | *ICES Area or geographical locality* | *Abundance estimate* | *95 per cent. Confidence limits* | *Method* | *Reference* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Harbour porpoise* | | | | | |
| 1994 | IVa | 98,564 | 66,679–145,697 | Ship-based line transect | Hammond *et al.*, 2002 |
| | IVb+c | 169,888 | 124,121–232,530 | | |
| | VIIf+g+h+j | 36,280 | 12,828–102,604 | | |
| *Bottlenose dolphin* | | | | | |
| 1992 | Moray Firth (southwestern IVa) | 129 | 110–174 | Photographic mark-recap Photographic identification or direct observation. | Wilson *et al*, 1999 |
| 2001 | French coasts Vile Villa | 250–300 | n/a | | ICES, 2002 |
| 1991–1993 | Cornwall | 15 | n/a | | ICES, 1996 |
| 1994–1995 | Dorset | 5 | n/a | | |
| 2001 | Cardigan Bay, Wales | 135 | 85–214 | | White and Webb, 1995 Baines *et al.*,2002 |
| | | 213 | 183–279 | Ship-based line transect | |

*2002 Report of the Advisory Committee on Ecosystems of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)*

| *Species Year* | *ICES Area or geographical locality* | *Abundance estimate* | *95 per cent. Confidence limits* | *Method* | *Reference* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *White-beaked and Atlantic white-sided dolphins* | | | | | |
| 1994 | IVa | 1,685 | 690–4,113 | Ship-based line transect | Hammond *et al.*, 2002 |
| | IVb | 9,242 | 5,344–15,981 | | |
| | VIIf + g + h + j | 833 | 159–4,360 | | |
| *Atlantic white-sided dolphin* | | | | | |
| 1998 | Faroes-Shetland channel | 21,371 | 10,000–45,000 | Ship-based line transect | Macleod, 2001 |
| 1998 | VIa (N) | 74,626 | 35,000–160,000 | | |
| 2000 | Parts of VI a&b VII b/c, VIIj&k | 5,490 | 1,134–10,015 | | O'Cadhla *et al.*, 2001 |
| *Common dolphin* | | | | | |
| 1994 | VIIf + g + h +j parts of VI a&b | 75,449 | 22,900–284,900 | Ship-based line transect | Hammond *et al.*, 2002 |
| 2000 | VII b/c, VIIj&k | 4,496 | 2,414–9,320 | | O'Cadhla *et al.*, 2001 |
| 1993 | Bay of Biscay | 61,888 | 35,461–108,010 | | Goujon *et al*, 1993 |
| *Striped dolphin* | | | | | |
| 1993 | Bay of Biscay | 73,843 | 36,113–150,990 | Ship-based line transect | Goujon *et al.*, 1993 |

## Country Code

**Mr. Peter Atkinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress her Department is making on its revision of the Country Code; and whether the revised code will require dogs to be kept on a short fixed lead *(a)* near livestock and *(b)* during the bird breeding season on land to which the statutory rights of access to open country under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 applies. [156767]

**Alun Michael:** The duty to issue a code of conduct for the guidance of persons visiting the countryside lies statutorily with the Countryside Agency. The agency has been consulting widely on proposals for updating the code, which was last revised in 1981. The agency aims to publish a new code in the summer, which will include general guidance on legal responsibilities regarding dogs. The code will not introduce any new responsibilities.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 itself requires people exercising the new right of access to keep dogs on short leads when in the vicinity of livestock, and on all access land between 1 March and 31 July. The Act also provides for local restrictions on dogs, including bans, where necessary, and allows landowners to exclude dogs for up to six weeks in any one year from fields or enclosures where lambing is taking place and for up to five years from land managed for the breeding and shooting of grouse.

The Countryside Agency has been seeking views on meeting its obligations under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to provide guidance for people using the new right of access and for people with an interest in land to which the new right applies. Information about the statutory requirements relating to dogs will be included in communications with the public when the new right of access is introduced.

## Horses and Ponies

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how many equines were slaughtered for human consumption in England in each year since 2000, broken down by type; [156566]

(2) how many tonnes of horsemeat were *(a)* produced in England and *(b)* exported from England in each year since 2000; [156567]

(3) how many tonnes of horsemeat were imported into the UK in each year since 2000; [156568]

(4) how many horses were exported from the UK to the EU in each year since 2000; [156569]

(5) how many horses, intended for slaughter, were exported from the UK to the EU in each year since 2000; and how many horses were exported to countries outside the EU; [156659]

(6) how many horses that were not intended for human consumption were slaughtered in the UK in each year since 2000. [156660]

**Alun Michael:** The information requested is given in the following table:

*UK production and trade in horses and horsemeat 2000–03*

| | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* | *2003* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Equines slaughtered (units—England)* | 9,112 | 10,479 | 8,284 | 6,727 |
| for human consumption | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| not for human consumption | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| *Horsemeat production (tonnes)* | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| *Horsemeat (tonnes)* | | | | |
| Imports | | | | |
| *From:* | | | | |
| the EU | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| the rest of the world | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Exports | | | | |
| *To:* | | | | |
| the EU | 2,857 | 2,417 | 2,022 | 1,566 |
| the rest of the world | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| *Horses (units)* | | | | |
| Imports | | | | |
| *Of which:* | | | | |
| Pure-bred breeding horses | | | | |
| the EU | 4,163 | 1,733 | 1,902 | 2,234 |
| the rest of the world | 1,104 | 835 | 715 | 728 |
| *Horses for slaughter* | | | | |
| the EU | — | — | — | — |
| the rest of the world | — | — | — | — |
| *Horses other than for slaughter* | | | | |
| the EU | 503 | 1,986 | 383 | 286 |
| the rest of the world | 147 | 48 | 183 | 190 |
| Exports | | | | |
| *Of which:* | | | | |
| *Pure-bred breeding horses* | | | | |
| the EU | 1,641 | 1,714 | 1,392 | 2,041 |
| the rest of the world | 934 | 842 | 1,088 | 2,223 |
| *Horses for slaughter* | | | | |
| the EU | — | — | — | — |
| the rest of the world | — | — | — | — |

*UK production and trade in horses and horsemeat 2000–03*

| | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Horses other than for slaughter* | | | | |
| the EU | 1,572 | 1,292 | 662 | 1,555 |
| the rest of the world | 695 | 375 | 364 | 338 |

*Source*:
H M Customs and Excise
Data prepared by Statistics (Commodities & Food) Consultancy Trade and IT, ESD, DEFRA
2003 EU data is provisional and subject to amendment

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) which EU Directive or Regulation requires horse traceability for disease surveillance purposes; [156655]

(2) what recent discussions she has had with the EU about disease surveillance in horses. [156656]

**Alun Michael:** There is currently no requirement in European legislation for a horse traceability system for disease surveillance purposes, but both the Government and the horse industry consider that there is a need for a national equine database. Defra is therefore working with the industry to set up such a database that will help to implement the horse passports requirements, and underpin economic and animal health and welfare strategies for the horse and its role within the rural economy.

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the cost to the Department of implementing the minimum values legislation was in each of the last three years. [156663]

**Alun Michael:** The cost to the Department of horse and pony export licensing (commonly referred to as the minimum values legislation) in England during the last three financial years was:

£

| | *Amount* |
|---|---|
| 2000–01 | 41,643 |
| 2001–02 | 39,705 |
| 2002–03 | 43,374 |

### Illegal Imports

**Mr. Gardiner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has for the establishment of a single agency to address legal and illegal imports of food. [155392]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** In its response to the Reports of the Foot and Mouth Disease inquiries in November 2002, the Government said that there was a case for a single agency to oversee all aspects of the management of the legal trade in imported foodstuffs, but that we would first aim to secure a step change in the co-ordination and delivery of local authority inspection of imported foodstuffs and products of animal origin within one year. We will review the first year's program with the step change project, which has been co-ordinated by the Food Standards Agency and in the light of that consider the case for an agency later in the Spring.

Responsibility for anti-smuggling checks on illegal imports of food was transferred to HM Customs and Excise in April 2003. The Government have no plans for changes in those responsibilities.

**Mr. Gardiner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the effectiveness of local authorities in the detection of illegal meat imports that have evaded customs and border inspections. [155394]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Local authorities have made and continue to make seizures of products of animal origin inland. Central records do not differentiate between legitimate imports which now fail to meet relevant regulations, shipments that have entered the EU through other member states and any that may have evaded customs and border inspections in the UK.

**Mr. Gardiner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she will report to Parliament on the progress of the illegal meat strategy. [155391]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Progress against the Government's Action plan on illegal imports in 2002–03 is reported in the Annual Review of controls on imports of Animal Products. Copies have been placed in House Libraries.

The 2003–04 Action Plan is appended to the Review, and we are working with HM Customs and other responsible parties to implement it. Progress will be reported in the second annual report which will be published in early Summer.

### Illegal Meat Imports

**Mr. Gardiner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment has been made of the sufficiency of resources allocated to HM Customs and Excise to address illegal meat imports and of how they compare with those of its equivalent in other European countries. [155847]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** We have almost doubled the amount of funding available to HMCE in 04/05 to put more resources into addressing illegal imports of meat, fish, plants, and their products. We do not have details of what resources other EU countries have in place but know that the UK is viewed as being more advanced in this area.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what role her Department has played in tackling the import of illegal meat. [156488]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is responsible for policy issues relating to imports of products of animal origin and plant and plant products.

HM Customs and Excise are responsible for enforcement at points of entry to the UK and local authorities are responsible for enforcement inland.

We continue to liaise closely with HM Customs and Excise and the Food Standards Agency to ensure a coherent approach in tackling illegal imports.

**Mr. Gardiner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) whether the Ad Hoc Ministerial Group 23 will consult organisations outside Government when undertaking the review of Step Change; [155396]

(2) if she will ask Ad Hoc Ministerial Group 23 to broaden the scope of the review into Step Change to include a review into the effectiveness of the Government's illegal meat strategy; [155397]

(3) when Ad Hoc Ministerial Group 23 has met; and if she will publish the minutes and agenda; [155398]

(4) if she will list the members of Ad Hoc Ministerial Group 23; and what its remit is. [155399]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** The Ministerial Committee on Illegal Imports (Misc 23) was established by the Prime Minister in July 2003 to co-ordinate policy on imports of animals, plants, fish and their products. It is composed of the following members:

Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Chair)

Minister for the Cabinet Office and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

Economic Secretary

Minister of State, Home Office (Beverley Hughes)

Minister of State, Department for Transport

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Lord Whitty)

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department of Health (Melanie Johnson)

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department for Culture, Media and Sport (Lord McIntosh)

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Phil Hope)

The Chairman of the Food Standards Agency is invited to attend.

It has been established practice under successive Governments not to disclose information relating to the proceedings of Cabinet Committees. This practice is now formalised by Exemption 2 of Part II of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

### Knackeries/Hunt Kennels

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how many knackeries were licensed in the UK in each year since 2000; [156661]

(2) how many hunt kennels were licensed in the UK in each year since 2000. [156662]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Prior to the Animal By-Products Regulations 2003, which came into force on 1 July 2003, Knackers' Yards required approval under the Animal By-Products Order 1999. Hunt Kennels required registration under the Order.

In June 2003, before the Animal By-Products Order was revoked, there were 73 approved Knackers' Yards and 293 registered Hunt Kennels. We do not have a breakdown of how many were approved in each year.

### Motor Cycling

**Mr. David:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures are being taken to prevent unauthorised off-road motor cycling. [158090]

**Alun Michael:** The Forestry Commission and Countryside Council for Wales are jointly organising the Wales Off-road Motorcycle Conference to take place on 6 May. The Conference will consider how best to curtail unlawful off-road motorcycling and how to develop, as an alternative, facilities for motorcycling as a managed outdoor recreational activity.

In addition, the Government have published a consultation paper setting out its proposals for tackling the problems that can arise through the use of motorcycles and other mechanically propelled vehicles on public rights of way.

### Parliamentary Questions

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many parliamentary questions have been tabled to her Department since 1 January 2003, broken down by *(a)* ordinary written and *(b)* named day; what precentage in respect of *(a)* were answered within 10 working days; and what percentage in respect of *(b)* were answered by the specified date. [157516]

**Alun Michael:** Records for Session 2002–03 were not maintained in such a way to enable the Department to extract the information requested without incurring disproportionate costs.

However, according to our records Defra received a total of 5,444 parliamentary questions broken down as follows:

(a) 3,836 were ordinary written;

(b) 851 were named day.

To date, in the current parliamentary session we have received a total of 1,784 parliamentary questions, broken down as follows:

(a) 1,104 were ordinary written, of which 923 were answered within 10 working days which equates to 83.6 per cent;

(b) 190 were named day and 42 were answered on the specified date which equates to 22.1 per cent.

Defra endeavours to reply to all parliamentary questions within parliamentary deadlines wherever possible.

### Peat

**Mr. Kidney:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what steps her Department is taking *(a)* to collect and *(b)* to publish data for the regular two-yearly monitoring of the use of peat and peat alternatives; [157173]

(2) what steps her Department is taking to meet the Biodiversity Action Plan targets for the replacement of peat in the horticulture industry. [157174]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** The latest information on monitoring of peat and alternative products for growing media and soil improvers in the UK was published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2003. The Department now has responsibility for this issue. We are considering arrangements for a further monitoring exercise later this year with a view to publishing the data in 2005.

In the meantime we have commissioned ADAS to produce a report which will provide details of the current use of peat and growing media alternatives in the commercial horticulture sector in England.

The Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP) is carrying out research into the use of recycled and compost materials in the production of growing media. The research includes a programme of demonstration growing trials across the UK, covering a range of plant types, growing regimes and commercial situations. The growing trials involve trials of peat-free and reduced peat formulations against a standard peat based formulation. It is expected that the results from the research will be published in April this year.

## Pollution

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the concentration was of *(a)* nitrogen dioxide, *(b)* sulphur dioxide and *(c)* benzene in each (i) London borough and (ii) London ward in each of the last five years. [156666]

**Alun Michael:** The United Kingdom Automatic Urban and Rural Air Quality Monitoring Network currently has 22 sites in the Greater London area. Annual mean concentrations of each pollutant for each year between 1999 and 2003 for the London boroughs and London wards are given in tables 1, 2 and 3, for nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and benzene, respectively.

There are a total of 33 boroughs and 785 wards (1991 ward data) in London. For nitrogen dioxide there are currently 16 London boroughs and 19 London wards that have monitoring in the national network. For sulphur dioxide there are currently 10 London boroughs and 13 London wards that have monitoring in the national network. For benzene there are currently four London boroughs and four London wards that have monitoring in the national network. Data from different sites are not necessarily directly comparable due to the different locations of the sites, for example, kerbside, roadside, background and suburban. The data for all the sites within the United Kingdom Automatic Urban and Rural Air Quality Monitoring Network are available from the National Air Quality Information Archive (www.airquality.co.uk).

In addition, a number of London boroughs carry out independent monitoring which is within the London Air Quality Network. Thirty-one boroughs have nitrogen dioxide monitoring, 26 boroughs have sulphur dioxide monitoring and one borough monitors benzene.

*Table 1: Annual mean nitrogen dioxide concentrations at each site in the Automatic Urban and Rural Air Quality Monitoring Network in Greater London in 1999–2003*

| | | | Highest annual mean nitrogen dioxide concentration (micrograms per metre cubed) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Sites* | *London borough* | *Ward* | *1999* | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* | *2003* |
| West London | Kensington and Chelsea | Abingdon Ward | 55 | 53 | 52 | 46 | 55 |
| Camden Kerbside | Camden | Adelaide Ward | 66 | 63 | 66 | 66 | 65 |
| London Marylebone Road | City of Westminster | Baker Street Ward | 91 | 93 | 84 | 81 | 107 |
| London Bromley | Bromley | Bickley Ward | 65 | 63 | 61 | 41 | 42 |
| London Bloomsbury | Camden | Bloomsbury Ward | 67 | 59 | 51 | — | — |
| Hounslow Roadside | Hounslow | Brentford Clifden Ward | 60 | 52 | 54 | 58 | — |
| London Cromwell Road 2 | Kensington and Chelsea | Brompton Ward | 93 | 88 | 76 | 72 | 76 |
| London Southwark | Southwark | Browning Ward | 56 | 52 | 55 | 47 | — |
| Haringey Roadside | Haringey | Bruce Grove Ward | 51 | 51 | 48 | 46 | 53 |
| London Sutton | Sutton | Carshalton Central Ward | 34 | 32 | 35 | — | — |
| Southwark Roadside | Southwark | Consort Ward | — | 63 | 65 | 58 | 67 |
| London Hackney | Hackney | Eastdown Ward | 60 | 51 | 48 | 47 | 50 |
| London Eltham | Greenwich | Eltham Park Ward | 36 | 33 | 34 | 30 | 38 |
| London Wandsworth | Wandsworth | Fairfield Ward | 51 | 49 | 53 | 52 | 62 |
| Tower Hamlets Roadside | Tower Hamlets | Holy Trinity Ward | 70 | 65 | 69 | 61 | 67 |
| London Bexley | Bexley | North End Ward | 37 | 35 | 36 | 31 | 37 |
| London Lewisham | Lewisham | Rushey Green Ward | 54 | — | — | 50 | 58 |
| London North Kensington | Kensington and Chelsea | St. Charles Ward | 46 | 40 | 42 | 40 | 45 |
| London Brent | Brent | St. Raphael's Ward | 37 | 36 | 37 | 29 | 32 |
| Sutton Roadside | Sutton | Sutton Central Ward | 43 | 40 | 44 | — | — |
| London Teddington | Richmond upon Thames | Teddington Ward | 32 | 28 | 29 | 25 | 28 |
| London A3 Roadside | Kingston Upon Thames | Tolworth South Ward | 59 | 55 | 54 | 58 | 73 |
| London Bridge Place, London Westminster | City of Westminster | Victoria Ward | 63 | — | — | 43 | 52 |
| London Hillingdon | Hillingdon | Yiewsley Ward | — | 48 | 46 | 45 | 54 |

*Table 2: Annual mean sulphur dioxide concentrations at each site in the Automatic Urban and Rural Air Quality Monitoring Network in Greater London in 1999–2003*

| | | | Highest annual mean sulphur dioxide concentration (micrograms per metre cubed) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Sites* | *London borough* | *Ward* | *1999* | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* | *2003* |
| London Marylebone Road | City of Westminster | Baker Street Ward | 13 | 15 | 12 | 10 | 12 |
| London Bloomsbury | Camden | Bloomsbury Ward | 13 | 11 | 11 | 7 | 8 |
| London Cromwell Road 2 | Kensington and Chelsea | Brompton Ward | 12 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 6 |
| London Southwark | Southwark | Browning Ward | 8 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 8 |
| Southwark Roadside | Southwark | Consort Ward | 10 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 6 |
| London Eltham | Greenwich | Eltham Park Ward | 5 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 5 |
| London Bexley | Bexley | North End Ward | 7 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 10 |
| London Lewisham | Lewisham | Rushey Green Ward | 8 | — | — | 4 | 6 |

*Table 2: Annual mean sulphur dioxide concentrations at each site in the Automatic Urban and Rural Air Quality Monitoring Network in Greater London in 1999–2003*

| Sites | London borough | Ward | Highest annual mean sulphur dioxide concentration (micrograms per metre cubed) 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| London North Kensington | Kensington and Chelsea | St. Charles Ward | 6 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 5 |
| London Brent | Brent | St. Raphael's Ward | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| Sutton Roadside | Sutton | Sutton Central Ward | 8 | 9 | 9 | — | — |
| London Teddington | Richmond upon Thames | Teddington Ward | 6 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| London Bridge Place, London Westminster | City of Westminster | Victoria Ward | 7 | — | — | 4 | 9 |
| London Hillingdon | Hillingdon | Yiewsley Ward | 10 | 10 | 9 | 7 | 8 |

*Table 3: Annual mean benzene concentrations at each site in the Automatic Urban and Rural Air Quality Monitoring Network in Greater London in 1999–2003*

| Sites | London borough | Ward | Highest annual mean benzene concentration (micrograms per metre cubed) 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| London Marylebone Road | City of Westminster | Baker Street Ward | 10.8 | 6.3 | 4.5 | 3.9 | 3.1 |
| London UCL, London Bloomsbury (pumped tube data)[1] | Camden | Bloomsbury Ward | 3.6 | 2.1 | — | — | 1.9 |
| London Eltham | Greenwich | Eltham Park Ward | 2.5 | 1.6 | — | — | — |
| Haringey Roadside (pumped tube data)[1] | Haringey | Bruce Grove Ward | — | — | — | — | 3.0 |

[1] Pumped tube data are collected using a non-automatic technique.

### Fisheries

**Geraldine Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to regulate public fisheries. [156859]

**Mr Bradshaw** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]:* Fisheries are managed on at a European level under the Common Fisheries Policy, nationally under UK legislation, and within six miles by Sea Fisheries Committees or the Environment Agency.

There are two major reviews being carried out which could impact on the management of public fisheries; the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit's Review of the UK Fishing Industry and the Defra Review of Marine Fisheries and Environmental Enforcement which is looking specifically at the organisation of enforcement. These Reviews are due to report in the near future and it is possible that their recommendations will lead to changes in current regulations.

### Publicity Campaigns

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much *(a)* her Department and *(b)* each agency and non-departmental public body sponsored by her Department spent on (i) advertising and (ii) information campaigns in each year since its creation; what her estimate is for 2003–04; and if she will make a statement. [149723]

**Alun Michael:** The Department does not maintain separate records of its expenditure for advertising and information campaigns. The expenditure for publicity by Defra's Communications Directorate, includes marketing, advertising, publications, events, shows and direct mailings, and is recorded for the financial years since Defra's creation in June 2001 as follows.

| | £ million |
|---|---|
| 2001–02 | 6.6 |
| 2002–03 | 4.7 |
| 2003–04 | [1]3.7 |

[1] estimate

This includes communications on a wide range of matters, much of it necessary or beneficial to the public and the wide range of industries in which Defra has an interest, together with local government, voluntary organisations and other bodies.

Information relating to agencies and non-departmental bodies sponsored by the Department is not held centrally and could be gathered only at disproportionate cost.

### Recruitment Advertising

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much her Department has spent on recruitment advertising in each year since 1997. [156453]

**Alun Michael:** As Defra was created in June 2001; information prior to this date is unavailable.

Given the current structure of the Human Resources function within the Department the information requested is available only at disproportionate cost.

### Rural Payments Agency

**Mr. Steen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will instruct the Rural Payments Agency to change its policy on accepting an initialled alteration of a figure on a subsidy claim. [156045]

**Alun Michael:** Following legal advice, the Rural Payments Agency has reviewed its procedures on accepting alterations on subsidy claims. It will no longer accept initialled alterations.

With effect from the 2004 scheme year IACS applicants are being advised that amendments must be crossed through, the correct information entered and the change signed and dated. Correction fluid is not to be used.

## DEFENCE

### Armed Forces (Irish Citizens)

**Mr. Swire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many citizens of the Republic of Ireland are serving in Her Majesty's armed forces. [155649]

**Mr. Ingram:** There are currently 65 Naval Service personnel and 200 Army personnel with a Republic of Ireland nationality shown on their Record of Service.

Insufficient data are available to produce reliable estimates for the RAF.

### Army Strength

**Mr. Keetch:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the *(a)* establishment and *(b)* strength of all ranks above major in the Army; and if he will make a statement. [154489]

**Mr. Caplin:** As at January 2003, the liability for officers over the rank of Major in the Army is:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Lt. Col. | 1,579 |
| Col. | 546 |
| Brig. | 175 |
| Maj. Gen. | 27 |
| Lt. Gen. | 5 |
| Gen. | 2 |

The information requested on strengths of all ranks over Major in the Army is contained in Tri-Service Publication 9, a copy of which is in the Library of the House.

**Mr. Keetch:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what reasons units are receiving lists of names for manning control review. [154490]

**Mr. Caplin:** The nomination of personnel for manning control action is a unit responsibility. Before January 2001 lists of individuals approaching Manning Control Points were regularly issued to Commanding Officers by the Infantry Manning and Career Management Division. In January 2001 this practice ceased. However, it subsequently proved that the information needed could not easily be taken from the relevant local computer systems. Following requests from individual units divisional lists were therefore resumed in January 2004. Commanding Officers are not required to take any action unless they believe that an individual should be subject to manning control.

### Colombia

**Jeremy Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many UK military personnel are deployed in Colombia; and how many Colombian military personnel are being trained in the UK. [157712]

**Mr. Ingram:** On the subject of the number of United Kingdom military personnel deployed in Colombia, I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave him on 11 June 2003, *Official Report*, column 910W.

One Colombian military officer is currently attending the Advanced Command and Staff Course at the Joint Services Command and Staff College, Shrivenham.

### Kenya

**Tom Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British military exercises have taken place in Kenya in each of the last five years, broken down by *(a)* number of troops involved and *(b)* length of exercise. [158035]

**Mr. Ingram:** The details of British military exercises that have taken place in Kenya over the last five years; broken down by the number of participating troops and length of the exercise are shown in the following table:

*Army*

| | *Exercise* | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Grand Prix*[1] | *Mono Prix*[2] | *Sharp Point*[3] | *Pineapple*[4] | *Oakapple*[5] | *Crabapple*[6] |
| 1999 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 2000 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 2001 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 2002 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 2003 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Total number of exercises | 13 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| Duration of each exercise (weeks) | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| Approximate number of personnel involved in each | 700 | 140 | 140 | 120 | 140 | 45 |

[1] A battalion exercise
[2] A company exercise
[3] A squadron level primary healthcare exercise
[4] A squadron level explosive ordnance clearance exercise
[5] A squadron level engineer construction exercise
[6] A troop level engineer construction exercise

### Missile Defence Centre

**Mr. Keetch:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what expenses are expected to be met from the Government's investment in the Missile Defence Centre; what expenses will be met by industry; how much investment is expected from industry; what outputs are expected from the centre; and if he will make a statement. [154902]

**Mr. Hoon:** The expenses incurred by the Missile Defence Centre (MDC) fall into the broad categories of running costs for the Centre itself and funding for specific technical work carried out in support of its objectives. In the period from the MDC's opening last July to the end of financial year 2003–04 the Ministry of Defence expects to contribute some £5.5 million, while the estimated contribution by industry will be some £2 million.

The outputs expected from the MDC in 2003–04 include: advice on missile defence issues; the development of models and databases to facilitate the formulation and evaluation of concepts for defending the United Kingdom against the ballistic missile threat; and the construction and testing of hardware elements of potential use to the United States Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) programme. These outputs are intended to inform national BMD policy, establish a leading role for the UK in missile defence, and secure significant participation by UK industry in the US BMD programme.

### North Korea

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what estimate he has made of the number of ballistic missiles *(a)* owned and *(b)* exported by North Korea; [157549]

(2) what assessment he has made of the biological weapons capacity of North Korea; [157548]

(3) what estimate he has made of the numerical strength of the special forces of North Korea; [157547]

(4) what assessment he has made of the *(a)* artillery and *(b)* missile launcher capacity of North Korea. [157546]

**Mr. Hoon:** Our assessment of North Korea's ballistic missile threat was published in December 2002 in the public discussion paper on Missile Defence, a copy of which is held in the Library of the House. The paper is also on the Ministry of Defence website www.mod.uk. North Korea has some hundreds of SCUD short-range ballistic missiles and NO DONG medium-range ballistic missiles in service. It is estimated that North Korea has also exported at least 400 ballistic missiles.

North Korea is a State Party to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. North Korea has the infrastructure to support the development of chemical and biological weapons and we remain very concerned by persistent reports that it is pursuing programmes to develop WMD.

The North Korean Special Operations Forces totals nearly 90,000 personnel of whom roughly 40,000 are deployable combat personnel; the rest are support staff.

We estimate that the North Korean army has around 30,000 artillery pieces. North Korea possesses many thousands of launcher systems for its artillery and ballistic, air defence and coastal defence missiles.

The International Institute for Strategic Studies' annual publication 'The Military Balance' gives details of military forces and capabilities.

### Queen's Lancashire Regiment

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the future role of the Queen's Lancashire Regiment. [158263]

**Mr. Ingram:** The Queen's Lancashire Regiment is a mechanised battalion currently with 19 Mechanised Brigade in Catterick. They are due to be posted to Cyprus this month, with responsibility for the security of the Sovereign Base Area and will carry out this duty until March 2006. Additionally, from April 2004 the Battalion will have a reinforcement role in Iraq.

## CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### Gambling

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment the Government have made of the impact of the proposals in the draft Gambling Bill on consumer debt. [158317]

**Mr. Caborn:** The policy document published with draft clauses in November as Cm 6014 drew attention to the risks of people gambling sums which they could not afford, and to the measures to be included in the Bill to address these risks, which include powers for the Gambling Commission to regulate advertising, credit and inducements, as well as provision for gambling debts to become enforceable. These and other measures are intended to avoid the growth in gambling opportunities from being accompanied by growth in the incidence of problem gambling; but we have made no separate assessment in terms of consumer debt generally.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the impact of the proposals outlined in the draft Gambling Bill upon the work of social services departments. [158351]

**Mr. Caborn:** We do not think that the proposals should have any overall impact on the work of social services.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the impact of the proposals outlined in the draft Gambling Bill upon the number of casino planning and licensing applications. [158430]

**Mr. Caborn:** We expect there to be an increase, not least because the proposals envisage abolition of the provision in the current law that casinos may be established only in specified permitted areas.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the impact of the proposals in the draft Gambling Bill upon *(a)* problem gambling and *(b)* money laundering. [158345]

**Mr. Caborn:** The Regulatory Impact Assessment published in November with draft clauses as Cm 6014 noted that proposals which extended the choice and availability of gambling carried a risk of increasing problems in these areas, but drew attention to the

effective system of licensing and regulation by a new Gambling Commission, with powers and resources not currently available, intended to address this risk.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what research her Department has assessed into the links between use of gaming machines by under 18-year-olds and the prevalence of gambling problems. [158347]

**Mr. Caborn:** We have taken note of the research studies cited in the report of the Gambling Review Body (Cm 5206) and included in the survey of relevant research evidence which formed part of the 2003 report by Professor Collins for the Responsibility in Gambling Trust (a copy of which is available on the Trust's website). A number of these studies relate to gaming machine play by children and young persons.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans she has to commission a baseline study on the prevalence of problem gambling in the United Kingdom. [158348]

**Mr. Caborn:** The results from the prevalence study which were published in 2000, and which were taken into account by the Gambling Review Body, provide the most recent baseline. We think that it would be desirable for a further study to be carried out before the provisions of the Bill are brought into effect.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the merits of adopting a harm-indexed approach to forms of gambling. [158353]

**Mr. Caborn:** The draft Gambling Bill reflects the principle that the degree of regulation to be applied to different kinds of gambling activity should reflect the degree of regulatory risk which they involve, those risks being of harm to children and the vulnerable; unfairness to participants; or crime or disorder.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the link between levels of problem gambling and restrictions on the use of gaming machines by under 18s in other European countries. [158691]

**Mr. Caborn:** There is little reliable information currently available to support possible hypotheses on this matter.

## Grants (Lancashire)

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what grants that fall outside the revenue support grant were made available to *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley from her Department in each of the last four financial years. [156509]

**Mr. Caborn:** The information is as follows:

*(a)* The following grants that fall outside the revenue support grant were made available to Lancashire by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in each of the last four financial years.

Lancashire has received the following grants from Arts Council England in the last four financial years[1].

| *Financial year* | *Number of grants* | *Total amount (£)* |
|---|---|---|
| 2000–01 | 0 | 0 |
| 2001–02 | 4 | 132,000 |
| 2002–03 | 3 | 65,400 |
| 2003–04 | 14 | 35,035 |
| Total | 21 | 232,435 |

English Heritage has offered the following grants to Lancashire in the last four financial years[1]:

| | *Repair grants* | | *Heritage economic regeneration schemes* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Financial year* | *Number of grants offered* | *Total* | *Number of grants offered* | *Total* |
| 2000–01 | 6 | 302,173 | 5 | 207,850 |
| 2001–02 | 10 | 267,386 | 8 | 527,411 |
| 2002–03 | 5 | 256,793 | 6 | 299,166 |
| 2003–04 | 5 | 93,381 | 7 | 751,166 |
| Total | 26 | 919,733 | 26 | 1,785,593 |

Lancashire has received the following grants from Sport England in the last four financial years[1]:

| *Financial year* | *Number of grants* | *Total amount (£)* |
|---|---|---|
| 2000–01 | 5 | 72,790 |
| 2001–02 | 10 | 153,340 |
| 2002–03 | 9 | 135,600 |
| 2003–04 | 5 | 44,000 |
| Total | 29 | 405,730 |

In 2001–02, Lancashire county council was awarded £178,000 from the DCMS/Wolfson Public Libraries Challenge Fund for reader development activities in the Burnley area.

Bolton Museum and Art Gallery and the Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery, Preston, are partners in the North West regional hub as part of "Renaissance in the Regions" (the national framework for England's museums and galleries). The North West hub received £160,000 in 2003–04 for "Renaissance", with a further £80,000 from the Education Strategy Fund (which delivers education programmes to school-aged children). The total grant to the North West hub for the period 2003–06 will be £1.42 million for "Renaissance" and £580,000 for the Education Strategy Fund.

Lancashire County Museums Service's textile industry collections are Designated (a pre-eminent collection of national or international importance held in a non-national museum) and have been awarded the following grants through the Designation Challenge Fund since it was established in 1999:

2000–01: £32,693—Development of plans for new displays at Whitakers Mill and improvements to storage.

2001–02: £122,210—Refurbishment and development of the "Spinning a Tale" Gallery, which portrays the mechanisation of the textile industry.

2002–04: £66,749—Improve access to the Designated collections held at Helmshore Textile Museums and Queen Street Mill Museum.

In 2003–04, the North West Regional Development Agency received DCMS funding of £713,000 towards implementing their tourism strategy for the region. Lancashire will be among the beneficiaries of this funding.

Lancashire has received the following awards from the National Lottery in the last four financial years[2]:

| Financial year | Number of awards | Total amount (£) |
|---|---|---|
| 2000–01 | 480 | 21,798,686 |
| 2001–02 | 365 | 25,691,632 |
| 2002–03 | 537 | 25,800,444 |
| 2003–04 | 416 | 25,188,943 |
| Total | 1798 | 98,479,705 |

*(b)* The following grants that fall outside the revenue support grant were made available to Chorley by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in each of the last four financial years.

English Heritage has offered Chorley the following grants in the last four financial years[1]:

| Financial year | Repair grants | | Heritage economic regeneration schemes | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Total (£) | Number | Total |
| 2000–01 | 1 | 7,500 | 0 | 0 |
| 2001–02 | 2 | 20,653 | 0 | 0 |
| 2002–03 | 2 | 74,000 | 0 | 0 |
| 2003–04 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 5 | 102,153 | 0 | 0 |

Chorley has received the following grants from Sport England in the last four financial years[1]:

| Financial year | Number of grants | Total amount (£) |
|---|---|---|
| 2000–01 | 1 | 12,290 |
| 2001–02 | 1 | 12,740 |
| 2002–03 | 0 | — |
| 2003–04 | 0 | — |
| Total | 2 | 25,030 |

In 2003–04, the North West Regional Development Agency received DCMS funding of £713,000 towards implementing their tourism strategy for the region. Chorley will be among the beneficiaries of this funding.

Chorley has received the following awards from the National Lottery in the last four financial years[2]:

| Financial year | Number of awards | Total amount (£) |
|---|---|---|
| 2000–01 | 31 | 169,139 |
| 2001–02 | 42 | 3,087,645 |
| 2002–03 | 74 | 5,150,093 |
| 2003–04 | 47 | 2,352,584 |
| Total | 194 | 10,759,461 |

[1] Excluding Lottery grants.
[2] The data has been derived from the Department's Awards Database and is based on information supplied by the distributing bodies. Full details of each of these projects can be found at: http://wwwlotteryculture.gov.uk/introduction.asp

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what funding and grants are given for theatres in Chorley. [157977]

**Estelle Morris:** This is a matter for Arts Council England. I understand that there is currently no funding going to theatres in Chorley though the grant schemes operated by the Arts Council are open to all applicants who meet the published criteria.

## National Lottery

**Miss Kirkbride:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on her plans to make the distribution of National Lottery funds more responsive to public opinion. [157785]

**Tessa Jowell:** The Government made a commitment in the National Lottery Funding Decision Document to increase the public's involvement in decisions on Lottery spending. The new merged distributor will pioneer new ways to achieve this. In preparation, the Community Fund and the New Opportunities Fund are already beginning to look at new ideas for consulting local people about particular local decisions. Other options on involving the public are being explored, including some of those set out in the decision document. Lottery distributors are also working together to identify best practice and to develop options for increasing public involvement in decisions about Lottery funding themes and local Lottery spending.

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much Heritage Lottery funding was given to each of the principal seaside towns in England and Wales from *(a)* the inception of the Lottery to 1997 and *(b)* 1997 to date, listed in descending order. [156039]

**Estelle Morris:** The amount of Heritage Lottery Funding that was given to each of the principal seaside towns in England and Wales from *(a)* the inception of the Lottery to, 1997 and *(b)* 1997 to date, listed in descending order was:

| | £ |
|---|---|
| *(a) Inception—31 December 1996* | |
| Brighton | 1,218,650 |
| Folkestone and Hythe | 116,000 |
| Thanet | 183,000 |
| Blackpool | 97,500 |
| Weston-Super-Mare | 71,500 |
| Conwy | 60,000 |
| Isle of Wight | 57,000 |
| Southport | 34,000 |
| Hastings and Bexhill | 7,200 |
| Bournemouth | — |
| Eastbourne | — |
| Lowestoft | — |
| Southend-on-Sea | — |
| Torbay | — |
| Whitstable and Herne Bay | — |
| Worthing | — |
| *(b) 1 January 1997 to date* | |
| Brighton | 13,130,219 |
| Hastings and Bexhill | 6,920,138 |
| Conwy | 6,765,877 |
| Southport | 5,538,238 |
| Thanet | 5,054,713 |
| Isle of Wight | 5,149,466 |
| Folkestone and Hythe | 5,412,968 |
| Bournemouth | 3,407,225 |
| Weston-Super-Mare | 1,954,475 |
| Whitstable and Herne Bay | 1,707,311 |
| Southend-on-Sea | 1,694,929 |
| Torbay | 939,100 |
| Lowestoft | 775,547 |
| Blackpool | 745,800 |
| Eastbourne | 435,650 |
| Worthing | 2,062,145 |

### Parthenon Sculptures

**Miss Kirkbride:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent representations she has received from the Greek Government regarding the ownership of the Parthenon Sculptures. [157777]

**Estelle Morris:** Representations made to Government from the Greek Government have focused primarily on reuniting the Parthenon Sculptures in the planned new Acropolis Museum in Athens on a long term basis.

In giving evidence before the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee in June 2000, the Greek Government emphasised that their current case rested on the proposal for a change in location of the Sculptures, rather than ownership issues.

In October 2002, the Prime Minister of Greece presented the Prime Minister with a copy of a proposal for the Reunification of the Parthenon Marbles in Greece which suggested that the restitution of the Marbles be carried out in the form of a long-term loan from the British Museum to the new Acropolis Museum, "bypassing the issue of ownership".

The Government have stated that they consider the Parthenon Sculptures to be a matter for the Trustees of the British Museum who are independent of Government.

### Satellite Television

**Chris McCafferty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent discussions she has had with service providers on access to free-to-view, commercial terrestrial channels, via satellite; and if she will make a statement. [157776]

**Estelle Morris:** Until May last year, the BBC paid for "solus" viewing cards enabling customers who did not wish to pay a subscription to receive the public service broadcasting channels by satellite. However, following the move of its broadcast services to a new satellite, all of the BBC's digital channels are now available via satellite without the need for a viewing card. It has therefore stopped paying for the provision of solus cards.

Following representations from the Government last year, an agreement was reached between the other main broadcasters and BSkyB to ensure that existing solus card viewers could continue receiving the other public service channels after their current cards expired in 2003. Viewers were able to purchase a new card, valid until at least 31 December 2005, for a one-off fee of £20+VAT. This offer was extended until 31 January 2004.

We understand that the broadcasters have no current plans to provide solus cards to new satellite customers. However, the Government remains committed to ensuring that analogue terrestrial broadcasting signals are maintained until everyone who can currently get the main public service broadcasting channels (BBC1 and 2, ITV1, Channel 4/S4C and Five) can receive them free-to-view via at least one of the digital platforms.

### Television Licence (Pensioners)

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will fund free television licences for pensioners. [157689]

**Estelle Morris:** The Government have already introduced free television licences for people aged 75 or over but have no plans to extend this concession to all pensioners. However, the arrangements for funding the BBC after the expiry of the Corporation's current Royal Charter at the end of 2006 are due to be considered as part of the Charter review process. The review will include a detailed examination of the concessionary arrangements.

## SCOTLAND

### Public Transport

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what measures have been introduced to encourage use of public transport by the disabled. [155423]

**Mrs. McGuire:** The specific issues in relation to public transport in Scotland are devolved and a matter for the Scottish Executive. Nicol Stephen., MSP, is the Scottish Executive Minister with responsibility for transport.

I understand, however, that the Scottish Executive is committed to ensuring that public transport is accessible to people with disabilities.

### Supreme Court

**John Thurso:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received on the appropriate number of Scottish members of the new Supreme Court. [156769]

**Mrs. McGuire:** The consultation on the Supreme Court was undertaken by the Department for Constitutional Affairs. Responses from Scottish organisations went directly to them. My right hon. Friend has not received any representations on the number of Scottish members of the new Supreme Court.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Cardiology Services

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what benefits derive from local hospitals providing nurse-led cardiac care services. [157339]

**Angela Smith:** All cardiac care inpatient services in local hospitals are consultant led. Cardiology nurses involved in the provision of cardiac services deliver essential elements of the patients' care, such as lifestyle advice in the case of cardiac rehabilitation. Their skills and knowledge allow for a more holistic approach to the care of patients.

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the cost of local hospitals providing a mobile coronary care service involving *(a)* a senior house officer and *(b)* nurses only. [157340]

**Angela Smith:** A number of different models currently exist for mobile coronary care units. Some are led by junior doctors, some by nurses and others by paramedics. Models of service delivery need to be flexible enough to respond to local needs including geography, demographics and existing service provision. Different types of vehicle are used and different grades of staff are involved, even within one discipline such as nursing. There is no average cost or typical unit. Any estimate of costs for a generic model therefore, whether led by doctors or nurses, would not be meaningful.

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what actions doctors can take as part of a mobile coronary care service that cardiology nurses are unable to offer. [157381]

**Angela Smith:** Mobile coronary care units are staffed by cardiology nurses and/or junior doctors. There is no difference in the procedures that can be undertaken by a doctor and a nurse when involved in a call-out.

During call-outs the coronary care team has access to a telemedicine link with their base hospital, which allows them to obtain the opinion of a senior cardiac doctor if the need arises.

### Departmental Officials

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which former officials of the Department have asked for permission to join *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* Deloitte and Touche, *(c)* Ernst and Young and *(d)* KPMG. [156906]

**Mr. Pearson:** No former Civil Servants from the 11 departments of the Northern Ireland Administration and the Northern Ireland Office have, during the calendar years 2001, 2002 and 2003, applied for permission to join PricewaterhouseCoopers, Deloitte and Touche, Ernst and Young or KPMG.

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what secondments *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* Deloitte and Touche, *(c)* Ernst and Young and *(d)* KPMG have made to his Department since 2001; for what (i) periods and (ii) tasks the secondments were made; whether secondments of staff from his Department have been made to those firms; and for what (A) periods and (B) tasks. [156921]

**Mr. Pearson:** Since 2001 no secondments, either inward or outward, have taken place between the 11 departments of the Northern Ireland Administration and the Northern Ireland Office and the companies mentioned.

The answer excludes agencies and NDPBs.

### Doctors' Hours

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many hours on average were worked weekly by *(a)* consultants, *(b)* registrars, *(c)* senior house officers and *(d)* junior house officers at each of the Province's health trusts in the most recent period for which figures were available. [157395]

**Angela Smith:** The information requested is provided in the table. Detailed information of this nature, however, is not routinely collected by trusts and can be difficult to obtain due to the non-standard working patterns of medical staff. Where precise figures have been unavailable, a number of trusts have attempted to provide a best estimate or range.

*Number of hours (on average) worked by consultants, registrars, senior house officers and junior house officers—week beginning 26 January 2004 (unless otherwise indicated)*

| *Health and social services trusts* | *Consultants* | *Registrars* | *Senior House Officers* | *Junior House Officers* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Altnagelvin Group HSS Trust[1] | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust | 43.0 | 0.0 | 54.2 | 0.0 |
| Belfast City Hospital HSS Trust | N/A | 50.1 | 48.6 | 53.2 |
| Causeway HSS Trust | 43.0 | 50.7 | 45.4 | 54.8 |
| Craigavon and Banbridge Community HSS Trust[2] | 40.0–44.0 | 40.0 | 45.0 | 0.0 |
| Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust | N/A | 48.0–60.0 | 48.0–55.0 | 50.0 |
| Down Lisburn HSS Trust | N/A | 47.3 | 42.1 | 50.8 |
| Foyle Community HSS Trust | N/A | N/A | 46.5 | 0.0 |
| Greenpark Healthcare HSS Trust[3] | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Homefirst Community HSS Trust[4] | N/A | 32.5 | 40.3 | N/A |
| Mater Infirmorum Hospital HSS Trust[5] | N/A | 53.0 | 46.0 | 54.0 |
| Newry and Mourne HSS Trust[6] | 40.0 | 58.0 | 62.0 | 56.0 |
| North and West Belfast HSS Trust | 40.0 | 40.0–48.0 | 40.0–48.0 | 0.0 |
| Royal Group of Hospitals HSS Trust | 45.0–50.0 | 45.0–50.0 | 45.0–50.0 | 50.0–55.0 |
| South and East Belfast HSS Trust | N/A | 41.9 | 48.4 | 0.0 |

*Number of hours (on average) worked by consultants, registrars, senior house officers and junior house officers—week beginning 26 January 2004 (unless otherwise indicated)*

| *Health and social services trusts* | *Consultants* | *Registrars* | *Senior House Officers* | *Junior House Officers* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust[7] | 68.0 | 65.0 | 62.0 | 56.0 |
| Ulster Community and Hospital Group HSS Trust[8] | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| United Hospitals Group HSS Trust | N/A | 53.3 | 48.8 | 47.6 |

[1] Altnagelvin Group HSS Trust cannot readily provide number of hours worked. The majority of the doctors are contracted for a basic 40 hours per week but many are working alternative shift patterns and are on 'on call' rotas.
[2] Craigavon and Banbridge Community HSS Trust has provided approximate hours worked as the medical staff participate on 'on-call' rotas. As such, hours worked each week will vary depending on the intensity of work required in that particular week.
[3] Greenpark Healthcare HSS Trust cannot readily provide number of hours worked.
[4] Homefirst Community HSS Trust has provided figures supplied from the trust's last monitoring return. Information supplied is as at February 2004.
[5] Mater Infirmorum Hospital HSS Trust cannot provide figures for consultant hours as they are currently undertaking a diary exercise on hours worked and this information is not available at present but will be available in due course.
[6] Newry and Mourne HSS Trust have not monitored hours in the period so they can only give an approximation based on the rotas set out for each grade of staff.
[7] Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust have provided consultant figures from 2001 Consultant Appraisal Exercise and Registrar, SHO and Junior House Officer figures from Junior Doctors New Deal Monitoring.
[8] Ulster Community and Hospitals Group HSS Trust has not provided figures due to the disproportionate cost of obtaining the information.

### Ethnic and Religious Integration

**Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much emphasis in targeting social need is given to integrating ethnic and religious groups. [157320]

**Mr. Spellar:** New Targeting Social Need (TSN) is Northern Ireland's main policy for tackling poverty and social exclusion and has three priority areas which focus on Employment/Employ ability, addressing inequality in other areas such as health and housing and Promoting Social Inclusion.

The Promoting Social Inclusion (PSI) element of New TSN involves Departments working, both collectively and with partners outside Government to identify and tackle factors, which can contribute to social exclusion. One of the initial priority areas identified under PSI was the position of minority ethnic people in Northern Ireland.

A formal PSI Working Group was set up to develop a strategy to promote inclusion of minority ethnic people in Northern Ireland and to tackle racial inequalities. A Race Equality Unit was established in 2001 within the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister to oversee the development of the Race Equality Strategy. The Unit's role is to lead on action—by Government and in partnership with external stakeholders—to tackle social exclusion of minority ethnic people in Northern Ireland and racial inequalities. It maintains close links with the Home Office, the National Assembly for Wales, the Scottish Executive and the administration in Republic of Ireland.

A draft of the Strategy was published for consultation in February 2003. A finalised version of the Strategy, which takes account of the results of the consultation, will be published in summer 2004.

### Fatal Shootings

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the circumstances were of the fatal shooting involving members of the Police Service of Northern Ireland on 29 April. [145735]

**Jane Kennedy:** The Police Ombudsman advises that the fatal shooting on 29 April 2003 involving the Police Service of Northern Ireland was referred to her office and that the incident is currently under investigation.

### Giant's Causeway

**Mr. Trimble:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the timetable is for the restoration of the visitor centre at the Giant's Causeway, County Antrim; and if he will make a statement. [157274]

**Mr. Pearson:** The Government have set Easter 2006 as the target date for the provision of new visitor facilities at the Giant's Causeway.

A Prior Information Notice which declares Government's intention to run parallel international competitions for both the architectural design and for the interpretation and fit out of the new facilities will be placed in the Official Journal of the European Union during week commencing 1 March 2004. This is the first step in the process and will be followed by the Formal Notice for the Architectural Design Competition which will invite expressions of interest. The architectural competition, which will be supervised by the International Union of Architects in Paris, will be run in accordance with UNESCO standard regulations for international competitions for World Heritage Sites.

### Health Service (Complaints)

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many complaints were received in Northern Ireland in the last 12 months by each health trust regarding *(a)* hospital, *(b)* community and *(c)* other care. [156321]

**Angela Smith:** Information is not available in the format requested. The following table presents information on the total number of complaints received

by each Health and Social Services Trust in the year ending September 2003. The Trusts are categorised according to whether they are hospital Trusts, community Trusts, mixed (hospital and community) Trusts, or other Trusts.

*Number of complaints received by each Health and Social Services Trust in the year ending September 2003, by category of Trust*

| *Health and Social Services Trust* | *Total Number of Complaints* |
|---|---|
| Belfast City Hospital | 142 |
| Green Park | 126 |
| Mater Infirmorum | 90 |
| Royal Group of Hospitals | 418 |
| United Hospitals | 281 |
| Craigavon Area Group | 177 |
| Altnagelvin Group | 205 |
| Hospital Trusts (Total) | 1,439 |
| North and West Belfast | 160 |
| South and East Belfast | 300 |
| Homefirst | 233 |
| Craigavon and Banbridge | 71 |
| Foyle | 57 |
| Community Trusts (Total) | 821 |
| Down Lisburn | 271 |
| Ulster Community and Hospitals | 331 |
| Causeway | 471 |
| Armagh and Dungannon | 80 |
| Newry and Mourne | 123 |
| Sperrin Lakeland | 85 |
| Mixed Trusts (Total) | 1,361 |
| Northern Ireland Ambulance Service | 192 |
| Other Trusts (Total) | 192 |
| Northern Ireland Total | 3,813 |

*Note:*
Community Trusts may provide services in non-acute hospitals, as well as services outside hospital

### Autistic Spectrum Disorders

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what proportion of sufferers of autistic spectrum disorders in Northern Ireland are deemed to have a learning disability. [156382]

**Angela Smith:** The information requested is not available.

### Physiotherapy

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 4 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 946W, on physiotherapy, if he will provide six monthly totals for each of the last five years of patients who waited between three and six months for an initial physiotherapy assessment. [156439]

**Angela Smith:** Information is collected centrally on numbers of persons attending a first out-patient appointment of an episode of care with a community physiotherapist, rather than on initial physiotherapy assessments. The number of persons who had waited between three and six months for their appointment is shown in the following table. The information is in respect of six-month intervals from the quarter ending 30 September 1998 to the quarter ending 30 September 2003 (the latest date for which such information is available).

| | | *Persons who waited between three and six months* | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Quarter ending* | *Total number of persons* | *Number* | *Percentage* |
| 30 September 1998 | 9,863 | 905 | 9.2 |
| 31 March 1999 | 10,679 | 1,505 | 14.1 |
| 30 September 1999 | 11,837 | 1,504 | 12.7 |
| 31 March 2000 | 11,704 | 2,235 | 19.1 |
| 30 September 2000 | 11,492 | 1,403 | 12.2 |
| 31 March 2001 | 13,446 | 1,995 | 14.8 |
| 30 September 2001 | 12,754 | 2,800 | 22.0 |
| 31 March 2002 | 14,154 | 2,741 | 19.4 |
| 30 September 2002 | 14,303 | 2,610 | 18.2 |
| 31 March 2003 | 15,644 | 2,632 | 16.8 |
| 30 September 2003 | 12,798 | 2,542 | 19.9 |

### Integrated Transport System

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made in the development of an integrated transport system for Northern Ireland. [157659]

**Mr. Spellar:** The Regional Transportation Strategy for Northern Ireland 2002- 12, the underlying principles and strategic direction of which were unanimously agreed by the Northern Ireland Assembly in July 2002, sets out a strategic framework for the future planning, funding and delivery of an integrated transport system for the region.

The implementation of the RTS is overseen, monitored and reviewed by the Regional Transportation Strategy Steering Group. The Department for Regional Development has also established an External Advisory Board, the Integrated Transport Stakeholder Group which offers advice on the implementation of the RTS.

Delivery of the RTS is being progressed through three transport plans; the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan, the Regional Strategic Network Transport Plan and the Sub-Regional Transport Plan. Work on the BMTP is well advanced and a proposed BMTP is due for release for Equality Impact Assessment consultation in March 2004. Taking any EQIA comments into account, publication is expected later in the year.

The RSTN TP is expected to be published in summer 2004. The SRTP is being developed in association with local Development Plans and is to be completed in 2006.

### Intergovernmental Bodies

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the *(a)* cost and *(b)* number of staff was in the (i) North-South Ministerial Council, (ii) British Irish Council and (iii) Inter-Governmental Conference in each year since they were created. [156625]

**Mr. Paul Murphy:** The cost and number of staff in each year since December 1999, when these Bodies were established, are as follows.

*(a) North/South Ministerial Council*

| | Cost (£)[1] | Staff |
|---|---|---|
| 1999–2000 | 94,949 | 6 |
| 2000–01 | 737,162 | 15 |
| 2001–02 | 787,609 | 16 |
| 2002–03 | 606,889 | 16 |
| 2003–04 | [2]489,964 | 15 |

[1] Expenditure by the NI Administration which includes salaries, administration and cost of meetings.
[2] Provisional figure (up to 31 January 2004)

*(b) British-Irish Council*

Each member of the British-Irish Council is responsible for the costs of its participation. The British and Irish Governments provide the Secretariat for the Council, in co-ordination with officials of each of the other members and bear the costs between them. In addition to servicing the work of the Council, the officials are involved in carrying out a range of other duties. It is not therefore possible to provide the cost of the British-Irish Council since its inception nor to identify detailed staff numbers. However, the cost to the NI Administration for Ministerial meetings in NI and travel and subsistence costs for Ministerial meetings outside NI are as follows:

| | £ |
|---|---|
| 1999–2000 | 6,365 |
| 2000–01 | 7,420 |
| 2001–02 | 10,158 |
| 2002–03 | 19,448 |
| 2003–04 | 2,597 |

*(c) British-Irish Inter-governmental Conference*

The cost of the British-Irish Inter-governmental Conferences since 1999 can be obtained only at disproportionate cost. The expenditure of the British-Irish Inter-governmental Secretariat is met by the two governments. The costs given are in relation to the British Government since 2 December 1999.

| | Cost (£) | [1]Staff |
|---|---|---|
| 1999–2000 | [2]232 | 14 |
| 2000–01 | 488 | 14 |
| 2001–02 | 554 | 12 |
| 2002–03 | 539 | 12 |
| 2003–04 | [3]445 | 12 |

[1] Figures given include staff from the Northern Ireland Office and the Irish Government.
[2] As the British-Irish Inter-governmental Conference was established on 2 December 1999, this figure covers the period 2 December 1999 to 31 March 2000.
[3] Provisional figure (up to 31 January 2004)

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many meetings of the *(a)* North-South Ministerial Council, *(b)* British-Irish Inter-Governmental Conference and *(c)* British Irish Council took place in each year since they were created. [156626]

**Mr. Paul Murphy:** The numbers of ministerial meetings that have taken place are as follows:

| Institution | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *(a)* North-South Ministerial Council | 1 | 22 | 24 | 18 | 0 | 0 |
| *(b)* British-Irish Inter-Governmental Conference | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| *(b)* British-Irish Council | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 0 |

**Olympic Bid**

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport in relation to the London 2012 Olympic Bid; and what steps he has taken to promote Northern Ireland as a venue for events within that bid. [157655]

**Angela Smith:** Regular contact takes place with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport through an inter-departmental group on the Olympic bid and one of the issues discussed by this group is how the regions, including Northern Ireland, can benefit from the games. Northern Ireland has been suggested as a venue for the early rounds of the football tournament and there is also the possibility of hosting training and acclimatisation camps for competing countries prior to the Games. The Olympic Bid has also become a standing item on the agenda for the Sports Cabinet, which is attended by UK Sports Ministers, including the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

**Parliamentary Questions**

**Mr. Brady:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many days on average his Department took in Session 2002–03 to give a substantive answer to a parliamentary Question for ordinary written answer; and what the greatest number of days taken to answer such a question was. [155921]

**Mr. Paul Murphy:** This information is not held in the format requested and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, I would like to assure the hon. Member that my department understands the importance of providing prompt and accurate answers to all Parliamentary Questions.

**Child/Adolescent Psychiatry**

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the longest time is for which a person has waited for child and adolescent psychiatry assessment in each board or trust area where the information is available. [157387]

**Angela Smith:** The following table details the longest time a patient has been waiting for child and adolescent psychiatry assessment at each of the health trusts in Northern Ireland which provide child and adolescent psychiatry services. The latest information available is representative of the position at 31 January 2004.[1,2]

| Provider trust | Longest wait |
|---|---|
| Down and Lisburn HSS Trust | 24 months |
| Ulster Community and Hospitals HSS Trust | 5 months |
| Foyle HSS Trust | 36 months |
| Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust | 25 months |
| Homefirst Community HSS Trust[1] | 12 months |
| Craigavon and Banbridge Community HSS Trust | 8 months |
| Newry and Mourne HSS Trust | 12 months |
| Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust | 23 months |
| South and East Belfast HSS Trust[2] | 3 months |
| The Royal Group of Hospitals HSS Trust | 48 months |

[1] Latest available data for Homefirst Community HSS Trust refers to patients waiting at 26 January 2004.
[2] South and East Belfast HSS Trust figures refer to patients waiting at 1 March 2004.
*Note:*
Data for all other trusts refers to patients waiting at 31 January 2004.
*Source:*
HPSS Trusts

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals are waiting for assessment by child and adolescent psychiatry services. [157388]

**Angela Smith:** Information obtained from health trusts in Northern Ireland indicates that, at the end of January 2004[1,2], 1,289 children were awaiting assessment by child and adolescent psychiatry services.

*Number of children awaiting assessment by child and adolescent psychiatry services in Northern Ireland*

| Provider trust | Total number of children waiting |
|---|---|
| Down and Lisburn HSS Trust | 137 |
| Ulster Community and Hospitals HSS Trust | 95 |
| Foyle HSS Trust | 127 |
| Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust | 176 |
| Homefirst Community HSS Trust[1] | 318 |
| Craigavon and Banbridge Community HSS Trust | 59 |
| Newry and Mourne HSS Trust | 69 |
| Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust | 80 |
| South and East Belfast HSS Trust[2] | 56 |
| The Royal Group of Hospitals HSS Trust | 172 |
| Northern Ireland | 1,289 |

[1] Latest available data for Homefirst Community HSS Trust refers to patients waiting at 26 January 2004.
[2] South and East Belfast HSS Trust figures refer to patients waiting at 1 March 2004.
*Note:*
Data for all other Trusts refers to patients waiting at 31 January 2004.
*Source:*
HPSS Trusts

### Road Accidents

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what evidence he has collated on road traffic accidents caused by slow driving. [157391]

**Angela Smith:** The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) is responsible for the collection of road traffic collision statistics in Northern Ireland and I have been advised that statistics relating specifically to collisions caused by slow moving vehicles are not held.

While it is accepted that slow drivers can, on occasion, cause annoyance to other road users, there is no evidence to indicate that slow driving is a major cause of collisions.

### Speed Cameras

**Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what research he has collated regarding the impact of speed cameras on the number of road traffic accidents; and if he will make a statement. [157453]

**Angela Smith:** There have been safety camera schemes similar to the initiative being piloted in Northern Ireland running in Great Britain for a number of years. In the two years of the Great Britain pilot, the number of people killed and seriously injured at camera sites fell by 35 per cent.

The Northern Ireland Safety Camera Pilot Scheme has been in operation since July 2003 and it is too early to make a valid assessment of its contribution to the reduction of road deaths and serious injuries. There is, however, every reason to believe that there is potential for reductions in deaths and serious injuries in Northern Ireland similar to those in Great Britain.

### Victims Memorial Fund

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the Government intend to provide additional funding to the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund for Victims; and if he will make a statement. [156119]

**Angela Smith:** Since 1998, the Government have allocated more than £20 million to victims' issues. More than £7 million of this has been allocated to the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund (NIMF). A number of other initiatives have also been funded. More than £8 million has been allocated for core and project funding to groups working in support of victims. Trauma centres have been established in Belfast and Omagh and Trauma Advisory Panels have been established in each Health Board Area. We are also raising awareness across the public sector about victims' needs, and the special sensitivities required when dealing with those who have experienced traumatic events.

Significant progress has been made in a relatively short period of time but more needs to be done. That is why I am currently working to develop the next generation of victims' policy. As part of this work I am engaged in a consultation process with victims and survivors and with experts and practitioners in the field to find out more about: victims' needs; to what extent existing initiatives, including the NIMF, are meeting these needs; what are the unmet needs; and where the priorities lie. The outcome of this process, which is ongoing, will inform decisions on future policy and funding.

### Waste Recycling

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many district councils in Northern Ireland offer a household waste recycling service. [157660]

**Angela Smith:** All District Councils in Northern Ireland provide a household waste recycling service. The level of provision differs according to each council's operational and budgetary constraints. In all cases, the Waste Management Plans of councils provide for the expansion of these services to maximise recycling and the diversion of waste from landfill.

Councils provide access to recycling facilities for a range of materials at Civic Amenity Centres. These usually include glass, cans and paper. Some centres also collect plastics, wood and green waste for composting.

Civic Amenity Centres are complemented in all council areas by the provision of 'bring facilities' in supermarket car parks or other public locations. These usually consist of glass bottle banks and can banks.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Business Links

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department has taken to reduce administrative demands of Business Link projects on small businesses. [157228]

**Nigel Griffiths:** By their very nature Business Link projects offer services to SMEs and do not make additional demands upon them. Business Link Operators provide information, advice or access to experts on any aspect needed to start and expand a business and access to a range of business support solutions including DTI business support products.

### Business Regulation

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the 10 projects to reform the regulatory environment for small business referred to in figure 19.3 of the Trade and Industry Departmental Report, Cm 5916. [157195]

**Nigel Griffiths:** The Government remain committed to creating a business environment in which all business, especially small business, has the chance to start, grow and employ staff. It recently published its Action Plan for Small Business on 8 January 2004, which details the measures it will take to reduce the regulatory burden. The Action Plan supersedes and builds on the 10 projects, details of which are set out as follows.

| *Projects* | *Details* |
|---|---|
| Timesaver Initiative | Timesaver has been incorporated as part of the Business.gov programme. The new Businesslink.gov.uk website is a key delivery arm of the programme. |
| Carter Review of Payroll Services | There was general support for the principle of greater use of information technology. The incentive payments to encourage smaller employers with less than 50 employees to file electronically will begin from 2004–05. The electronic filing of employer returns are expected to become a universal requirement from 2010. The payroll support given by Business Support Teams and the employers' helpline will be expanding. |
| Small Firms Litmus Test | Revised Small Firms Impact Test introduced in February 2003 as part of new Regulatory Impact Assessment process. A database of businesses has been developed to assist policy makers. |
| Revitalising Local Business Partnerships | SBS introduced a Partnership Fund which aims to build on the work currently undertaken by LBPs and encourage LBPs to promote and sustain partnerships. The LBP website was launched in 2001. SBS provide a forum highlighting best practices within the partnerships. SBS have a part-time national LBP co-ordinator. A second national conference was held in June 2003 to mark the 10th anniversary of the first LBP (Barnsley). |
| Parental Leave and Dispute Resolution | Maternity and Paternity package introduced in April 2003. Dispute and Grievance Package including revised ACAS Code coming into force Oct 2004. Small business heavily involved in the shaping of the policy. |
| Disability | SBS has developed relationships with the Disability Rights Commission on the drafting of its code. SBS has worked with Employers Forum on Disability to ensure that Business Advisors can offer best-advice to small business. Input into the new Bill and other initiatives om disability are on-going. |
| Better Regulation Task Force Small Shopkeepers Report | 12 recommendations made to Government. Six were accepted, five accepted in part and one not accepted. Progress made, for example, on liquor licensing reform, single internet portal and guidance. |
| Food Standards and Food Labelling Requirements | SBS has forged closer links with the FSA and is working with the agency on the introduction of new simplified standards for the food sector. The aim is to minimise the impact on small businesses. |
| Climate Change Levy | In 2002 the SBS in conjunction with Ecotec undertook research into the impact of the Levy on small businesses. These results were fed into wider DTI work being completed on the levy. |
| Health and Safety Bill | The majority of elements within the Health and Safety Bill were transport related and were incorporated into a Transport Bill with all the health and safety issues dropped from it and not being pursued. |

### Business Support

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many firms have been helped by *(a)* grants for research and development, *(b)* grants for investigating an innovative idea and *(c)* knowledge transfer partnerships since their introduction. [157191]

**Nigel Griffiths:** The information is as follows.

*(a)* 207 Grant for R&D offers have been made between 1 June 2003 to 31 December 2003.

*(b)* 75 Grant for Investigating an Innovative Idea offers have been made between 1 June 2003 and 31 December 2003.

*(c)* Since the first Knowledge Transfer Partnerships were considered in September 2003, 130 partnerships have been approved and so far 16 of them have begun work on their projects.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much money has been spent on the Small Firms Loan Guarantee scheme since it was created; and of this total, how much has been spent on administration. [157194]

**Nigel Griffiths:** Between the start of the scheme in June 1981 and 31 March 2003 the total programme expenditure has been £482.8 million. Expenditure on administration between 1 April 2000 and 31 March 2003 is estimated at £1.97 million of which £0.37 million is included within the total of £482.8 million and £1.6 million is additional. Earlier administrative cost could be determined only at disproportionate cost.

### Consumer Direct

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the *(a)* responsibilities and *(b)* planned expenditure of Consumer Direct for each year between 2003 and 2006. [157196]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** The information is as follows:

*(a)* The responsibilities of Consumer Direct are: to provide consistent consumer advice by telephone, e-mail and online, thereby improving accessibility and meeting unmet demand estimated at 400,000 to 1.5 million calls per year; to improve the quality and coverage of information for Trading Standards through access to a central consumer complaints database; and to refer consumers who need additional help and support to the agencies best placed to assist them, including Trading Standards and Citizens Advice Bureaux.

The service will provide clear, practical advice for consumers who want to: sort out problems with suppliers of goods and services; know their rights as consumers; report scams and find out how to avoid them; receive advice on how to seek out reputable traders. The overriding aim is to empower consumers to resolve issues themselves. It will not provide product specific information or recommend individual organisations or service providers, nor will it intervene with a trader on a consumer's behalf.

Consumer Direct will begin operation in four Pathfinder nations/regions this summer (Scotland, Wales, Yorkshire and the Humber, and the South West Nationwide rollout (excluding Northern Ireland) will be completed by 2007.

*(b)* The planned expenditure of Consumer Direct is:

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 2003–04 | 3 |
| 2004–05 | 11 |
| 2005–06 | 16 |

This expenditure may be subject to adjustment depending on the speed of roll out following implementation of the pathfinders.

### Debt Collection Agencies

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what regulations exist for debt collection agencies regarding the amount of evidence that must be represented to them before they take up a claim. [155662]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) licence debt collection under the Consumer Credit Act 1974. The OFT publishes guidance which is intended to set out the type of behaviour that falls within the category of unfair business practices and which call into question fitness to retain or be given a licence. The most recent guidance on debt collection was published in July 2003.

The guidance does not specify what evidence must be provided to a debt collection agency before they take up a claim but it does state that "sending demands for payment to an individual when it is uncertain that they are the debtor in question" and "ignoring and/or disregarding claims that debts have been settled" are examples of unfair practices.

The guidance also makes it clear that the creditor remains responsible for third parties acting on their behalf and states that if they "choose to do business or continue to do business with third parties engaged in questionable fitness, then their own fitness will be called into question."

A copy of the guidance can be obtained from the Office of Fair Trading, Fleetbank House, 2–6 Salisbury Square, London EC4Y 8JX.

### Department Branding

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much her Department spent on branding the Department between 1997–98 and 2003–04, broken down by *(a)* consultancy fees, *(b)* design and orders for new stationery, *(c)* website design and *(d)* other material featuring new logos. [154075]

**Ms Hewitt:** The Department does not centrally collect the information sought at the required level of detail and to provide it would entail disproportionate cost.

However, in 2003 as a result of the DTI Review and the subsequent need to reduce the number of competing brands and logos emanating from the Department all design work has been rationalised around the single and well-recognised DTI logo. £300,000 was spent on identity development and design guidelines—including the production of electronic stationery templates—with the purpose of saving future design costs for the Department. In addition £3,000 has been spent on new stationery, £5,000 on the website and £10,000 on new publicity materials. At all times current and future costs are being kept to a minimum—with the new design guidelines phased in as appropriate.

### Dirigibles

**Mr. Challen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research her Department has conducted on the potential *(a)* environmental and *(b)* economic benefits that could be derived from dirigibles in meeting future aviation needs. [157702]

**Mr. McNulty:** I have been asked to reply.

None. We do not envisage that dirigibles will play a significant role, if any, in meeting future air passenger transport needs.

### Disadvantaged Communities

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department is taking to encourage enterprise in disadvantaged communities. [157232]

**Nigel Griffiths:** Promoting more enterprise in disadvantaged communities and among groups of people currently under-represented in enterprise is one of the seven core strategies in the "Action Plan for Small Business" that we published in January 2004.

We have introduced, and are continuing to develop, a range of measures that includes:

establishing the Phoenix Fund with a £145 million budget to improve the quality of business support and access to finance (funding a diverse range of initiatives that target specific geographic areas as well as women, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, offenders and refugees);

tasking Business Links to ensure that their services meet the needs of everyone in their areas interested in setting up and running their own business, irrespective of where they live;

developing enterprise areas (the 15 per cent. most deprived wards) as a means of co-ordinating better policy development;

support for the Inner City 100 Index which celebrates and role models the success of entrepreneurs from disadvantaged communities;

specific tools to help community-based social enterprises develop their business skills;

through the Phoenix Fund supporting the production of City Growth Strategies to help disadvantaged communities to put enterprise at the heart of regeneration.

### E-commerce

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures her Department is taking to regulate the use of *(a)* symbols and *(b)* hallmarks by web-traders. [157212]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** The Government do not regulate directly the use of symbols and hallmarks by web-traders. Some web-traders use these devices to show that they subscribe to voluntary codes of practice for electronic commerce. The Government encourage the development of self-regulatory approaches to electronic commerce as a light touch alternative to legislation.

The Enterprise Act 2002 empowers the Office of Fair Trading to approve consumer codes of practice. These arrangements apply to consumer codes generally; they could cover codes for e-commerce, but are not specific to such codes or to symbols and hallmarks used by web-traders.

The Trade Marks Act 1994 protects signs that are used to indicate the origin of goods, and the courts have confirmed that this law applies equally to the use of such signs on the internet.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many businesses have been accredited with the TrustUK e-hallmark in each year since its inception; and what assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of TrustUK in increasing consumer confidence for on-line shopping. [157213]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** The number of businesses accredited with the TrustUK e-hallmark in each year since its inception is:

| | *Number of web-traders* |
|---|---|
| 2000 | 3,765 |
| 2001 | 4,500 |
| 2002 | 5,285 |
| 2003 | [1]2,941 |

[1] Decrease in numbers follows the closure of the Consumers' Association's Which? WebTrader scheme in January 2003.
Figures provided by TrustUK.

TrustUK is a private sector organisation, which was originally set up with Government endorsement by the Alliance for Electronic Business and The Consumers' Association.

The Department has participated in two reviews of the TrustUK scheme. These reviews concluded that TrustUK should switch from regulatory work to promoting best practice more generally.

In 2003, DTI decided to withdraw the secretariat services it provides to the TrustUK approvals committee. This decision took into account the pressure on DTI resources, recent changes to the legislative framework including the Enterprise Act 2002 (which sets out a new approach to codes of practice), and the Department's belief that TrustUK, as a private sector self-regulatory organisation, should be able to operate independently.

The extent to which schemes like TrustUK are able to enhance consumer confidence depends on their ability to generate demand from business and profile among consumers.

Since its launch TrustUK has achieved much. Its criteria for e-commerce codes and its "code of codes" model have attracted positive interest and among other things have influenced the European Commission's thinking on an EU-wide code scheme for e-commerce.

### Engineering/Manufacturing Jobs (North-West)

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many jobs in *(a)* engineering and *(b)* manufacturing have been lost in (i) the North West and (ii) Lancashire since 1997. [156983]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** Although official statistics do not provide estimates of the number of jobs lost, the ONS Annual Business Inquiry does show the changes in the total number of employee jobs by region.

In the North West, there were 83,000 (or 16 per cent.) fewer employee jobs in manufacturing and 31,000 (or 15 per cent.) fewer employee jobs in engineering in 2002 compared to 1997.

In Lancashire, there were 12,000 (or 11 per cent.) fewer employee jobs in manufacturing and 1,000 (or 2 per cent.) fewer employee jobs in engineering in 2002 compared to 1997.

This information is given in the following table.

*Employee jobs in engineering and manufacturing for the North West and Lancashire*

| | *1997* | *2002* | *Net change* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Manufacturing* | | | |
| North West | 532,000 | 449,000 | -83,000 |
| Lancashire | 106,000 | 94,000 | -12,000 |
| *Engineering* | | | |
| North West | 197,000 | 167,000 | -31,000 |
| Lancashire | 44,000 | 43,000 | -1,000 |

*Note:*
Engineering defined as SICs 27 to 35
*Source:*
1997 Rescaled Annual Employment Survey, Office for National Statistics
2002 Annual Business Inquiry, Office for National Statistics

### Industrial Disputes

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department is taking to minimise the impact of working days lost owing to labour disputes on the *(a)* public administration, *(b)* education and *(c)* health sectors. [157238]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** The DTI does not have lead responsibility for these sectors. While the number of stoppages in 2003 was an all-time low, the Government via the lead Department concerned makes contingency plans, where appropriate, to minimise the impact on the public.

### Information Security

**Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures her Department have taken to ensure that Government Departments are adequately protected from internet hackers and fraudsters. [157806]

**Mr. Alexander:** I have been asked to reply.

The Cabinet Office provides all Government Departments with comprehensive guidance on information security which is regularly updated as required. This includes advice on how to protect against internet hackers and fraudsters. Departments also subscribe to UNIRAS, the Government's incident reporting and alert scheme, which provides immediate warnings and advice on how to protect against the latest threats.

### Inward Investment

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many inward investment decisions were made in the United Kingdom in each year between 1999 and 2003; what the expenditure of British Trade International was on inward investment; and how many new jobs were created through inward investment. [157202]

**Nigel Griffiths:** The following figures are based on information provided by companies at the time of the announcement of the decision to invest in the UK. They are based on the companies best estimate of jobs created by the investment in its first three years. The figures take no account of subsequent developments. There is no requirement to notify UK Trade and Investment and so these figures include only those projects where UK Trade and Investment and its regional partners were involved or which have come to their notice.

Also in the table is a breakdown of inward investment expenditure by UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) formerly British Trade International. These figures include the part funding of the English Regional Development Agencies.

| | *Number of projects* | *Number of new jobs* | *UKTI inward investment expenditure (£ million)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1999–2000 | 800 | 54,365 | 15.3 |
| 2000–01 | 880 | 71,168 | 18.7 |
| 2001–02 | 844 | 35,362 | 18.1 |
| 2002–03 | 711 | 34,446 | 20.9 |

### Jobcentre Plus

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many away days were organised by Jobcentre Plus in 2003; and what their total cost was. [157200]

**Mr. Pond:** I have been asked to reply.

The information requested can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

### Miners' Compensation

**Mr. Todd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether those whose mining compensation claims have been concluded based on erroneous pension calculations will receive payment of any balance due on a correct recalculation. [155595]

**Nigel Griffiths:** The Department has agreed with the claimants' solicitors that where an offer of compensation is made using the interim pensions spreadsheet in the absence of a final version of the calculator, claimants may either:

(i) accept the offer as a full and final settlement of all heads of damage, including pension loss, in which case there is no entitlement to a top-up payment; or,

(ii) accept the offer in full and final settlement of all heads of damage, except pension loss, in which case the claimant may claim a top-up payment once the calculator is finalised.

**Andy Burnham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many claims for *(a)* chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and *(b)* vibration white finger have been received to date under the Coal Health Compensation Scheme from the *(a)* Leigh, *(b)* Makerfield and *(c)* Wigan constituencies; and how many have received (i) full and final settlement and (ii) an interim award only. [156727]

**Nigel Griffiths** *[holding answer 1 March 2004]:* The figures as of 31 January 2004 are:

| | *Claims received* | *Full and final settlements* | *Interim payments* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Leigh* | | | |
| COPD | 3,779 | 974 | 603 |
| VWF | 701 | 422 | 388 |
| *Makerfield* | | | |
| COPD | 3,015 | 675 | 453 |
| VWF | 646 | 349 | 378 |
| *Wigan* | | | |
| COPD | 2,553 | 537 | 388 |
| VWF | 366 | 180 | 186 |

Constituency figures can be found on the DTI website: www.dti.gov.uk/coalhealth. The information is complied in the middle of the month and shows the figures for the end of the previous month.

**Andy Burnham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the cumulative total paid out under the Coal Health Compensation Scheme to former miners and their families in the *(a)* Leigh, *(b)* Makerfield and *(c)* Wigan constituencies was in each of the last five years. [156728]

**Nigel Griffiths** *[holding answer 1 March 2004]:* The figures are:

£

| | *Total damages paid*[1] |
|---|---|
| *Leigh* | |
| 1999 | 443,229 |
| 2000 | 1,439,124 |
| 2001 | 3,197,967 |
| 2002 | 6,240,815 |
| 2003 | 10,999,680 |
| *Makerfield* | |
| 1999 | 337,963 |
| 2000 | 1,234,187 |
| 2001 | 2,766,916 |
| 2002 | 5,154,127 |
| 2003 | 9,114,523 |
| *Wigan* | |
| 1999 | 193,935 |
| 2000 | 772,161 |
| 2001 | 1,694,785 |
| 2002 | 3,494,4[illegible] |
| 2003 | 6,027,1[illegible] |

[1] Cumulative as at end of year.

*Notes:*

1. Statistics represent COPD and VWF claims combined.
2. Total damages paid are cumulative as at the end of the year.
3. Produced from data copy as at 22 February 2004.

Constituency figures can be found on the DTI website: www.dti.gov.uk/coalhealth. The information is complied in the middle of the month and shows the figures for the end of the previous month.

### Minimum Wage

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people in each London borough are earning the minimum wage. [156678]

**Mr. Sutcliffe** *[holding answer 1 March 2004]:* It is not possible to provide estimates specifically for each borough of London. However, based on the Office for National Statistics' Low Pay data released in 2003, the DTI estimates that around 80,000 people in London stood to benefit from the introduction of the national minimum wage in April 1999.

The DTI estimates that between 50,000 and 60,000 people in London benefited from the increase in minimum wage rates in October 2003.

### Ministerial Meetings

**Mr. Webb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list, for each bilateral meeting that she has had in the last two years with senior executives of commercial organisations, *(a)* the date of the meeting, *(b)* the commercial organisation with whom she met and *(c)* whether the meeting was at (i) her instigation and (ii) the instigation of the commercial organisation concerned. [156336]

**Ms Hewitt** *[holding answer 26 February 2004]:* I meet representatives from many commercial organisations during the course of my ministerial duties. Obtaining the information as requested could be achieved only at disproportionate cost to the taxpayer.

### North Korea

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she is taking to promote trade between the United Kingdom and North Korea. [157541]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** HMG has not undertaken any trade promotion activity with or in North Korea in the light of North Korea's pursuit of a clandestine nuclear weapons programme. The resumption of such activity is dependent upon substantial progress being made towards a resolution of the nuclear and diplomatic issues.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the benefits to UK firms of North Korea's legislation to exempt foreigners from dual taxation. [157551]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** None at present.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the benefits to UK firms of North Korea's legislation to give foreigners investment protection guarantees. [157552]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** None.

### Paid Leave

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what percentage of the work force has less than three weeks' annual paid leave. [155265]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** According to the UK Labour Force Survey 1.7 per cent. of full-time employees had less than 15 days paid holiday including bank holidays in autumn 2003 compared to 4.6 per cent. in autumn 1997. From 1999 onwards the working time regulations provided 20 days paid annual leave entitlement including bank

holidays per year. In autumn 2003, 2.5 per cent. of full-time employees had less than 20 days paid annual leave including bank holidays compared to 6.8 per cent. in autumn 1997.

### Small Business

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many small businesses have reported access to *(a)* finance and *(b)* regulation as barriers to growth in each year since 1997. [157233]

**Nigel Griffiths:** Prior to summer 2001 there were no Government surveys that collected robust information on the concerns of small businesses.

The following table records the proportion of small businesses reporting that access to finance was a barrier to growth in four surveys of small and medium enterprises conducted by the Small Business Service since 2001.

These surveys did not collect information on the proportion of small businesses reporting that regulation was a barrier to growth. They did, however, collect data on the proportion of small businesses reporting that regulation was one of the main obstacles to the success of their business. This information is also recorded in the following table.

In each survey, around two thousand owner-managers were interviewed.

*The proportion of English small businesses with 1–249 employees[1] who said that they had had a problem with raising finance and that this had slowed the growth of their business[2]*

| | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Wave 1 (summer 2001) | 6 |
| Wave 2 (autumn 2001) | 3 |
| Wave 3 (winter 2001–02) | 2 |
| Wave 4 (summer 2002) | [2]Not available |
| Wave 5 (autumn 2002) | 1 |

[1] Excludes firms with no employees.
[2] This question was not asked in Wave 4 of the Omnibus Survey.
*Source*:
Small Business Service Omnibus Survey

*The proportion of English small businesses with 1–249 employees[1] who, when asked what were the main obstacles to the success of their business, mentioned regulation[2]*

| | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Wave 1 (summer 2001) | [2]Not available |
| Wave 2 (autumn 2001) | 25 |
| Wave 3 (winter 2001–02) | 28 |
| Wave 4 (summer 2002) | 20 |
| Wave 5 (autumn 2002) | 22 |

[1] Excludes firms with no employees.
[2] This question was not asked in Wave 1 of the Omnibus Survey.
*Source*:
Small Business Service Omnibus Survey.

The results of the most recent survey of small businesses conducted by the Small Business Service (autumn 2003) will be published in summer 2004.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many national strategies for the Small Business Service have been *(a)* developed and *(b)* implemented; and how her Department intends to monitor these. [157237]

**Nigel Griffiths:** In December 2002, the Small Business Service (SBS) published "Small Business and Government—The Way Forward"—a strategic framework for a government-wide approach to helping small businesses based around seven themes identified as key drivers for economic growth, improved productivity and enterprise for all. Government have used this framework to build a single, cross-government action plan for small business. The SBS published the Action Plan on 8 January 2004.

Implementation is now underway. Progress is being monitored through a web-based implementation programme accessible at www.sbs.gov.uk which sets out milestones and target dates for the implementation of the actions, together with relevant contact points within Government. It is being updated on a regular basis.

### Takeovers

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent representations she has received from the CBI on the proposed EU Directive on Takeovers. [157902]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** The Department received representations from, and had regular meetings with, the CBI and other business and City consultees throughout the negotiations on the EU Takeovers Directive. We expect the Directive to be finally adopted in the near future.

### Working Hours

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the *(a)* costs and *(b)* benefits of long hours working for (i) non-manual and (ii) manual workers in the UK. [155289]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** The Department has commissioned and published a two volume study entitled "Working long hours: a review of the evidence" (DTI Employment Relations Research Series No. 16) which summarises the costs and benefits of long hours working for both manual and non-manual workers in the UK. It can be found at the following web address: http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/inform.htm.

**Michael Fabricant:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what position she plans to take in the Council of Ministers on the European Parliament's proposal to end the freedom of employees to work more than 48 hours a week; and if she will make a statement. [156462]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** The Council of Ministers will exchange views on the Commission's Communication published on 5 January 2004 when they meet on 4/5 March.

The UK believes legislation should provide minimum standards of employment protection while maintaining the flexibility our individual labour market requires and which many workers prefer. We believe that maintaining the opt out allows workers choice as well as protection.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Burma

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the UN Commission on Human Rights regarding the mandate of the Special Rapporteur in respect of human rights in Burma. [157463]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** We fully support the efforts of Sergio Pinheiro, the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights. We are currently working with our EU partners on this year's Commission on Human Rights Resolution on Burma, including on Pinheiro's Mandate.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the UN Special Envoy to Burma. [157467]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** I am in regular contact with Tan Sri Razali Ismail, the UN Special Envoy to Burma and last met him when he visited London in July 2003. We fully support his tireless efforts to promote reconciliation in Burma and we urge the regime to allow him to return to Burma soon—he and the UN have a crucial role to play in the reconciliation process.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what assessment he has made of the treatment of Rohingya Muslims under Burma's 1982 Citizenship Law; [157469]

(2) what assessment he has made of the treatment of Rohingya Muslims in Arakan State in Western Burma. [157470]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** We are concerned by the issue of ethnic minority rights and the abuses suffered by ethnic groups in Burma including the Rohingya Muslims. The UK welcomes and is supportive of all efforts to encourage the Burmese military regime to enter into genuine and substantive dialogue with democratic and ethnic group leaders in Burma leading to national reconciliation.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what representations he has made to the Burmese Government about the level of political detentions in the country since May 2003; [157615]

(2) what representations he has made to the State Peace and Development Council in Burma about the release of all prisoners of conscience from prison; [157627]

(3) what representations he has made to the State Peace and Development Council in Burma about the release of Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest; [157628]

(4) what representations he has made to the State Peace and Development Council in Burma about lifting all restrictions on the activities of the National League for Democracy and other political parties in Burma. [157632]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** I have repeatedly called on the Burmese regime to release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest, to release all political prisoners and prisoners of conscience and to allow freedom of speech and activity for the National League for Democracy and all political parties. Most recently I pressed these issues when I met the Burmese Ambassador on 23 February.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the number of political detentions in Burma *(a)* between May 2002 and May 2003 and *(b)* since May 2003. [157616]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** We estimate that there were approximately 1,300 political prisoners in Burma between May 2002 and May 2003. We estimate that there are currently about 1,350 political prisoners in Burma.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the number of rapes committed by members of the Burmese Army in 2003. [157630]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** We do not have the information to make a reliable estimate.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he expects that the Burmese Army will complete the withdrawal of troops from *(a)* Karen, *(b)* Karenni and *(c)* other ethnic areas. [157631]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** It is not possible to predict when the Burmese Army will complete its withdrawal of troops from these areas.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the extent of the use of child soldiers in Burma by the State Peace and Development Council. [157634]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** We are deeply concerned by reports of child soldiers in Burma. UNICEF estimates that as many as 70,000 child soldiers are in the Burmese national army and Human Rights Watch reported in October 2002 that they constituted one fifth of Burma's army and can be as young as 11-years-old. The issue has been included in successive EU co-sponsored UNGA and UNCHR resolutions. In January 2004, the UN Security Council passed a Resolution on Children Affected by Armed Conflict. We highlighted our concerns on child soldiers in Burma.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the ceasefire agreement between the State Peace and Development Council in Burma and the Karen National Union; [157635]

(2) what recent discussions he has had with the Burmese Government about the establishment of a process for monitoring infringements of the ceasefire between State Peace and Development Council troops and those of the Karen National Union. [157722]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** When I met the Burmese Ambassador on 23 February, I welcomed the talks between the State Peace and Development Council and the Karen National Union to agree a ceasefire. I hope that these talks will lead to a permanent peace settlement.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the extent of forced labour in Burma. [157643]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** The Burmese Government have still to address effectively the international community's concerns over the use of forced labour in Burma. In 2002 and 2003 there was a worrying number of credible reports suggesting forced labour was widespread in Burma, especially in the border areas where the military presence remains high. At the International Labour Organization (ILO) Governing Body meeting on 20 November 2003 the EU expressed grave concern at the Burmese Government's failure to take effective action on forced labour and stressed the need to fully implement the recommendations from the ILO High Level Team report of September 2001 without any further delay. The ILO's Governing Body meeting in March 2004 will give further consideration to the situation in Burma.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last had contact with the Karen National Union; and what was discussed. [157645]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** I have had no direct contact with the Karen National Union.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last communicated with representatives of the State Peace and Development Council in Burma; and what the content of the exchange was. [157646]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** I met the Burmese Ambassador on 23 February to discuss the State Peace and Development Council plans for a National Convention. I pressed for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners. I stressed the need for an inclusive, transparent National Convention with a clear time-frame. We welcome the move from detention to house arrest of U Tin Oo, but we call for his and Aung San Suu Kyi's full release.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the number of *(a)* Karen and *(b)* Karenni people who have been displaced by the Burmese Army in each of the last three years. [157647]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** We estimate that approximately 140,000 refugees, mostly from Karen and Karenni States, live in refugee camps on the Thai/Burmese border. As many as one million live as illegal migrants in Thailand. We estimate there are about 630,000 internally displaced people within Burma.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the human rights situation in Burma; and what representations he has made to the Burmese Government about the matter. [157723]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** There has been no significant improvement in the human rights situation in Burma. I regularly raise our concerns on humanitarian issues with the Burmese authorities, most recently when I met the Burmese Ambassador on 23 February. We co-sponsored the UN General Assembly Human Rights Resolution on Burma last December and will play an active role in the forthcoming UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva. We strongly support the efforts of the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights, Sergio Pinheiro.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations his Department has made to the Burmese Government about the need for an independent investigation into the violence perpetrated in Depayin on 30 May 2003. [157726]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** We have repeatedly condemned the violent regime-sponsored attack on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her convoy on 30 May 2003. The UK co-sponsored the UN General Assembly Resolution on Burma in December 2003 that called on the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) to hold a full and independent enquiry into Depayin with international co-operation. We await the SPDC's response.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Burmese Government about the fate of the 11 people sentenced to death for high treason under Article 122(1) of the Penal Code. [157727]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** The UK opposes the use of the death penalty in all circumstances and we, together with European Union partners, call on all countries to abolish the death penalty. The EU Presidency expressed the EU's grave concern over the sentences in a demarche to the Burmese authorities in December.

### Corporate Taxation

**Mr. Spring:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the Government's policy on the co-ordination of corporate taxation within the European Union. [157117]

**Dawn Primarolo:** I have been asked to reply.

The Government's view is that fair tax competition is the way forward for Europe, not tax harmonisation. The Government will not support any action at European level that would threaten jobs and investment or damage the competitive position of British business.

### Departmental Officials

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which former officials of the Department have asked for permission to join *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* Deloitte & Touche, *(c)* Ernst and Young and *(d)* KPMG. [156902]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** Since 1998, we are unaware of any former officials of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office who have asked for permission to join Pricewaterhouse Coopers, Deloitte & Touche, Ernst and Young or KPMG.

To locate individual requests from officials earlier than 1998 would incur disproportionate costs.

### Guantanamo Bay

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the United

Kingdom recognises the legal right of the United States to build and operate a prison camp at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. [157156]

**Mr. Mullin:** The extent to which arrangements between the US and Cuba permit the US to build and operate facilities in Guantanamo Bay is primarily a matter for the two Governments concerned.

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information has been provided to him by *(a)* the United States Department of Defense and *(b)* other US authorities in respect of information obtained from the four detainees holding British citizenship being kept in detention at Camp Delta at Guantanamo Bay. [157157]

**Mr. Mullin:** There are nine British nationals currently detained at Guantanamo Bay.

In accordance with exemption 1 of Part 2 the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, we do not disclose information received in confidence from a foreign government.

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the locations where British *(a)* citizens and *(b)* residents were detained before being taken to the American prison camp at Guantanamo Bay; on what dates (i) British diplomats and (ii) members of the security and intelligence services visited each detainee; and whether any British (A) citizen and (B) resident being held at Guantanamo Bay has been permitted a visit from a legal representative. [157188]

**Mr. Mullin:** In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, we are not in a position to give details of where the British nationals at Guantanamo Bay were detained prior to their transfer there. Exemption 15 of Part 2 the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information applies. British diplomats visited the British detainees in January 2002, February 2002, May 2002, November 2002, April 2003 and September 2003. Officials have questioned the British detainees about matters relevant to national security. The Government have a duty to protect the UK's national security. As far as we are aware, no British nationals or British residents have been permitted a visit from any legal representative.

### Hong Kong

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many UK passport holders live in Hong Kong. [157567]

**Mr. Mullin:** There are approximately £3.6 million British passport holders living in Hong Kong.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when a visit by a Minister in his Department to Hong Kong will next take place; and what talks have taken place with China on a ministerial visit to Hong Kong. [157985]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** Foreign engagements for my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and other Ministers are kept under constant review. It is not practice to announce such visits until they are firm. Because of the unpredictable nature of world events, final decisions on overseas visits are often not possible until very shortly before the day of travel and occasionally not until they are under way.

The most recent visit to Hong Kong by a Foreign Office Minister was by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Mr. Rammell) in December 2003.

Due to the high degree of autonomy afforded to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) under the "One Country, Two Systems" principle, we discuss the timing of ministerial visits to Hong Kong with the SAR Government.

### Iran

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the recent elections in Iran. [157649]

**Mr. Rammell:** Over the last 10 years Iran has made progress towards greater political freedom. But the flawed parliamentary elections held on 20 February were a clear setback.

On 23 February, EU Foreign Ministers expressed their deep regret and disappointment that large numbers of candidates, including many sitting deputies, had been prevented from standing, thus making a genuine democratic choice by the Iranian people impossible. For elections in any country to be regarded as free and fair, electors must have a chance to vote for candidates with a range of views.

### Iraq

**Norman Lamb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials from (i) his Department and (ii) other Departments have had contact with Mr. Nadhmi Auchi since the conflict in Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [142019]

**Mr. Rammell:** Pursuant to his answer on 5 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 84W.

Since replying, it has been brought to my attention that my noble Friend the Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean wrote to Mr. Nadhmi Auchi on 7 July 2003 in response to his letter to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 15 May 2003 about the Anglo Arab Organisation. United Kingdom Trade and Investment (UKTI) officials also met with Mr. Auchi in June 2003, in connection with his role in the Anglo-Arab Organisation and in July sent him a list of their events in the region. Mr. Auchi also sent three invitations to the Prime Minister and his officials, all of whch were declined

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the earliest possible date for the holding of elections in Iraq; and what steps he is taking to expedite such an election. [157652]

**Mr. Rammell:** The Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General, Lakhdar Brahimi, visited Iraq in February to look into the processes and timing of elections. His report, issued on 23 February, made clear that elections were not feasible before the end of 2004 at

the earliest. We accept this assessment and stand ready to support the UN and the Iraqis in preparing for elections based on the UN's suggested timetable. We have worked hard with the Iraqis to agree a Transitional Administrative Law, an essential step towards early elections.

### Middle East

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the impact of the Israeli separation fence on health service provision in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. [157637]

**Mr. Rammell:** Israel's building of a barrier on occupied territory restricts the free movement of people and essential supplies—including the provision of health services—between the Occupied Territories and Israel and other countries, as well as within the Occupied Territories. We are concerned by reports that a number of Palestinians have been deprived of urgent medical attention as a result of delays at checkpoints. We continue to express our serious concerns over the route and impact of the fence to the Israeli Government. Most recently, my noble Friend the Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean raised the matter with the Israeli Defence Minister, Shaul Mofaz, in London on 12 February.

### Radio Free Asia

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the value of Radio Free Asia in *(a)* communicating news and *(b)* stimulating political debate. [157536]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** None.

### Secondments

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what secondments *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* Deloitte & Touche, *(c)* Ernst & Young and *(d)* KPMG have made to his Department since 2001; for what (i) periods and (ii) tasks the secondments were made; whether secondments of staff from his Department have been made to those firms; and for what (A) periods and (B) tasks. [156925]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** According to our records, the following secondments have been made into the Foreign and Commonwealth Office:

*a. PricewaterhouseCoopers*

(i) One person from 1 April 2000 to 1 April 2001

(ii) Based in Management Consultancy Services in the FCO.

*b. Deloitte & Touche*

(i) No inward secondments

*c. Ernst & Young*

(i) No inward secondments

*d. KPMG*

(i) One person from 1 June 2000—1 June 2001

(ii) Based in the IT Strategy Unit (ITSU), FCO.

Our records show that no officers have been seconded to these companies since 2001.

### Uganda

**Mr. Blizzard:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to seek to end the conflict in Northern Uganda. [157667]

**Mr. Mullin:** We deplore the violence perpetrated against innocent civilians by the Lord's Resistance Army in the north of Uganda. We continue to encourage the Ugandan Government to seek a peaceful resolution to this conflict and to take steps to improve prospects for dialogue.

UK support to date has focussed on humanitarian assistance (£8.4 million in the last twelve months); targeted support to reconciliation processes; promotion of human rights, international humanitarian law, and supporting the role of civil society and improving international donor coordination.

We continue to keep in close contact with the Government of Uganda and the international community to see what more we can do to help.

**Mr. Blizzard:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action he is taking to obtain the support of international organisations to address the conflict in Northern Uganda. [157669]

**Mr. Mullin:** We are working closely with the international community and organisations to improve donor coordination and support a resolution of the conflict in northern Uganda. The UK was instrumental in the founding of the Donor Technical Group on the North in Kampala and currently holds the position of Deputy Chair of the Group. This is widely seen as the most important co-ordinating forum on donor responses to the conflict and has contributed to the development of agreed approaches and programmes in support of conflict resolution.

**Mr. Blizzard:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what meetings his Department has had with the Ugandan Government regarding the conflict in the north of the country. [157670]

**Mr. Mullin:** We continue to raise the conflict with the Lord's Resistance Army with the Government of Uganda at official and ministerial level. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and I discussed the situation in northern Uganda with President Museveni during his visit to London on 29 January. We urged President Museveni to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict. We encouraged him to take steps to improve prospects for dialogue. Our High Commissioner in Kampala is in constant touch with the Ugandan President about this issue.

**Mr. Blizzard:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to prevent the abduction of children in Northern Uganda by the Lord's Resistance Army. [157672]

**Mr. Mullin:** The vast majority of Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) fighters are the innocent children of civilians, abducted and forced to fight against their will. The degree of violence and the practice of making

children a main target of their war is deeply repellent. We are supporting efforts to seek a resolution to this conflict and providing support to rehabilitate children who escape their LRA captors. Over the last year the UK has given £1.3 million to UNICEF and Save the Children Fund for relief activities, and their work to protect children at risk of abduction and to reintegrate child ex-combatants into society.

### United Nations

**Mr. Spring:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the Government's policy is on the establishment of a United Nations council for sustainable and human development. [157112]

**Mr. Rammell:** The UK believes the UN has an important role to play in promoting sustainable and human development. We believe the key is to strengthen the effectiveness and co-ordination of existing organisations, rather than creating new ones.

The Millennium Declaration in 2000 and the World Summit for Sustainable Development in 2002 established concrete measures for judging performance on sustainable development through the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. The UK is now working at the national and international level to meet these commitments. The UK provides substantial support for those UN bodies dealing with sustainable and human development.

The UK believes the UN must change to better reflect current demands, and is taking part in the continuing discussion on reform of the UN system. As part of this process we are looking at the work of those UN bodies dealing with sustainable and human development.

**Mr. Spring:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will support the launch of an international convention for the reform of the United Nations in 2005. [157110]

**Mr. Rammell:** We do not see the need for new mechanisms to reform the United Nations, as we would prefer to work through existing processes. The UK is a strong advocate of reform at the United Nations. The effectiveness of the organisation must be enhanced to ensure that the UN is able to meet the challenges currently facing the international community. Our priorities are a Security Council that deals effectively with the full range of threats to international peace and security: we welcome the establishment by the Secretary-General of a High Level Panel to look at this issue. We are supporting efforts to revitalise the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and moves to reform the development agencies. We have also strongly supported Kofi Annan's 2002 proposals to improve the UN Secretariat and its budgetary procedures. We believe that these existing processes will lead to an organisation better equipped to meet current challenges.

### Zimbabwe

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the regulations on presidential powers issued this month by the Zimbabwe Government; and what representations he has made about them. [157535]

**Mr. Mullin:** The regulations provide for the automatic detention in custody for nine days for people charged with a wide range of political and economic crimes, including those charged with advocating and organising violence, boycotts or civil disobedience under the Public Order and Security Act. They could be used to harass members of civic society, the independent media and ZANU (PF)'s political opponents.

At the General Affairs and Economic Relations Council on 23 February, EU Foreign Ministers issued a strong statement condemning the Government of Zimbabwe for its human rights abuses.

## EDUCATION AND SKILLS

### Basic Skills Training

**Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many adults he plans should participate in learning and skills training up to their first level 2 in each year from 2003 to 2006. [154976]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** We expect around 475,000 adults to participate in learning up to their first full level 2 funded by the public sector between 2003 and 2006. In addition there will be a number of learners participating in privately funded learning. We expect this privately funded learning to deliver around 180,000 adults with a first full level 2 between 2003 and 2006.

Taken together with the change in the levels of qualifications of people in the workforce through young people entering the labour market (as adults) and replacing poorer qualified retirees, we expect this level of participation to enable us to meet our commitment to increase the number of adults with a full level 2 qualification by 1 million between 2003 and 2006.

### Broadband

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools have a broadband connection. [157190]

**Mr. Charles Clarke:** As at December 2003, 41 per cent. of primary schools and 98 per cent. of secondary schools (49 per cent. of all schools), in England, were connected to broadband compared to just one in eight two years ago. This data has been extracted from LEA connectivity statistics.

### Computer Access

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what successor schemes there are to the Computers in Reach scheme; and what support is in place to maintain equipment acquired under that scheme. [158151]

**Mr. Charles Clarke** *[holding answer 2 March 2004]:* The Computers Within Reach Scheme closed on 31 October 2001 having delivered over 24,000 recycled computers to people in 22 pilot areas, at a cost of

£7.1 million over two years. Those eligible were in receipt of certain working age benefits or a State Pension with minimum income guarantee.

An evaluation was conducted, and copies have been placed in the House of Commons Library. The report highlighted a number of difficulties. In view of these difficulties, we considered carefully whether to repeat the scheme against alternatives that might provide more effective access to ICT and learning opportunities for those currently without access.

At the time it was decided to channel the remaining £7.9 million into purchasing wireless technology equipment and laptops for Adult and Community Learning Centres serving deprived wards around the country.

There are no current plans to initiate any similar projects.

Each individual who received a refurbished computer from one of the contracted suppliers would as part of the agreement receive a one year warranty with the machine. All costs for maintenance and upgrades would then fall to the owner when the years warranty expired.

### Departmental Running Costs

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the running costs of his Department were for each year since 2000–01; what his estimate is of annual expenditure up to 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [156587]

**Mr. Charles Clarke:** Details of the Department's gross administrative expenditure for 2000–01 to 2005–06 are contained in Table 5.1 of Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2003 (Cm 5901). The figures are on a resource basis. Figures for 2000–01 and 2001–02 were published in Table 5.5 of Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2000–01 (Cm 4601) but these are on a cash basis.

### Disabled Children

**Jim Dobbin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to improve the statistics he collects on *(a)* the number of disabled children, *(b)* the type of disability affecting each child, *(c)* the severity and combination of their disabilities, *(d)* the levels of service provided for disabled children and *(e)* the adequacy of these services. [154741]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** The Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) took place last month. For the first time the Department collected the Special Educational Needs (SEN) type, for those pupils with statements or who are classified as "school action plus". This will enable us to examine the background factors associated with particular SEN types and the attainment patterns at various Key Stages of particular groups of pupils. Since many pupils with SEN have multiple needs the data collected records their primary and secondary need.

As for levels and adequacy of services, OfSTED will be reporting to the Secretary of State in 2005 on how well schools in general are carrying out the duties which were brought in by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001. These duties focus on inclusion, providing protection from discrimination for disabled pupils and strategic planning to improve access to schools for disabled pupils. There is a clear expectation that these duties will lead to improvements in the services provided to disabled children at school.

We have improved the information we collect about the number of disabled children supported by social services through the Children in Need (CIN) Census, which shows the number of disabled children reported in the survey week who received a service during that week. The last survey was carried out in February 2003, with the local authority results from this due to be published on 26 February. (The previous survey was carried out in September/October 2001.) The results are published and shown by local authority, although not collected by type of disability nor what type of service they received.

Further information on data collection by type of SEN can be found at http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/sen/datatypes.

### Education and Youth Council

**Mr. Hood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the outcome was of the Education and Youth Council held on 26 February; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if he will make a statement. [157915]

**Alan Johnson:** The Education, Youth and Culture Council on 26 February adopted the joint Commission/Council interim report on the detailed work programme on the follow-up to the Lisbon Objectives on education and training systems in Europe for transmission to the 2004 Spring European Council.

The proposal for a Decision to establish "Europass", a single transparency tool for qualifications and competences was discussed. This part of the discussion was held in public and televised. The Irish Presidency are aiming to reach a Common Position on this by May 2004.

The Council adopted a number of items without discussion. These included the Decision establishing new rules for the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training (ACVT), to take account of EU enlargement.

The Commission announced that it would be adopting a Communication next month on the next generation of education spending programmes. This Communication will set out the Commission's proposals for the next phase of Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Tempus, (2007–2013).

The Commission presented its Report on the follow-up to the Recommendation of the European Parliament and Council on mobility within the Community of students, persons undergoing training, volunteers and teachers and trainers.

Over lunch, progress on the 2004 European Year of Education through Sport was discussed. This is intended to showcase and promote the role of physical education and school sport, in particular its contribution to whole school standards and developing citizenship.

### Educational Maintenance Allowances

**Helen Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the *(a)* cost and *(b)* likely effect on participation rates of extending educational maintenance allowances to those engaged in part-time study. [156635]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** The minimum attendance requirement for EMA is only 12 guided learning hours per week, so the main evaluation of the pilot scheme has assessed impact on part-time as well as full-time study. We do not plan to extend EMA to those studying for less than 12 hours. The evidence from the evaluation also indicates that with EMA, young people are able to establish a better balance between part-time work and their studies.

### Examinations

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of pupils in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough achieved three grade As or above at A Level in each of the last five years. [158456]

**Mr. Miliband:** The information requested is as follows:

*Part (a):*

The percentage of 16–18 year old A level candidates achieving at least three grade As at A level in Greater London in 1999 to 2003:

| *Year* | *Percentage* |
|---|---|
| 1999 | 3.8 |
| 2000 | 4.4 |
| 2001 | 4.5 |
| 2002 | 4.8 |
| 2003 | 5.1 |

*Part (b):*

The percentage of 16–18 year old A level candidates achieving at least three grade As at A level in each Local Education Authority in London in 1999 to 2003:

| | *1999* | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* | *2003* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Inner London | 2.7 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 2.7 | 2.9 |
| Camden | 4.4 | 5.7 | 5.7 | 5.4 | 5.1 |
| Hackney | 0.5 | 0.6 | 1.1 | 0.7 | 0.9 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 3.6 | 7.0 | 4.3 | 3.6 | 5.0 |
| Haringey | 2.5 | 4.2 | 2.9 | 3.2 | 4.6 |
| Islington | 1.9 | 1.8 | 1.3 | 1.1 | 0.5 |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 5.9 | 2.0 | 2.6 | 4.5 | 6.9 |
| Lambeth | 1.0 | 0.0 | 1.1 | 0.0 | 3.8 |
| Lewisham | 2.2 | 2.5 | 3.7 | 2.4 | 2.4 |
| Newham | 1.3 | 1.9 | 1.5 | 2.8 | 1.3 |
| Southwark | 0.0 | 2.4 | 1.1 | 1.0 | 0.4 |
| Tower Hamlets | 0.5 | 0.3 | 0.6 | 1.0 | 0.1 |
| Wandsworth | 3.1 | 2.7 | 3.3 | 1.8 | 3.2 |
| Westminster, City of | 2.2 | 1.8 | 3.3 | 3.5 | 2.9 |
| Outer London | 4.1 | 4.9 | 5.0 | 5.5 | 5.9 |
| Barking and Dagenham | 1.0 | 1.5 | 1.1 | 2.6 | 1.6 |
| Barnet | 7.5 | 8.3 | 8.1 | 9.3 | 10.8 |
| Bexley | 2.8 | 3.9 | 5.0 | 5.6 | 5.4 |
| Brent | 3.4 | 3.8 | 3.7 | 5.2 | 4.3 |
| Bromley | 3.9 | 5.4 | 5.9 | 5.7 | 6.3 |
| Croydon | 2.2 | 2.3 | 2.0 | 2.4 | 3.0 |
| Ealing | 1.7 | 3.8 | 4.5 | 2.8 | 5.9 |
| Enfield | 5.3 | 5.7 | 4.8 | 5.7 | 5.2 |
| Greenwich | 1.7 | 3.0 | 1.3 | 1.4 | 2.3 |
| Harrow | 2.6 | 3.7 | 2.8 | 3.6 | 4.7 |
| Havering | 4.6 | 4.3 | 4.1 | 5.9 | 4.6 |
| Hillingdon | 3.3 | 5.3 | 4.5 | 3.0 | 4.5 |
| Hounslow | 2.0 | 2.7 | 2.3 | 3.4 | 2.6 |
| Kingston upon Thames | 5.0 | 8.0 | 10.7 | 7.8 | 8.7 |
| Merton | 3.7 | 4.4 | 1.0 | 4.6 | 4.7 |
| Redbridge | 6.1 | 5.9 | 6.0 | 6.1 | 8.5 |
| Richmond upon Thames | 3.6 | 4.2 | 3.9 | 4.6 | 5.6 |
| Sutton | 8.0 | 8.8 | 9.7 | 13.7 | 11.2 |
| Waltham Forest | 1.6 | 1.1 | 2.3 | 2.1 | 1.8 |

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the value added between Key Stage 3 and GCSE/GNVQ for schools in *(a)* Ribble Valley and Fulwood and *(b)* Lancashire was excluding the results of specialist schools. [156495]

**Mr. Miliband:** The following table shows the 2003 Key Stage 3 to GCSE/GNVQ Value Added measures for *(a)* Ribble Valley parliamentary constituency and *(b)* Lancashire local education authority when (1) Specialist schools are included and (2) Specialist schools are excluded. Figures are based on maintained schools only:

| | *(a) Ribble Valley* | *(b) Lancashire LEA* |
|---|---|---|
| *(1) Specialist schools included* | | |
| KS3-GCSE/GNVQ VA measure | 99.0 | 98.8 |
| (Number of schools) | (10) | (118) |
| *(2) Specialist schools excluded* | | |
| KS3-GCSE/GNVQ VA measure | 99.0 | 99.5 |
| (Number of schools) | (6) | (85) |

These figures represent the results of one particular cohort of pupils, showing their value-added over the two years leading up to GCSE. School and LEA figures are also available in the school performance tables covering pupil value-added over the three years leading up to KS3. Similar information for each of these key stages was also published for the 2002 cohorts. Any assessment of whether particular schools or types of school are more effective than others should take into account this wider picture, as well as recognising that small differences in VA scores may not indicate significant differences in effectiveness.

### School Fire Alarms

**Bob Russell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills who is responsible for ensuring that fire alarms in schools comply with legislation and regulations. [157946]

**Mr. Miliband:** Under health and safety legislation responsibility for fire safety, including the maintenance of fire alarm systems, rests with the employer. With community schools, community special schools, voluntary controlled schools, maintained nursery schools and pupil referral units, the employer is the local education authority. For foundation schools, foundation special schools and voluntary aided schools, the employer is usually the governing body. With independent schools, the employer is usually the governing body or proprietor.

### Kurdish

**Dr. Tonge:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to allow students in UK schools to take Kurdish at GCSE level. [158303]

**Mr. Charles Clarke:** The decision whether or not to offer particular subjects at GCSE is one for the awarding bodies which are independent commercial enterprises. They do not currently offer a GCSE in Kurdish. The Department has no power to prescribe that subjects outside of the statutory national curriculum should be available at GCSE. For some areas of study, such as Kurdish, which are likely to have a relatively low number of candidates, the cost of providing an examination would be an important consideration for the awarding bodies.

### Vocational Qualifications

**Mr. Willis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether level 2 entitlements for adults are available to individuals who are economically inactive. [156069]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** As we said in our Skills Strategy White Paper, "21st Century Skills", we will create a new guarantee of free tuition for any adult without a good foundation of employability skills to get the training they need to achieve such a qualification at level 2. We intend that it will apply to those in the workforce or of working age—including the economically inactive who are seeking those employability skills—who do not already have a full level 2 qualification, and who commit to trying to achieve one. The Government already waive tuition fees for certain categories of adults receiving income-based benefits such as income support, housing and council tax benefits and those undertaking basic skills learning. Many colleges also offer free or discounted learning for other groups of people including those not on state benefits.

### Medical Students

**Dr. Kumar:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students entered universities to study medicine in *(a)* 1992, *(b)* 1997, *(c)* 2001 and *(d)* 2003. [148408]

**Alan Johnson:** The available figures are given in the table and cover accepted applicants through the Universities and Colleges Admission Service (UCAS).

*Accepted applicants through UCAS to pre-medicine study at UK institutions*

| *Year of entry* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1992 | 4,425 |
| 1997 | 5,029 |
| 2001 | 6,240 |
| 2002 | 6,959 |

*Source:*

The Universities Central Council on Admissions (1992) and Universities and Colleges Admissions Service.

### Postgraduate Education

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment his Department has made of the impact of the proposals for higher education on the number of students choosing to continue in postgraduate education. [157496]

**Alan Johnson:** As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Skills stated in the Second Reading debate on 27 January, there will be a review by an independent commission, reporting to Parliament directly on the impact of the new fee regime three years after implementation. Evaluation of the impact on postgraduate education will be considered as part of that review.

My right hon. Friend has also commissioned a report to examine the Gateways into the Professions which will be led by Sir Alan Langlands. The report will examine how the public sector and the professions can sustain and improve recruitment opportunities for graduates, especially those who do not qualify for the full £3000 support. Sir Alan will be reporting to us by mid 2005.

### Pupil Numbers

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils were on the roll in each secondary school in Newcastle upon Tyne in each year since April 2000; and what percentage of those students *(a)* were eligible for and *(b)* took up free school meals. [157053]

**Mr. Miliband:** The available data are shown in the table.

*Maintained secondary schools[1]: School meal arrangements Newcastle upon Tyne local education authority area—Position in January each year*

| | *Number on roll[2,3]* | *Number known to be eligible for free meals* | *Percentage known to be eligible for free meals* | *Pupils taking free school meals* | *Percentage taking free school meals* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2000 | 17,874 | 4,572 | 25.6 | 3,123 | 17.5 |
| 2001 | 18,071 | 4,573 | 25.3 | 2,988 | 16.5 |
| 2002 | 17,805 | 4,190 | 23.5 | 2,783 | 15.6 |
| 2003 | 17,808 | 4,213 | 23.7 | 2,890 | 16.2 |

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.

[2] Includes dually registered pupils.

[3] For 2000–02 excludes boarding pupils.

*Source:*

Annual Schools' Census

It is the Department's current policy not to publish school level information unless the schools concerned have had the opportunity to confirm the information available through processes such as the performance tables. Information on free school meals has not been confirmed in this way.

**Sandra Gidley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children were being educated at each key stage in the Romsey constituency in each school year since 1997–98. [157077]

**Mr. Miliband:** The information requested is shown in the table.

*Maintained primary and secondary schools: number of pupils by key stage[1,2]—Position in January each year 1997 to 2003 Romsey parliamentary constituency*

| | Primary | | Secondary | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Key stage 1*[3] | *Key stage 2*[4] | *Key stage 3*[5] | *Key stage 4*[6] |
| 1997 | 2,020 | 3,960 | 4,140 | 2,730 |
| 1998 | 2,010 | 4,010 | 4,140 | 2,710 |
| 1999 | 2,010 | 4,020 | 4,260 | 2,700 |
| 2000 | 1,930 | 4,120 | 4,350 | 2,720 |
| 2001 | 1,850 | 4,090 | 4,470 | 2,810 |
| 2002 | 1,750 | 4,020 | 4,490 | 2,860 |
| 2003 | 1,850 | 4,070 | 4,470 | 2,910 |

[1] Key stage based on pupils' age.
[2] Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.
[3] Pupils aged 5 and 6 at the start of the academic year.
[4] Pupils aged 7, 8, 9 and 10 at the start of the academic year.
[5] Pupils aged 11, 12 and 13 at the start of the academic year.
[6] Pupils aged 14 and 15 at the start of the academic year.
*Source:*
Annual Schools' Census

### Recruitment Advertising

**Pete Wishart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what his Department's expenditure on recruitment advertising was in each of the last three years, broken down by publication; and what proportion of such expenditure was *(a)* to advertise vacant posts and *(b)* in the form of other general recruitment advertising. [155517]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** My Department uses the most appropriate national, regional, trade magazine publication or website for recruitment advertising, depending on the nature of the vacancy to be filled. The media used most regularly included the *Guardian/Observer, Times/Sunday Times, TES, Economist, Ethnic Media Group* and Personnel Publications.

The following table gives the advertising costs for Civil Servants recruited to work within my Department for the years 2001/02 and 2002/03. The figures represent a significant investment in bringing into the Department, at a senior level, people with delivery skills and experience in the wider education and skills sector and beyond.

The Department for Education and Skills was established in June 2001 and therefore the figures quoted for 2001/02 are from June 2001–March 2002. The figures for 2002/03 are for a complete financial year.

£

| | *2001/02* | *2002/03* |
|---|---|---|
| Central Recruitment relating to Grades AA–Grade 6 | 187,890.24 | 134,016.11 |
| Senior Civil Service Recruitment | 111,266.54 | 256,669.66 |
| Totals | 299,156.78 | 390,685.77 |

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much his Department has spent on recruitment advertising in each year since 1997. [156452]

**Mr. Charles Clarke:** The following table gives the advertising costs for civil servants recruited to work within my Department for the years 2001/02 and 2002/03. The figures represent a significant investment in bringing into the Department, at a senior level, people with delivery skills and experience in the wider education and skills sector and beyond.

The Department for Education and Skills was established in June 2001 and therefore the figures quoted for 2001/02 are from June 2001-March 2002. The figures for 2002/03 are for a complete financial year.

£

| | *2001/02* | *2002/03* |
|---|---|---|
| Central recruitment relating to Grades AA–Grade 6 | 187,890.24 | 134,016.11 |
| Senior civil service recruitment | 111,266.54 | 256,669.66 |
| Total | 299,156.78 | 390,685.77 |

### School Buildings (Cleethorpes)

**Shona McIsaac:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list *(a)* new schools, *(b)* major building projects and *(c)* major refurbishments to schools in Cleethorpes constituency since 1997. [158118]

**Mr. Miliband:** The majority of capital support is allocated to schools and local education authorities (LEAs) by formula, and they decide how to invest it in line with their asset management plans. The Department does not, therefore, have complete information about all the new schools, major building projects and major refurbishments in Cleethorpes. This information should be held locally. However, the following table shows the total capital support provided by this Government for school buildings in North East Lincolnshire LEA and North Lincolnshire LEA since 1997–98.

*£ million*

| | *North East Lincolnshire* | *North Lincolnshire* |
|---|---|---|
| 1997–98 | 0.858 | 0.950 |
| 1998–99 | 2.987 | 2.635 |
| 1999–2000 | 3.137 | 2.241 |
| 2000–01 | 5.550 | 5.856 |
| 2001–02 | 3.599 | 10.019 |
| 2002–03 | 7.993 | 9.945 |
| 2003–04 | 7.718 | 6.113 |

We have to date, also allocated indicative funding for future years worth approximately £7.248 million in 2004–05 and £3.366 million in 2005–06 for North East Lincolnshire, and £10.051 million in 2004–05 and £2.542 in 2005–06 for North Lincolnshire.

### School Funding (Greater London)

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the *(a)* schools funding spending share, *(b)* school pupil numbers and *(c)* schools funding spending share per pupil was in (i) Greater London and (ii) each London borough in each year since 1997. [158453]

**Mr. Miliband:** Education Formula Spending Share (EFSS) replaced the former Education SSA in 2003–04. There is no equivalent to Schools Formula Spending Share (SFSS) in years prior to 2003–04 so information is given in tables showing EFSS and SSA, pupil numbers

and EFSS/SSA per pupil in Greater London and for each London borough since 1997. A copy of the tables has been placed in the Library.

### School Sports Facilities

**James Purnell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent discussions he has had with universities on the opening of their sports facilities for out-of-hours community use. [157767]

**Alan Johnson:** There have been no discussions with universities on the opening of their sports facilities for out-of-hours community use. Higher education institutions (HEIs) are autonomous organisations and it is up to individual institutions to decide on the degree of public use of their sports facilities. This will vary depending on the type of facilities, the requirements of the local community and the needs of the institutions. However, I am aware that universities are already increasingly engaged in this type of activity.

### Special Schools

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the age profile of teachers in special schools is; and how many newly qualified teachers were recruited by these schools in the last year for which figures are available. [157605]

**Mr. Miliband** *[holding answer 1 March 2004]:* There were 100 newly qualified[1] entrants to full or part-time service in maintained special schools in England between March 2001 and March 2002.

The following table shows regular qualified teachers in full-time service in maintained special schools in England by age, at March 2002:

[1] Includes conventional and employment based training routes.

*Special schools*

| *Age* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Under 25 | 80 |
| 25–29 | 690 |
| 30–34 | 950 |
| 35–39 | 1,190 |
| 40–44 | 1,830 |
| 45–49 | 3,380 |
| 50–54 | 3,260 |
| 55–59 | 1,370 |
| 60 and over | 160 |
| All ages | 12,910 |

*Provisional data:*
Database of Teacher Records

### Specialist Schools

**Mr. Brady:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of bids for specialist school status made by *(a)* faith schools, *(b)* non-faith schools, *(c)* faith schools with a comprehensive intake, *(d)* non-faith schools with a comprehensive intake, *(e)* Church of England schools, *(f)* Roman Catholic schools, *(g)* grammar schools and *(h)* Roman Catholic grammar schools have been successful. [157751]

**Mr. Miliband** *[holding answer 1 March 2004]:* The following table shows specialist school applications over the last two years.

*Specialist school applications*

| *Type of school* | *Number of applications*[1] | *Percentage of applications successful* |
|---|---|---|
| Faith schools | 249 | 58.2 |
| Non-faith schools | 1,179 | 60.4 |
| Faith schools with a comprehensive intake | 217 | 66.8 |
| Non-faith schools with a comprehensive intake | 1,036 | 59.9 |
| Church of England schools | 71 | 56.3 |
| Roman Catholic schools | 172 | 58.7 |
| Grammar schools | 87 | 70.1 |
| Roman Catholic grammar schools | [2]7 | 14.3 |

[1] These figures include some schools which have applied on more than one occasion.
[2] Given the small sample size, this data should be interpreted with caution.

The selection process for the Specialist Schools Programme is robust and transparent.

It is open to all maintained secondary schools and our aim is that all schools that are ready should become specialist.

All unsuccessful applicant schools receive detailed written feedback based on independent assessments. The Specialist Schools Trust and Youth Sport Trust provide a range of support to these and other aspiring specialist schools.

### Student Drop-out Rates

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research his Department has commissioned into *(a)* student drop-out rates in the poorest communities and *(b)* the impact of benefit rules on students dropping out of access courses. [156308]

**Alan Johnson:** We are not aware of research into student drop-out rates in the poorest communities. However, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) has found that levels of non-completion are correlated only very weakly, if at all, with social class after taking into account prior academic record (see HEFCE submission to the Education and Employment Committee, Sixth Report, 13 March 2001, HC 124, page 121). Other research has reached similar conclusions. Examples include:

"Right Choice? A follow-up to 'Making the Right Choice'", Connor H., Pearson R., Pollard E., Tyers C., Willison R. Universities UK 2001 http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/pubs/report.php?id = 1427uuk

"Dropping Out: A study of early leavers from Higher Education" Rhys Davies and Peter Elias, DfES Research Report 386 http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/

Research shows that non-completion is a complex process that cannot normally be explained by any single factor. The reasons (many of which are inter-related) why people leave higher education include:

incompatibility between the student and their course or institution;

lack of preparation for higher education;

lack of commitment to the course;

financial hardship;

poor academic progress; and

health or other personal reasons.

The Department is not aware of research into the impact of benefit rules on students dropping out of access courses.

The UK non-completion rate has stayed broadly the same at around 17–18 per cent. since 1991–92 and this fell to just over 16 per cent. in the figures published in December 2003 by HEFCE. This represents one of the highest completion rates in the OECD and we are determined to maintain this level of performance.

HEFCE has allocated £225 million to institutions in 2003–04 for widening access and improving retention and recognises some of the additional costs of supporting students from non-traditional backgrounds and those who are less well prepared for higher education.

### Teachers (Retirement)

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to raise the normal retirement age for teachers to 65; what estimate he has made of the cost savings from raising the pension age to 65; and if he will make a statement. [156575]

**Mr. Miliband:** The retirement age of teachers is covered in the contract of employment between the teacher and their employer. Issues relating to contractual retirement ages are still under consideration in the light of the policy on encouraging longer working lifetimes in the Green Paper (GM 5865) "Simplicity, security and choice: Working and saving for retirement. Action on occupational pensions"; and considerations on how legislation on age discrimination under the EU Employment Directive EC78/2000 will be implemented in the UK.

The provisions of the Teachers' Pension Scheme are currently under review in consultation with representatives of teacher and employer associations. This review is being conducted in the context of proposals to increase the normal pension age (ie the age at which scheme members can access an unreduced pension) to 65. It is proposed that the higher pension age would apply to new teachers from 2006 and to the future service of existing teachers from 2013. The impact on scheme costs of the increase in the normal pension age and any improvements that may be made to the existing provisions of the TPS will be assessed by the Government Actuary as options are worked up in consultation with teacher and employer representatives.

### Training Boards

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the annual cost to public funds is of the *(a)* Construction Industry Training Board and *(b)* Engineering Construction Industry Training Board; and if he will make a statement. [156586]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** The operating costs of the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) and the Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB) are funded from a levy on the employers in the industries they cover.

They may receive public funding from government departments or agencies to support employer training through the delivery of particular projects or initiatives. In the financial year ended December 2003 the CITB received a total of £41,685,000 and the ECITB received £1,494,000. The vast majority of this was Learning and Skills Council funding to support the delivery of Modern Apprenticeships.

### Undergraduates

**Chris Grayling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many undergraduate students there were in the United Kingdom on the latest date for which figures are available broken down by *(a)* age, *(b)* nature of course and *(c)* type of institution. [145106]

**Alan Johnson:** The available figures are given in the table.

*All undergraduate students enrolled at UK institutions, 2002/03*

| | *Pre-1992* | | *Of which: Russell group*[1] | | *Post-1992* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Age* | *1st degree* | *Other UG* | *1st degree* | *Other UG* | *1st degree* | *Other UG* |
| Up to 20 years | 332,673 | 18,565 | 164,300 | 6,165 | 201,829 | 33,816 |
| 21–24 years | 125,991 | 31,785 | 59,305 | 9,118 | 131,420 | 31,147 |
| 25 years plus | 51,845 | 257,405 | 15,934 | 44,109 | 102,069 | 105,671 |
| Total | 510,509 | 307,755 | 239,539 | 59,392 | 435,318 | 170,634 |

[1] The Russell Group includes the Universities of Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Nottingham, Oxford, Sheffield, Southampton, Warwick, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Cardiff, Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine, King's College London, University College London and the London School of Economics and Political Science.

*Source:*
Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and Learning Skills Council (LSC)

| | *Other HEIs* | | *FEIs*[1] | | *Total* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Age* | *1st degree* | *Other UG* | *1st degree* | *Other UG* | *1st degree* | *Other UG* |
| Up to 20 years | 65,342 | 11,389 | 5,621 | 49,810 | 605,465 | 113,580 |
| 21–24 years | 35,934 | 8,599 | 4,238 | 30,626 | 297,583 | 102,157 |
| 25 years plus | 27,967 | 32,483 | 7,428 | 107,536 | 189,309 | 503,095 |
| Total | 129,243 | 52,471 | 17,287 | 187,972 | 1,092,357 | 718,832 |

[1] Figures for HE study in FE institutions have been carried over from 2001/02 until figures for 2002/03 are available.

*Source:*
Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and Learning Skills Council (LSC)

### Transitional Funding

**Shona McIsaac:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) which local education authorities have submitted bids for additional transitional funding to assist schools and local education authorities with financial problems; [158117]

(2) what criteria has been set down for allocating the transitional relief which has been awarded to local education authorities to help schools with budget difficulties. [158120]

**Mr. Miliband:** The information requested has been placed in the Libraries.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### Benefit Payments

**Mr. Webb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of likely reasons for the increase in Income Support and Jobseekers's Allowance overpayments to non-pensioners owing to official error; and if he will make a statement. [155892]

**Mr. Pond** *[holding answer 25 February 2004]:* The loss from fraud and error in Income Support (IS) and Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) reduced to 7.3 per cent. in March 2003, compared to the 10.4 per cent. September 1998 baseline figure. This is the lowest ever level of loss recorded and builds on our previous achievements. We have now reduced by 30 per cent. the loss for people of working age receiving IS or JSA.

The Department estimates that the rate of overpayment in IS and JSA due to official error was 1.9 per cent. of expenditure for the period April 2002 March 2003. The equivalent figure in the previous year, for the period April 2001 to March 2002, was 1.8 per cent.

The increase of 0.1 per cent. is very small compared to the margins of sampling error around the two estimates. Furthermore, a change in the methodology between 2001–02 and 2002–03 increased the estimate of official error by 0.1 per cent. In these circumstances we cannot conclude that there has been a real increase in the underlying rate of official error. Further details on the methodology change will be provided in the next National Statistics report which is due to be published in March 2004.

### Child Support Agency

**Mr. Viggers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what measures are available to the Child Support Agency to enforce payment; and in how many cases these have been invoked in each of the last five years. [153034]

**Mr. Pond:** The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

*Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. Peter Viggers, dated 3 March 2004:*

In reply to your recent Parliamentary questions about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked what measures are available to the Child Support Agency to enforce payment; and in how many cases these have been invoked in each of the last five years.

Where a non-resident parent chooses not to pay child maintenance we will seek to discuss this by telephone when we will remind them of their legal responsibility. If there is still no adequate response and the non-resident parent is employed we will usually seek to implement, through the employer, a deduction from earnings. If the non-resident parent is self-employed, or has other forms of income, we can take action through the courts. This firstly involves establishing a liability order—normally through the Magistrates Court. When that is established we can then deploy a range of alternative enforcement mechanisms, including:

Levying of distress involving the use of Bailiffs;

Establishing a third party debt order—allowing money owed to the debtor to be frozen and sent to us to cover the outstanding debt;

Establishing a charging order—registering the debt against certain assets owned by the debtor;

Registering a County Court judgement, which may affect the debtors credit rating;

Applying for a warrant to commit the debtor to prison or for an order preventing them from holding or obtaining a driving licence.

The process and subsequent actions vary slightly in Scotland.

In the last four years we have applied a deduction from earnings in the following number of cases. We do not hold reliable data prior to 1999/2000.

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1999/2000 | 121,074 |
| 2000/2001 | 51,673 |
| 2001/2002 | 64,584 |
| 2002/2003 | 113,120 |

The table below shows the number of cases that were referred by caseworkers for further specialist enforcement action.

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1999/2000 | 7,663 |
| 2000/2001 | 3,561 |
| 2001/2002 | 3,546 |
| 2002/2003 | 8,054 |

I hope this is helpful.

**Bob Russell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will take steps to amend Child Support Agency regulations to disregard from maintenance calculations the service overseas allowances paid to members of Her Majesty's Armed Forces. [157558]

**Mr. Pond:** No. Child Support regulations already provide that allowances which are exempt from tax, such as the Local Overseas Allowance, are disregarded for the purposes of maintenance calculations.

### Funeral Payments

**Sir Archy Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether funeral payments have been made to help with costs incurred of funerals arranged overseas since 1997. [157822]

**Mr. Pond:** The information is not available.

Since 1997, people with the right to reside in the UK, under European Economic Community directives, may receive help for the cost of a funeral that takes place in the European economic area or Switzerland.

As long as the other conditions of entitlement are satisfied a funeral payment may be made equivalent to that which would have been paid if the funeral had taken place in the UK. The Department does not collect centrally information regarding the number of funeral payments made for funerals held outside the UK.

## New Deal

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost of the New Deal for Employment was in each year from 2001–02 to 2005–06 (planned); and if he will make a statement. [156702]

**Mr. Browne:** The information is in the table.

*New Deal costs*[1]

*£ million*

| | *2001–02 Outturn* | *2002–03*[2] *Forecast outturn* | *2003–04 Plans* | *2004–05 Plans* | *2005–06 Plans* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| New Deal for Young People | 308 | 339 | 340 | 320 | 320 |
| New Deal 25 plus | 213 | 254 | 255 | 259 | 261 |
| New Deal 50 plus | 87 | 106 | 56 | 16 | 10 |
| New Deal for Lone Parents | 46 | 80 | 82 | 109 | 116 |
| New Deal for Disabled People | 10 | 27 | 27 | 27 | 27 |
| New Deal for partners | 8 | 6 | 11 | 26 | 39 |

[1] Includes programme and administrative spend.
[2] Figures are rounded to the nearest million.
*Source:*
Department for Work and Pensions Departmental Report 2003

**Sir Archy Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when elements of the Regulated Social Fund have been increased and by how much in *(a)* cash and *(b)* real terms; what research he has conducted on the cost of a simple, respectful and low cost funeral in each of the last six years; how many people have received funeral payments since 1997; and what the average award was in each year. [157821]

**Mr. Pond:** Funeral payments from the Social Fund cover, in full, the cost of certain necessary charges; these include fees levied by burial authorities and crematoria. An additional sum is allowed for other funeral expenses, which give the person arranging the funeral the freedom to select items or services they consider appropriate. This additional sum was increased to a maximum of £700 from 7 April 2003.

The total average funeral payment in 2002–03 was £929. The amount awarded in many cases can be much higher but this is often offset by money available from the deceased's assets, which may be taken into account.

The available information is in the table.

*Number and average amount of Social Fund funeral payments since 1997*

*£*

| | *Number of funeral payments* | *Average amount paid* |
|---|---|---|
| 1997–98 | 48,000 | 792 |
| 1998–99 | 46,000 | 839 |
| 1999–2000 | 44,000 | 866 |
| 2000–01 | 40,000 | 892 |
| 2001–02 | 42,000 | 909 |
| 2002–03 | 45,000 | 929 |

*Note:*
Number of funeral payments is rounded to the nearest thousand
*Source:*
DWP Social Fund Policy, Budget and Management Information System

The Department does not collect information on the cost of funeral services, however the amount of a funeral payment is kept under review and we continue to consult with representatives from funeral directors' associations, church groups and other interested organisations.

The available information regarding increases in elements of the regulated Social Fund is in the table.

*Regulated Social Fund prescribed elements in cash and real terms since 1997*

*£*

| | *Cash terms* | *Real terms 2003–04 prices* |
|---|---|---|
| *Sure Start Maternity Grant* | | |
| 1997–98 | 100 | 116 |
| 1998–99 | 100 | 113 |
| 1999–2000 | 100 | 110 |
| 2000–01 | 200 | 218 |
| 2000–01 | 300 | 327 |
| 2001–02 | 300 | 318 |
| 2002–03 | 500 | 514 |
| 2003–04 | 500 | 500 |
| *Funeral Payment* | | |
| 1997–98 | 600 | 696 |
| 1998–99 | 600 | 676 |
| 1999–2000 | 600 | 662 |
| 2000–01 | 600 | 653 |
| 2001–02 | 600 | 637 |
| 2002–03 | 600 | 616 |
| 2003–04 | 700 | 700 |
| *Cold Weather Payment* | | |
| 1997–98 | 8.50 | 9.86 |
| 1998–99 | 8.50 | 9.58 |
| 1999–2000 | 8.50 | 9.38 |
| 2000–01 | 8.50 | 9.26 |
| 2001–02 | 8.50 | 9.02 |
| 2002–03 | 8.50 | 8.73 |
| 2003–04 | 8.50 | 8.50 |

*Regulated Social Fund prescribed elements in cash and real terms since 1997*

£

| | Cash terms | Real terms 2003–04 prices |
|---|---|---|
| *Winter fuel payment (IS/JSA(IB) with pensioner premium)* | | |
| 1997–98 | 50 | 58 |
| 1998–99 | 50 | 56 |
| 1999–2000 | 100 | 110 |
| 2000–01 | 200 | 218 |
| 2001–02 | 200 | 212 |
| 2002–03 | 200 | 205 |
| 2003–04 | 200 | 200 |
| *Winter fuel payment (other eligible)* | | |
| 1997–98 | 20 | 23 |
| 1998–99 | 20 | 23 |
| 1999–2000 | 100 | 110 |
| 2000–01 | 200 | 218 |
| 2001–02 | 200 | 212 |
| 2002–03 | 200 | 205 |
| 2003–04 | 200 | 200 |
| *80 plus annual payment* | | |
| 2003–04 | 100 | 100 |

*Note:*
Real terms prices have been calculated using the GDP deflator issued by HMT on 23 Dec 2003

*Source:*
DWP Figures

### Student Loans

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) whether student loans can be taken into account in calculating other benefits for *(a)* the student and *(b)* the student's spouse or partner; [152468]

(2) whether Jobseeker's Allowance eligibility is affected by the claimant's partner's student loan. [152471]

**Mr. Pond** *[holding answer 3 February 2004]:* Income related benefits are intended to help people whose resources are insufficient to meet their day to day living expenses; any income available to meet those expenses is normally taken into account when working out how much benefit can be paid.

A person in receipt of an income related benefit, including JSA (income based), Income Support, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit will therefore have their or their partner's student loan taken into account when calculating the amount of benefit payable. Up to £605 of a student loan may be disregarded to take into account costs of travel, books and equipment.

Benefits that are not income related, including contribution based benefits, will not be affected by a student loan.

### Migrant Workers

**Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many jobcentre plus vacancies were filled during 2002–03 by *(a)* skilled and *(b)* unskilled migrants. [157585]

**Mr. Browne:** The information requested is not available.

## CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

### Data Protection

**Mr. Chope:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) if he will require the Information Commissioner to bring legal proceedings against individuals or organisations identified as purporting to be acting as a collector in relation to data protection but acting without the authority of the Information Commissioner; [157599]

(2) what action the Information Commissioner is taking to prevent organisations passing themselves off as the Data Protection Registrar; and if he will make a statement. [157589]

**Mr. Lammy:** The Commissioner carries out his statutory duties independently of government. He has no powers under the Data Protection Act to take legal action against "collectors", but he has been working closely with the Office of Fair Trading, local trading standards services across the country and various police forces to tackle the problem. The coordinated efforts of these bodies have resulted in a number of successful legal actions and continuing investigations.

The Commissioner has been able to take action in the case of one firm, which has been using his registered trademarks. The matter is currently in the hands of his lawyers.

In addition to these measures, the Commissioner has strengthened his notification administrative procedures and his staff continue to work very hard to offer appropriate advice to the public and to help raise awareness of the activities of these "collectors".

**Mr. Chope:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what estimate he has made of the number of *(a)* individuals and *(b)* organisations which have fallen victim to bogus collectors in relation to data protection in each of the last three years; [157600]

(2) what estimate he has made of the income received by the Information Commissioner from data protection registration fees under the Data Protection Act 1998 which emanated from bogus agencies in each of the last two years; [157591]

(3) on how many occasions fees forwarded to the Information Commissioner by bogus collectors on behalf of data protection were from organisations which do not need to be registered; and what happens to such fees; [157588]

(4) if he will estimate the cost to the Information Commissioner of telephone calls, correspondence and administration arising from the activities of bogus organisations posing as collectors in relation to data protection. [157587]

**Mr. Lammy:** I understand from the Information Commissioner that in total approximately 27,000 notifications have been received via these bogus agencies. There were some 2,500 in 2001–02; 12,000 in 2002–03; and 12,500 in 2003–04. The figures available do not distinguish between individuals and organisations.

The income received amounted to £420,000 in 2002–03 and £437,500 in 2003–04.

The Data Protection Act allows organisations whose processing is exempt from the notification requirement to notify voluntarily. From the documentation submitted through the bogus agencies, it is not possible for the Commissioner to assess whether a notification is mandatory or voluntary. Refunds are given where the registration is a duplicate or where organisations contact the Commissioner and qualify for an exemption. Figures for the total number of refunds made prior to August 2003 are not available. Since that date, there have been approximately 400.

The Commissioner estimates that the costs to his office of the bogus agencies in the year 2003–04 have been in the region of £100,000.

### Legal Aid

**David Davis:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what legal aid entitlement is available to *(a)* UK citizens and *(b)* non-UK citizens when charged with (i) civil and (ii) criminal offences. [156228]

**Mr. Lammy:** There are no nationality or residency requirements for using the courts in the United Kingdom. The availability of civil and criminal legal aid follows the same basic principle. Any individual, whether they are a UK citizen or not, may make an application for civil or criminal legal aid in any of the three jurisdictions within the United Kingdom (England and Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland). The applicant, however, must pass the relevant merits and means criteria for the civil or criminal schemes within the jurisdiction where the application is made, and, in addition, the legal proceedings for which legal aid is sought must have originated within that jurisdiction.

## DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

### Housing

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his response is to the Country Landowners and Business Association report on affordable housing in rural areas. [157531]

**Keith Hill:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister welcomes the Association's report and the contribution it is making to the debate about the balance between the need for more affordable housing in many rural areas and protection of the countryside. The report's recommendations mainly relate to the planning system and will be taken into account in finalising the proposed changes to Planning Policy Guidance on Housing (PPG3) which were consulted on last summer.

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on affordable housing in rural areas. [157533]

**Keith Hill:** The Government are acutely aware of the difficulties caused in rural, and other, areas as a result of shortages of good quality affordable housing. A comprehensive programme of action to address this, and the problems associated with poor housing conditions and low demand and abandonment, was launched by my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister in "Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future" on 5 February 2003. This specifically recognises the importance of balancing provision of additional housing in rural areas with protection of the countryside.

The action to increase affordable housing focuses on improving the effectiveness of the planning system and the establishment of four growth areas to alleviate the overall housing pressures in London and surrounding areas. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has also increased the target for new affordable housing provided in settlements of less than 3,000 people.

Kate Barker, a member of the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee, is carrying out a review of issues underlying the lack of supply and responsiveness of housing in the UK. Her interim report published on 10 December set out the major analysis of these issues and the constraints that must be overcome to meet the housing need for this and future generations. The Government look forward to her final report, which is due later in the month.

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the level of affordable housing stock in the Vale of York was on *(a)* 1 January 1997 and *(b)* 1 January 2004. [157534]

**Keith Hill:** The available information in respect of housing provided by local authorities and registered social landlords is presented as follows for the districts surrounding and including the Vale of York constituency:

*Social Dwelling stock for surrounding districts of the Vale of York constituency, as at 1 April*

| | *Local authority*[1] | | *Registered Social Landlord*[1] | | *Total* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *1997* | *2003* | *1997* | *2003* | *1997* | *2003* |
| Hambleton | 0 | 0 | 4,648 | 4,601 | 4,648 | 4,601 |
| Harrogate | 4,806 | 4,074 | 1,375 | 2,151 | 6,181 | 6,225 |
| York | 9,497 | 8,406 | 3,064 | 3,819 | 12,561 | 12,225 |

[1] Figures for the number of dwellings in 1997 include self-contained units only, while figures for 2003 include bed spaces and self-contained units.

*Source:*
ODPM's Housing Investment Programme return and Housing Corporation's Regulatory Statistical Return.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the percentage of affordable housing stock is in the Chorley constituency. [158126]

**Keith Hill:** The available information in respect of housing provided by local authorities and registered social landlords is presented as follows for the district of Chorley:

*Social dwelling stock for Chorley district as at 1 April 2003*

| | *Number* | *As percentage of total stock* |
|---|---|---|
| Local Authority | 3,271 | 7.6 |
| Registered Social Landlord | 3,011 | 7.0 |
| Total | 6,282 | 14.6 |

*Source:*
ODPM's Housing Investment Programme returns and Housing Corporation's Regulatory and Statistical Return.

**John Cryer:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average waiting time was in each of the last four years for a person to be rehoused in the London borough of Havering. [157322]

**Keith Hill:** Information provided by the London borough of Havering showing the average waiting time for rehousing a person in the borough for the last four years is as follows:

| | *Average waiting time* |
|---|---|
| 1999–2000 | 2 years 5 months |
| 2000–01 | 2 years 5 months |
| 2001–02 | 2 years 5 months |
| 2002–03 | 2 years 10 months |

**John Cryer:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the waiting list figures in the London borough of Haver. g for old age pensioner housing were in each of the last four years. [157323]

**Keith Hill:** The London borough of Havering have advised the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister that in 2001–02 the average waiting time for old age pensioner housing in the borough was one year and two months; in 2002–03 it was one year and four months. The boroughs' records for 1999–2000 and 2000–01 are held manually and could be collated only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Purchase:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1650–51W, on housing stock transfer, what proportion of the *(a)* interest on and *(b)* capital of the £8 billion private investment he has planned will be repaid directly from public funds. [157291]

**Keith Hill:** The new landlord is responsible for servicing the interest and capital of any private finance taken out as part of the housing transfer. No assistance is given directly from public funds.

**Mr. Purchase:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1650–51W, on housing stock transfer, what proportion of the extra £8 billion private investment has been invested in arm's length management organisation stock *(a)* directly and *(b)* indirectly. [157292]

**Keith Hill:** To date £12 billion of private funding is being used for the purchase and improvement of housing stock that has been transferred into the ownership of Registered Social Landlords. None of it is available for investment in stock owned by local authorities and managed by Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs). My answer of 12 February indicated that £900 million of public funding has so far been allocated for this latter purpose.

**Mr. Purchase:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1650–51W, on housing stock transfer, what proportion of the nearly £900 million of public funding to bring homes up to the Decent Homes standard is additional to what would have been available had the housing stock remained under local authority management control. [157293]

**Keith Hill:** All of the £900 million so far allocated under the Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) programme is additional to the public funding available to all local authorities which own housing stock, irrespective of whether it is managed directly or by an ALMO.

### Leasehold (Bogus Charges)

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what progress has been made towards the implementation of the provisions of the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002 that will protect leaseholders from bogus ground rent charges. [157490]

**Keith Hill:** The Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002 includes provisions that will make it mandatory for landlords to give leaseholders a notice specifying how much ground rent is required, when the rent is payable and what the consequences are of non-payment. The leaseholder will also be given a grace period for paying the ground rent, which will be not be less than 30 days or more than 60 days after the day of the notice.

The measures will form part of the third Commencement Order which will deal with the outstanding accounting, insurance, forfeiture, ground rent and right to enfranchise provisions in the 2002 Act. The Order and associated regulations are expected to be laid in July this year, coming into force in most cases, three months later.

### Liveability Fund

**Mr. Dhanda:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the sums available through the Liveability Fund. [156818]

**Keith Hill:** The Liveability Fund is providing £89 million over three years (2003–06) to assist local authorities in identifying new and innovative ways of delivering improved 'liveability' services.

The fund will support 27 pilot areas to improve parks and public spaces with grants of between £2.1 million and £3.8 million.

### Local Authority Procurement

**Mrs. Roche:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many local authorities now have a procurement champion in place; and how many local authorities have completed a procurement plan to ensure best practice as recommended in the Byatt Report. [158084]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. The National Procurement Strategy for Local Government, launched in October 2003, includes milestones for 2004 for each authority to appoint a procurement champion and to develop a corporate procurement strategy, owned by chief executives, members and senior officers.

On 25 February, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Local Government Association (LGA) announced nine Centres of Procurement Excellence to support authorities in implementing the National Procurement Strategy. The centres will collect information about the implementation of the Strategy in each region, including progress in appointing champions and developing corporate procurement strategies.

### Millennium Dome

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the *(a)* maintenance and *(b)* management costs for the Millennium Dome (i) up to the date when it passes to the private sector and (ii) for the next financial year. [157829]

**Keith Hill:** English Partnerships (EP) has budgeted in accordance with the contracts signed between EP, Meridian Delta Ltd. and Anschutz Entertainment Group in May 2002, to continue to pay core Dome management and maintenance costs until construction of the new arena starts. Similarly, while the arena is under construction, EP has budgeted for a reduced level of costs. Those costs will cease on practical completion of the arena. We are not in a position to give estimates of costs at this stage, as there are negotiations proceeding which are commercially confidential. However, once the transaction with Meridian Delta Ltd. and Anschutz Entertainment Group has gone unconditional, which is expected in June this year, I will update the House further and provide more information on the expected future level of costs.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has regularly updated the House on costs incurred by EP in relation to the Dome, including its management and maintenance. The average monthly cost for management and maintenance of the Dome from January 2003 to December 2003 was £221,000, including rates, utilities, security and EP staff costs.

All costs incurred by EP since it took over responsibility for the Dome in July 2001 and including the costs of the sale process will be recovered from the sale proceeds.

### Parliamentary Questions

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will reply to the question from the hon. Member for Gordon, on Departmental Advertising, tabled on 22 January 2004, reference 149916. [158399]

**Yvette Cooper:** A reply was given to the hon. Member for Gordon on 2 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 820W.

### Red Ash

**Ms Walley:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his Department's guidelines are for the removal of red ash from beneath residential properties; and if he will make a statement. [158101]

**Phil Hope:** Removal of the red ash material is only required where unacceptable excessive movement has occurred to a dwelling's ground floor. It will result in considerable disruption and expense for the property owner. The Building Research Establishment (BRE) has undertaken research and produced guidance for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. This guide is the Special Digest 1, "Concrete in aggressive ground" which may be purchased from BRE, Watford. It deals with problems of aggressive fill beneath floor slabs.

### Regional Assemblies

**Mr. Jenkin:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost of securing the Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Act 2003 and enabling referendums in the three northern regions has been to date. [157027]

**Mr. Raynsford:** It is not possible to disaggregate relevant staff and overhead costs.

To date £4,000 has been incurred on the soundings exercise, and the three consultations on the arrangements for the referendums.

Expenditure has also been incurred by the Electoral Commission, which receives resources from the Speakers Committee to cover its costs.

On 17 June 2003, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister directed the Boundary Committee for England to conduct reviews of local government structure in the three Northern Regions. It is anticipated that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will provide £4.5 million to the Boundary Committee for England during 2003–04 for this work.

### Standards Board for England

**Mr. Steen:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what budget has been allocated for the running costs of the Standards Board for England in 2004–05; what its terms of reference are; how many and what percentage of complaints have been investigated since referral; and if he will make a statement on how the Board contributes to the functions of the Local Government Ombudsman. [158398]

**Phil Hope:** The current budget provisionally allocated for the Standards Board for England in 2004–05 is £8 million, subject to approval by Parliament to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's main estimates. The Board's principal roles, as provided for by Part III of the Local Government Act 2000, are to appoint ethical standards officers who investigate misconduct allegations against local government members, to decide whether allegations should be referred for investigation and to issue guidance to local authorities on matters relating to the conduct of members.

Of the 5,188 allegations received by the Board up to November last year, the total referred for investigation was 1,955 (38 per cent. of the total allegations received). Of these, the total number of investigations completed was 1,014.

The remit of the Standards Board is separate from that of the Commission for Local Administration in England, and the Board has no role with regard to the Commission's functions.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Antisocial Behaviour Orders

**Mark Tami:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what requirements are placed on local authorities and the police to liaise on and co-ordinate *(a)* their response to and *(b)* regulation of anti-social behaviour orders. [156449]

**Ms Blears:** Before applying for an anti-social behaviour order the police and local authority have a statutory duty to consult with each other. Where the applicant is a Registered Social Landlord, British Transport Police, a Housing Action Trust or a County Council, they must consult with both the local police and local authority. It is a matter of good practice that all agencies should be involved in monitoring the order once it has been granted.

**Mark Tami:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many anti-social behaviour orders were granted in each local authority in each of the last two years in *(a)* England and *(b)* Wales. [156538]

**Ms Blears:** The available information will be placed in the Library.

**Mark Tami:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research his Department has carried out into the propensity of individuals who have been served with anti-social behaviour orders to re-offend. [156545]

**Ms Blears:** Siobhan Campbell, in 'A Review of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders', Home Office Research Study 236, January 2002, found that just over one third of a sample of 20 individuals given ASBOs were known to have breached their order. Fewer (30 per cent.) had committed further offences during that time. In only four cases had the individual been taken to court for both breach and a further offence.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Anti-Social Behaviour Orders have been made in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley in each of the last three years. [157115]

**Ms Blears:** Data on the number of notifications, reported to the Home Office, of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders issued in Lancashire and Chorley in the last three years are given in the table.

*The number of ASBOs issued in Lancashire and Chorley, as notified to the Home Office by all courts, from 1 January 2001 to 30 September 2003 (latest available)*

| | Area | |
|---|---|---|
| *Period* | *Lancashire* | *Of which: Chorley* |
| 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2001 | 7 | 2 |
| 1 January 2002 to 30 November 2002[1] | 11 | — |
| 1 December 2002 to 30 September 2003 | 30 | 1 |
| Total issued | 48 | 3 |

[1] Following introduction of the Police Reform Act (2002) data for December 2002 are included in the first quarter data for 2003.

### CCTV (Chorley)

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the benefits of CCTV in Chorley. [157116]

**Ms Blears:** Police operational experience and general research studies show that CCTV has considerable crime reduction and detection potential, particularly when used as part of a wider strategy.

A detailed statistical evaluation of the impact of CCTV in Chorley is currently under way. The results of this should be available later this year.

Crime levels for local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, including Chorley, have been collected and published for six types of crime: violence against the person, sexual offences, robbery, burglary dwelling, theft of motor vehicles and theft from motor vehicles.

The latest figures are contained in Home Office Statistical Bulletin 07/03 "Recorded Crime England and Wales 2002/03".

### Credit Card Fraud

**Mr. Gibb:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what assessment he has made of the quantity of credit card fraud on the internet in 2003; [157094]

(2) what measures he is undertaking to counter credit card fraud on the internet; [157098]

(3) what discussions he has had with the Association for Payment Clearing Services regarding credit card fraud on the internet; [157099]

(4) for what reason he has withdrawn funding from the Dedicated Cheque and Plastic Crime Unit; [157118]

(5) what assessment he has made of the amount of credit card fraud on the internet following the rolling out of chip and PIN across the United Kingdom; [157119]

(6) what his assessment is of the effect of internet credit card fraud on the *(a)* funding of terrorism and *(b)* proliferation of illegal drugs. [157120]

**Ms Blears:** The Government do not routinely collect figures on the cost of credit card fraud, but the Association for Payment Clearing Services (APACS) estimates the cost of internet fraud in 2002 (the most recent figures available) to be £28 million accounting for 7 per cent. of all card fraud losses.

The measures taken by Home Office to counter this include a recently launched website to combat fraud over the internet. The 'e-tailing mini site' forms part of the Crime Reduction Website and provides information to help both consumers and businesses protect themselves when using the internet.

The Home Office also participates in an APACS led Steering Group to tackle 'Card Not Present' (CNP) fraud. This includes fraud over the internet. We support practical measures being introduced by the industry to increase levels of security for internet transactions. These include Address Verification Services (AVS), Card Security Code (CSC), Mastercard Secure Code and Verified by Visa which are already making a significant impact on CNP Fraud. A manual ("Spot and Stop Card Fraud Retailer Pack") resulting from the CNP Steering Group's Work provides advice to merchants on the dangers of CNP fraud and the steps which can be taken to prevent it.

The Dedicated Cheque and Plastic Crime Unit (DCPCU) was set up as a two-year pilot in April 2002. The future of the Unit is currently under consideration. A decision about the future of the unit when the pilot ends in April will be made shortly.

It is not yet possible to make a realistic assessment of any likely increase in internet fraud following the introduction of Chip and PIN but the industry is taking measures, as outlined above, to minimise the risk.

As with other types of crime some of the proceeds of internet credit card fraud may be used to finance other forms of criminal activity. The extent is not known.

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has collated regarding altered levels of ATM fraud where the chip and PIN credit card system is used exclusively. [157380]

**Ms Blears:** I understand from the Association of Payment Clearing Services that the chip and PIN system is not used exclusively anywhere in the world. We cannot therefore draw on experience to say what may happen in terms of possible fraud migration to ATMs once Chip and PIN is fully implemented in the United Kingdom.

The upgrading of cash machines to chip and PIN technology is more secure because the user needs both the genuine card and the PIN. This is a major improvement on the magnetic stripe and PIN system where a fraudster could have used the PIN with a counterfeit card.

## Crime Statistics

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many arrests were made in the Romford area of the London borough of Havering during *(a)* 1995, *(b)* 1997, *(c)* 1999, *(d)* 2001 and *(e)* 2003. [157014]

**Ms Blears:** Information on arrests collected centrally is based on persons arrested for 'notifiable' offences at police force area level only, in England and Wales. The information does not identify individual local authority areas.

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many criminal offences involving broken bottles or broken glasses were committed in *(a)* Wrexham, *(b)* Rhyl, *(c)* Prestatyn, *(d)* Mold, *(e)* Flint, *(f)* Deeside, *(g)* Shotton, *(h)* Abergele, *(i)* Denbigh, *(j)* Holyhead, *(k)* Amlwch, *(l)* Bangor, *(m)* Caernarfon, *(n)* Dolgellau, *(o)* Bala, *(p)* Machynlleth, *(q)* Colwyn Bay, *(r)* Llandudno, *(s)* Conwy, *(t)* Ruthin and *(u)* Llangollen, in each of the past 15 years, listed in descending order; [156036]

(2) how many criminal offences involving broken bottles or broken glasses were committed in each police authority area in England and Wales in the last year for which figures are available; [156037]

(3) how many crime and disorder incidents there were at, and between, each railway station in North Wales in each of the past 10 years, listed in descending order. [156244]

**Ms Blears:** The requested information is not available centrally.

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* arrests were made, *(b)* people were charged, *(c)* cautions were issued and *(d)* convictions there were in the North West, broken down by (i) police force, (ii) constituency and (iii) local authority area in each year since 1997. [156497]

**Ms Blears:** The available information, relating to persons arrested in the North West Region, by police force area, is contained in Table A. It is limited to arrests for notifiable offences and relates to the financial years, 1999–2000 to 2002–03.

The number of persons cautioned, proceeded against at the magistrates courts (numbers of persons charged are not held centrally) and found guilty at all courts for all offences, in the North West Region, by police force area, 1997 to 2002 is contained in Table B.

Statistics on cautions and court proceedings for 2003 will be published in the autumn.

*Table A. Persons arrested for notifiable offences recorded by the police, by police force area, North West Region, 1999–2000 to 2002–03*

| *Police force area* | *1999–2000* | *2000–01* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cheshire | 18,202 | 16,959 | 16,525 | 18,121 |
| Cumbria | 15,568 | 13,226 | 14,106 | 13,584 |
| Greater Manchester | 73,366 | 68,803 | 68,408 | 70,424 |
| Lancashire | 37,535 | 36,998 | 41,715 | 40,241 |
| Merseyside | 44,315 | 45,598 | 41,072 | 47,182 |
| North West Region | 188,986 | 181,584 | 181,826 | 189,552 |

*Table B. Number of persons cautioned, proceeded against at the magistrates courts and found guilty at all courts for all offences, by police force area, North West Region 1997 to 2002*[1]

| *Year/Police force area* | *Cautioned* | *Proceeded against* | *Found guilty* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *1997* | | | |
| Cheshire | 4,048 | 28,929 | 23,363 |
| Cumbria | 2,901 | 20,882 | 16,991 |
| Greater Manchester | 16,297 | 122,793 | 93,889 |
| Lancashire | 9,333 | 70,472 | 49,219 |
| Merseyside | 13,763 | 54,632 | 41,661 |
| Total | 46,342 | 297,708 | 225,123 |
| *1998* | | | |
| Cheshire | 4,587 | 30,342 | 24,642 |
| Cumbria | 3,015 | 20,113 | 16,367 |
| Greater Manchester | 19,716 | 132,912 | 102,403 |
| Lancashire | 8,906 | 70,745 | 50,177 |
| Merseyside | 14,205 | 55,424 | 42,070 |
| Total | 50,429 | 309,536 | 235,659 |
| *1999* | | | |
| Cheshire | 3,592 | 30,424 | 24,205 |
| Cumbria | 3,031 | 19,640 | 15,799 |
| Greater Manchester | 16,142 | 136,152 | 103,768 |
| Lancashire | 7,355 | 64,839 | 46,540 |
| Merseyside | 12,159 | 47,443 | 36,025 |
| Total | 42,279 | 298,498 | 226,337 |
| *2000* | | | |
| Cheshire | 3,111 | 33,545 | 26,898 |
| Cumbria | 2,336 | 16,903 | 13,610 |
| Greater Manchester | 12,389 | 145,894 | 111,841 |
| Lancashire | 6,777 | 69,137 | 49,384 |
| Merseyside | 8,216 | 55,047 | 40,197 |
| Total | 32,829 | 320,526 | 241,930 |
| *2001* | | | |
| Cheshire | 2,780 | 31 ,296 | 25,338 |
| Cumbria | 2,505 | 14,515 | 11,519 |
| Greater Manchester | 11,181 | 133,992 | 96,604 |

*Table B. Number of persons cautioned, proceeded against at the magistrates courts and found guilty at all courts for all offences, by police force area, North West Region 1997 to 2002*[1]

| *Year/Police force area* | *Cautioned* | *Proceeded against* | *Found guilty* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lancashire | 7,189 | 67,546 | 47,807 |
| Merseyside | 6,142 | 56,556 | 41,146 |
| Total | 29,797 | 303,905 | 222,414 |
| *2002* | | | |
| Cheshire | 2,084 | 35,196 | 28,369 |
| Cumbria | 2,392 | 14,318 | 11,376 |
| Greater Manchester | 9,774 | 133,654 | 97,063 |
| Lancashire | 6,515 | 67,525 | 47,961 |
| Merseyside | 6,331 | 56,713 | 43,928 |
| Total | 27,096 | 307,406 | 228,697 |

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

### Criminal Records Bureau

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what methods counter-signatories will be required to use *(a)* to obtain fingerprints from applicants and *(b)* to authenticate documents provided by applicants as set out in his consultation on new draft regulations for the Criminal Records Bureau. [156059]

**Ms Blears:** The draft regulations, issued for consultation on 1 December 2003, would require Registered Bodies, or their agents, to authenticate the identity of a Disclosure applicant by examining a combination of official or other documents (for example passports, driving licences and utility bills) which will help confirm the applicant's name, date of birth and current address. Counter signatories, or those carrying out identity checking on their behalf, should be alert for signs of tampering. The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) has issued guidelines which identify suspicious signs to be on the lookout for when examining the documents commonly presented by applicants.

The draft regulations would not require counter signatories to obtain fingerprints from applicants. We have separately consulted on the Independent Review Team's proposal that applicants for the most sensitive positions should be required to submit their fingerprints with their Disclosure application. We are currently analysing over 2,000 responses to this consultation.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how the Criminal Records Bureau *(a)* check and *(b)* authenticate with the issuing bodies identity documents submitted with applications. [156060]

**Ms Blears:** Since the inception of the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Registered Bodies have checked the identity of applicants for Disclosures. Being closer to direct contact with applicants than the CRB they are best placed to do so. We have proposed, in the consultation paper we issued in December, that Registered Bodies be made explicitly responsible for validating the identity of those for whom they seek Disclosures. The CRB has issued guidance to Registered Bodies to help them identify common official documents that may have been forged or tampered with.

The CRB continues to check that Registered Bodies, or their agents, have undertaken the necessary checks to verify the identity of applicants. Where evidence of such checks is not recorded on the Disclosure application form they are rejected by the Bureau. In addition, as part of the proposed periodic audit of Registered Bodies, CRB staff will be checking to see that Registered Bodies properly discharge their responsibilities in this area. Furthermore, as part of their anti-fraud measures the CRB checks a sample of applications against lists maintained by the UK Passport Services and DVLA of fraudulently obtained passports and driving licences.

### Domestic Violence

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many domestic violence incidents were reported in the last 12 months, broken down by *(a)* police authority area, *(b)* local authority area and *(c)* basic command unit; and how many and what percentage of these incidents resulted in prosecution. [156243]

**Ms Blears:** Domestic violence is not separately identified in the recorded crime statistics collected by the Home Office nor in the statistics of court proceedings, because the circumstances of the offences are not collected. While the number of incidents of domestic violence in England and Wales are measured by the British Crime Survey (BCS), figures are not available by police force area or at more local levels.

In the 2002–03 BCS there were an estimated 501,000 incidents of domestic violence in England and Wales as a whole, 35 per cent. of which were reported to the police. This is from the main face-to-face part of the survey and shows a decrease of 38 per cent. since 1997.

### Football Supporters

**Bob Russell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether legislation to prevent football supporters from leaving the UK to attend matches abroad applies to *(a)* players and *(b)* officials. [157608]

**Ms Blears** *[holding answer 1 March 2004]*: The provisions of the Football Spectators Act 1989 (as amended by the Football (Disorder Act 2000) apply to all residents of England and Wales. No senior player or official is currently subject to a football banning order.

### Gun Crime

**Ms Abbott:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the performance of Government-funded community groups working to combat gun crime. [149786]

**Caroline Flint:** The Government are, in this financial year, providing £1.5 million specifically to support community action to help tackle gun crime. This is in addition to other funding, including through the Street Crime Initiative, to support community-based programmes that will help to tackle gun crime.

This work is on-going, but we will take stock, at an appropriate time, of the outcomes of the projects supported in order to inform future community-based action in this area. We will be developing a dedicated website to support those working to tackle gun crime, where we can provide information about existing programmes and spread examples of good practice.

### Katharine Gun

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had in the last 12 months with the *(a)* Secretary of State for Defence, *(b)* Department for Constitutional Affairs, *(c)* Prime Minister and *(d)* Attorney General over the Katharine Gun case. [158096]

**Mr. Blunkett:** I had no discussions with the Secretary of State for Defence, or the Department for Constitutional Affairs, or the Prime Minister on this matter.

I had no discussions with the Attorney-General. However, I was copied in on the "Shawcross Exercise", the process of which the Solicitor-General has already outlined to the House on 26 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 428.

### National Asylum Support Service

**Mr. Steen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will publish the full independent review into the National Asylum Support Service; and for what reason it has not yet been published. [152425]

**Beverley Hughes:** Because of the level of public interest in the review and the recommendation from the Home Affairs Committee Ministers are currently considering the matter.

### Offender Assessments

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many offenders have undergone an OASys assessment in the last 12 months; and what the average cost per assessment was. [155961]

**Paul Goggins:** On 9 January 2004, the latest date for which figures from both services are available, the Prison Service OASys IT system held assessments on some 1,400 offenders while the National Probation Service OASys IT system held assessments on some 63,800 offenders. Figures are not held centrally on use of the paper-based OASys system that pre-dated the computerised system in the National Probation Service.

Reliable unit costs are not yet available. The Prison Service and National Probation Service expect to have figures towards the end of this year when implementation of OASys IT in the two Services is further advanced.

### Parliamentary Questions

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to reply to the oral Question of the hon. Member for the Vale of York (ref 155764), not reached on 23 February, on the number of acceptable behaviour contracts issued. [156873]

**Ms Blears:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 222W.

### Police

**Sandra Gidley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police were allocated to front line duties in Hampshire in each year since 1997. [157096]

**Ms Blears:** Information on front line policing is not available. We are, as part of the Police Performance Assessment Framework, collecting data from forces so that we can publish a baseline estimate of front line policing for all forces. This will be a valuable tool to drive up the amount of time spent on front line duties.

Published data are in the form of total police strength by police force area.

*Number of police officers[1] in Hampshire, 1997–2003*

| *As at 31 March* | *Police officers[2]* |
|---|---|
| 1997 | 3,452 |
| 1998 | 3,490 |
| 1999 | 3,473 |
| 2000 | 3,419 |
| 2001 | 3,438 |
| 2002 | 3,480 |
| 2003 | [3]3,668 |

[1] Full time equivalents.

[2] Excludes officers seconded to NCS, NCIS and Central Services.

[3] Comparable strength.

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the police retirement age is; what plans he has to increase this; what estimate he has made of the cost savings that would accrue if the retirement age was lifted to 65; and if he will make a statement. [156593]

**Ms Blears:** There is no fixed retirement age for the police. Under the Police Pensions Regulations officers with at least 25 years' service may retire with an immediate pension from age 50. Officers may also retire with an immediate pension, irrespective of age, after 30 years' service, when they will have accrued maximum benefits. This means that an officer who joined at age 18½—the earliest age at which it is possible to start as a police officer—is entitled to retire at age 48½ a with a full pension. Otherwise officers become eligible to retire with an immediate pension on reaching their compulsory retirement age, which ranges from 55 to 60 depending on the rank and force of the officer concerned. Officers with less than 25 years' service who leave the police with deferred benefits will receive their pension at age 60.

The Government are currently considering options for the modernisation of police pensions to make them more flexible and affordable for future entrants. We have launched a UK-wide consultation exercise on proposals for a new police pension scheme, to be introduced by April 2006. One of the key features of our proposals is the introduction of a minimum pension age of 55 for new entrants and the raising of the deferred pension age from 60 to 65 in line with the proposed rise in the normal pension age in other public service schemes.

Information is not available on the level of savings that would be involved if the police retirement age were to be raised to 65 for all officers. If such a calculation were carried out it is arguable that the cost implications

for operational effectiveness should also be taken into account. The Department of Work and Pensions Green Paper of December 2002, in proposing a normal public service pension age of 65, recognised that services like the police and the armed forces had specific needs which made a lower pension age appropriate for their members.

### Police Funding

**David Maclean:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will meet inflationary costs in employment costs, pensions, and supplies and services as part of the 2004–05 funding settlement for police authorities. [151874]

**Ms Blears:** All police authorities in England and Wales will receive a 3.25 per cent. increase in general grants, above the police pay award increase of 3 per cent. and general inflation projections of 2.6 per cent.

Prospective police pensions' costs are taken into account when overall grant provision is determined.

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for how long *(a)* community support officers and *(b)* rural policy officers will be funded centrally; and who will pay for the officers when central funding lapses. [156872]

**Ms Blears:** All Home Office Community Support Officer (CSO) funding continues until March 2006. The potential for central funding of CSOs after March 2006 is being considered as part of the Spending Review 2004, although 21 police forces are currently employing 964 CSOs whose costs have not been funded by the Home Office.

The Rural Policing Fund is reviewed annually and there are no plans to abolish it. I am satisfied that the fund meets a genuine need to improve the policing of the most sparsely populated areas in England and Wales.

**Mr Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much of the cost of policing Havering is paid for by *(a)* central Government and *(b)* the local council; and what the total cost is in 2003–04. [157041]

**Ms Blears:** The Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) set a final budget of £2.2 billion in 2003–04. £443 million was raised through the police precept on council tax and £1764 million from general grants. The internal distribution of resources is a matter for the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis and the MPA.

I understand that Havering's police budget for 2003–04 is £17.3 million. In addition to this, Havering benefits from services provided by specialist crime and operations directorates as well as support from other pan-London operational units.

### Police/Prison Officers

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what surveys his Department has conducted into the views of *(a)* police officers and *(b)* prison officers in the last two years. [155063]

**Ms Blears:** The information is as follows:

*(a) Police Officers*

The Home Office has conducted the following formal surveys of police officers views over the last two years:

1. Qualitative research to inform police service communications—June 2003

2. Survey on reasons for leaving the Police Service—2002

3. Two surveys on police leadership issues—late 2002/early 2003

4. Attitudes and perceptions relating to the impact of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry on the police—commenced 2002 and work ongoing

5. Views and experiences of recording police stops—commenced 2003 and work ongoing

6. Police effectiveness in handling racist incidents—commenced in 2002 and work ongoing

7. A monitoring and evaluation project into community and race relations training—commenced late 2002 and work ongoing

8. Quality assurance research into community and race relations training—commenced late 2002 and work ongoing

9. Review of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984–2002

10. Evaluation of the new Police Misconduct Procedures—published 2003.

The Home Office is, of course, continually in dialogue with police officers at all levels, seeking their views and options on a wide range of policing issues in a less formal context.

*(b) Prison Officers*

A National Staff Attitude Survey has been administered in-house to Prison Service staff annually between 2000–2003.

1. June 2002—Survey of Prison Service staff attitudes representing 36 per cent. of staff in post.

2. November 2003—Full-census staff attitude survey of all Prison Service staff.

Copies of reports between 2000–2002 are available in the Library. The final report for 2003 will be available in the late spring/early summer 2004.

### Police Vehicles (Accidents)

**Jim Dowd:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been *(a)* killed and *(b)* injured in road traffic accidents involving police vehicles in each of the past five years. [157779]

**Caroline Flint:** The number of police and civilian fatalities and injuries arising from police responses to immediate/emergency calls and pursuits will be placed in the Library.

### Northern Ireland (On-the-run Terrorists)

**Mr. Swire:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many on the run terrorists have been apprehended and released back into the community in the last five years. [155647]

**Mr. Paul Murphy:** I have been asked to reply.

25 people, who had left Northern Ireland without completing their sentences, have been informed that they can return to Northern Ireland without serving more time in custody. The Government's proposals for dealing with on-the-run terrorists were set out in the

paper published on 1 May 2003 alongside the Joint Declaration. These proposals would only be taken forward within the context of acts of completion.

### Vandalism (Buses)

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been prosecuted for vandalism on buses in London in the last two years; in how many cases on board CCTV footage was used in the prosecution; and how many convictions resulted. [156570]

**Ms Blears:** It is not possible to distinguish offences of vandalism on London buses from other types of criminal damage in the Home Office figures for court proceedings, as the circumstances of individual offences are not collected centrally.

## HEALTH

### Health Service Reforms

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funding has been allocated to support the national roll-out of "Agenda for Change"; and how this funding has been allocated. [156279]

**Mr. Hutton:** Additional funding worth 0.8 per cent. of main allocations has been allocated to primary care trusts (PCTs) in 2004–05 and a further 0.8 per cent. in 2005–06 to cover the costs of implementing "Agenda for Change" in acute and specialist hospital trusts, mental health trusts, ambulance trusts and PCTs themselves. Funding for implementation costs in strategic health authorities is currently being assessed but has not yet been allocated.

Additional funding equivalent to 0.1 per cent. of total PCT allocations in 2004–05 and a further 0.1 per cent. in 2005–06 has been allocated to PCTs in areas in and around London to meet the cost of the new high cost area supplements.

### Foundation Hospitals

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the cost of administration of the foundation hospital governance system. [157593]

**Mr. Hutton:** The cost of administration of the governance system for each National Health Service foundation trust will depend on a number of factors, including the size of the membership. Experience of other membership organisations suggests that the cost of establishing and maintaining a membership base of 5,000 people is likely to be around £2.25 per member per annum. For NHS foundation trusts, these costs will not be entirely additional as they will replicate some current activity that trusts are already doing around informing the public, patients and staff about issues affecting each trust.

### Consultant Contract

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects that the consultant's contract will be implemented. [157139]

**Mr. Hutton:** Following the agreement reached last year with the British Medical Association and the NHS Confederation, National Health Service trusts and other employing organisations were asked to use the new NHS consultants' contract for all new appointments advertised after 31 October 2003 and give all existing consultants the opportunity to indicate by 31 October 2003 whether they wished to give a commitment to the new contract.

We expect that the great majority of consultants who have given a commitment to the new contract will have agreed job plans by 31 March 2004. Where, exceptionally, there are any consultants whose job plans have taken longer to complete than other consultants, NHS trusts and other employing organisations have been asked to agree arrangements with their strategic health authority to complete the process as early as possible in the new financial year.

### Dentistry

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of people used the internet to access information on NHS dentists in their area in *(a)* England and *(b)* Adur, Arun and Worthing in the last year for which figures are available. [156049]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The Department does not collect information about the number of people who use the internet to access information on national health service dentists.

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS patient treatments were undertaken by dentists *(a)* in England, *(b)* in each NHS region and *(c)* in each strategic health authority area in each year since 1997. [156062]

**Ms Rosie Winterton** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]:* The information available for the number of courses of treatment carried out by the General Dental Service (CDS) by national health service region and strategic health authority in england for the years ending March 1998 to 2003, has been placed in the Library.

A course of treatment may involve one or more visits to the dentist. A patient may have several courses in a single year.

Courses of treatment for children exclude courses where a payment claim is not required, which are mainly courses where only an examination takes place.

### Domiciliary Care Agencies

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health which conditions have been relaxed for domiciliary care agencies registered with conditions by the National Care Standards Commission; and for what length of time they have been relaxed. [156296]

**Dr. Ladyman:** Domiciliary care agencies must comply with the Domiciliary Care Agencies Regulations 2002 in order to be registered by the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC). These requirements have not been relaxed. Conditions are set by the NCSC at the

point of registration after an assessment has been made of the fitness of the service against regulations and taking into account National Minimum Standards.

The NCSC published guidance on 12 December 2003, setting out circumstances in which conditions could be attached to registration.

### Drug-related Deaths

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made in meeting the target of reducing the number of drug-related deaths since 1999. [156291]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The number of drug related deaths since 1999 is shown in the table.

| | *England and Wales* | *England only* |
|---|---|---|
| 1999 | 1,571 | 1,484 |
| 2000 | 1,666 | 1,565 |
| 2001 | 1,628 | 1,528 |
| 2002 | 1,565 | 1,456 |

*Notes:*

1. Since the publication of drug related deaths in 2001 in February 2003, additional substances have become controlled. Earlier years' data have been updated to reflect these drugs. This means that the new data are comparable across the time period, despite the fact that some of the drugs were not controlled in the earlier years.
2. The 2002 figures, published by the Office for National Statistics on 26 February 2004, show a fall in the number of drug related deaths for the second consecutive year and the figure is now below the 1999 baseline.

*Source:*

Office for National Statistics.

### Equine Slaughter

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many slaughterhouses are licensed for the slaughter of equines. [156565]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** I have been advised by the Food Standards Agency that in the United Kingdom twelve slaughterhouses are licensed to slaughter equines; 11 in England and one in Northern Ireland.

### Medical Training (EU Accession States)

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of whether medical training in the accession states conforms to the minimum EU requirements. [156297]

**Mr. Hutton:** All accession states are committed to ensuring that the qualifications they award to doctors who began their training on or after the date of accession meet specified minimum European Community requirements. Their holders can then benefit from automatic recognition throughout the EC. Practitioners from these states who are already qualified or are currently in training must show that they either meet these requirements in full or have recent and substantial practice experience.

**Mr. Baron:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate has been made of the number of *(a)* nurses and *(b)* midwives from accession countries who will seek to work in the United Kingdom following accession. [156861]

**Mr. Hutton** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]:* No estimate has been made.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council will, in due course, will have statistics about the numbers of nurses and midwives from accession countries who join its register.

**Mr. Baron:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether *(a)* nurses and *(b)* midwives from EU accession countries would currently be able to work in the United Kingdom using qualifications from their home country if they were given permission to seek work in the UK. [156863]

**Mr. Hutton** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]:* Relevantly qualified practitioners from the accession states will be able to work in the United Kingdom after accession.

All nationals from the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia who find work in the United Kingdom will be required to register with the Home Office under the new Worker Registration Scheme as soon as they find work.

### Flu Vaccine

**Sandra Gidley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the take-up rates for influenza vaccine were at 1 January *(a)* in England and *(b)* broken down by (i) primary care trust and (ii) strategic health authority. [154353]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Information on the uptake rates for flu vaccine in those aged 65 and over for 2003–04 by primary care trust and strategic health authority has been placed in the Library.

**Dr. Starkey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will change the guidelines on free influenza vaccinations to include carers. [156687]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Policy for those receiving free flu vaccination is currently under review. Carers are one of the groups under consideration.

### Food Supplements Directive

**Sir Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) for what reasons his Department opposed the application to the High Court in London brought by the Health Food Manufacturers Association, the National Association of Health Stores and Consumers for Health Choice for leave to appeal to the European Court of Justice against the provisions of the Food Supplements Directive; upon what date the case was heard; what the outcome of the case was; and if he will make a statement; [155194]

(2) if he will make funds available to the Health Food Manufacturers Association, the National Association of Health Stores, and Consumers for Health Choice to

enable them to proceed to the European Court of Justice with their case relating to the Food Supplements Directive; [155195]

(3) on what date in 2003 the Minister for Public Health met industry representatives to discuss their concerns about the Food Supplements Directive; on what date the Minister subsequently approached the office of Commissioner Byrne to seek a meeting to discuss those issues; on what dates the approach was subsequently pursued; and if he will make a statement on the reasons for the failure so far to arrange such a meeting. [155196]

(4) when the Minister for Public Health next expects to meet representatives of the Health Food Manufacturers Association, the National Association of Health Stores, and Consumers for Health Choice to discuss their concerns about the Food Supplements Directive; and what progress the Minister will report at that meeting; [155197]

(5) what information he has received about the timing of the case being taken to the European Court of Justice in relation to the Food Supplements Regulations; what assistance he intends to give the Health Food Manufacturers Association and the National Association of Health Stores in preparing that case; and if he will make a statement. [155198]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The National Association of Health Stores (NAHS) and The Health Food Manufacturers' Association (HFMA) have challenged The Food Supplements (England) Regulations 2003 and The Food Supplements (Wales) Regulations 2003 on grounds that the underlying Directive is in part invalid because of incompatibility with Community law. They sought a reference to the European Court of Justice (ECJ) regarding the validity of the relevant parts of the Directive and then the quashing of the relevant part of the England and Wales Regulations.

At a hearing on 30 January 2004 the judge gave permission for judicial review of the Regulations and ordered that there be a reference to the ECJ for a preliminary ruling in respect of the validity of the Directive. Formal reference to the ECJ is likely to take place around the end of February. I understand that the ECJ takes approximately 24 months to give a preliminary ruling; however the national court will request expedition by the ECJ.

Article 10 of the European Community Treaty imposes a duty on member states to take all appropriate measures to ensure fulfilment of the obligations arising out of the Treaty or resulting from action taken by institutions of the Community. The Government had a responsibility to ensure that the full arguments concerning the validity of the Directive were put before the court, so that it could see the reasoning on both sides before deciding whether to grant permission for the case to proceed and whether to order that a reference be made to the ECJ.

The Government have no plans to make funds available to the claimants. At the appropriate point the United Kingdom like other member states will decide on what if any observations it will make to the ECJ.

I met with industry representatives to discuss their concerns about the Food Supplements Directive on 7 October 2003.

Since then I have been seeking to arrange a discussion about the setting of EC maximum permitted levels for vitamins and minerals in food supplements with Commissioner Byrne at the earliest practical opportunity. As to the timing of this meeting, it should be noted that we do not expect the Commission's proposal on maximum levels for another two to three years and there are currently no formal EC discussions on maximum levels under way.

I have no current plans to meet representatives of the Health Food Manufacturer's Association, the NAHS and Consumers for Health Choice again. However, I will consider a further meeting when I have discussed maximum levels with Commissioner Byrne and the industry has experience of submitting safety dossiers to the European Food Safety Authority so that discussions can also cover how that process is working.

### School Fruit Scheme

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health which schools in the Chorley constituency benefit from the free fruit scheme. [157255]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The following 50 schools in the Chorley District of Lancashire local education authority receive fruit under the National School Fruit Scheme:

Chorley All Saints Church of England Primary School and Nursery Unit

Duke Street Primary School

Highfield Primary School

Chorley, the Parish of St. Laurence Church of England Primary School

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Chorley

St. George's Church of England Primary School, Chorley

Chorley St. James' Church of England Primary School

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Chorley

Gillibrand Primary School

Chorley St. Mary's Catholic Primary

Chorley St. Peter's Church of England Primary School

St. Gregory's Catholic Primary School, Chorley

Buckshaw Primary School

Rivington Voluntary Aided Primary School

Adlington St. Paul's Church of England Primary School

Adlington Primary School

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Brinscall

Lancaster Lane Community Primary School

Clayton-le-Woods Manor Road Primary School

Clayton-le-Woods Westwood Primary School

Anderton St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Bretherton Endowed Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Brindle St. James' Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Brindle Gregson Lane Primary School

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Brindle

Christ Church Charnock Richard Church of England Primary School

St. Bede's Roman Catholic Primary School, Clayton Green

Clayton-le-Woods Church of England Primary School

Coppull Parish Church of England Primary School

Coppull St. John's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

St. Oswald's Catholic Primary School, Coppull

Coppull Primary School

Croston Trinity & St. Michael's Church of England Methodist Primary School

Eccleston St. Mary's Church of England Primary School

Euxton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Euxton St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

Euxton Primrose Hill Primary School

Heskin Pemberton's Church of England Primary School

Mawdesley St. Peter's Church of England Primary School

SS Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School, Mawdesley

Balshaw Lane Community Primary School

Eccleston Primary School

Clayton Brook Primary School

St. Chad's Catholic Primary School

Whittle-le-Woods Church of England Primary School

Brinscall St. John's Church of England and Methodist Primary School

Abbey Village Primary School

Withnell Fold Primary School

Chorley Astley Park

Mayfield School

### Breast Cancer

**Mrs. Calton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the NHS will offer genetic testing of the complete BRCA2 gene instead of the current test. [156897]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The National Institute for Clinical Excellence is preparing guidance for the national health service in England and Wales on the identification and management of genetic risk of familial breast cancer, with which the BRCA 2 gene is associated. This is due to be published shortly and is expected to include guidance on when it is appropriate to refer individuals for genetic testing, and the type of test which should be offered.

### Hepatitis C

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many new cases of hepatitis C have been diagnosed among drug users in *(a)* London and *(b)* England in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [156561]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Laboratory reports of antibody to hepatitis C in London and England from 1999 to 2003, where injecting drug use is given as a risk factor, are shown in the table. The majority of cases of acute hepatitis C infection do not result in symptoms and therefore new infections are not usually identified. These laboratory reports do not distinguish between new and previous infections.

*Laboratory reports of hepatitis C infection in London and England 1999–2003, where injecting drug use is given as a risk factor*

| | *1999* | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* | *2003*[1] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| London | 338 | 283 | 399 | 366 | 377 |
| England | 5,297 | 4,893 | 4,665 | 5,547 | 6,129 |

[1] Provisional data.

*Source:*
Health Protection Agency.

### HIV/AIDS

**Mr. Nigel Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many new HIV positive cases were recorded in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available; how many deaths from HIV/AIDS there were in each year; how many HIV positive cases have been reported in total; and if he will make an assessment of likely future trends of the disease. [157485]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The numbers of new diagnoses of HIV infection and deaths in HIV-infected individuals, with or without reported AIDS, recorded in England in each of the last 10 years are shown in the table. By the end of December 2003, a total of 56,286 individuals had been reported as diagnosed with HIV infection in England since the start of the epidemic.

The latest estimates for future trends in numbers of diagnosed individuals living with HIV were published by the Health Protection Agency (HPA) at the end of 2002. They are available on the HPA website at http://www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/hiv_and_sti/publications/hiv_annual_2002.pdf.

| *Year*[1] | *Newly diagnosed HIV infections* | *Deaths* |
|---|---|---|
| 1993 | 2,404 | 1,422 |
| 1994 | 2,362 | 1,527 |
| 1995 | 2,449 | 1,528 |
| 1996 | 2,477 | 1,308 |
| 1997 | 2,512 | 652 |
| 1998 | 2,618 | 446 |
| 1999 | 2,878 | 417 |
| 2000 | 3,618 | 424 |
| 2001 | 4,716 | 422 |
| 2002 | 5,531 | 336 |

*Note:*
Numbers for recent years will rise as delayed reports are received.
*Source:*
Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre, Health Protection Agency (data to the end of December 2003).

### Hospital Regulators

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* organisations and *(b)* regulators are entitled to (i) inspect and (ii) regulate NHS hospital trusts in England. [154009]

**Mr. Hutton:** Using the definition in The Better Regulation Task Force's report, "Independent Regulators", there are 31 bodies with the right to inspect or regulate national health service hospital trusts in England. However, 18 of these are regulators of the professions, or professional bodies, whose inspection roles apply only to training which a hospital might provide.

From 1 April 2004, the Commission for Health Improvement, the Social Services Inspectorate and the National Care Standards Commission will cease to exist. At the same time, three new bodies will be introduced: the Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection, the Commission for Social Care Inspection and the Foundation Trusts Regulator, but in most cases they will replace or rationalise a number of the functions of existing bodies.

### Long-term Care

**Sandra Gidley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what target he has set for intensive home care as a percentage of intensive home and residential care. [158053]

**Dr. Ladyman:** The Department's Public Service Agreement includes a target to increase the number of those supported to live intensively at home to 30 per cent. of all those being supported at home or in residential care by March 2006. The percentage has risen by nearly two points, from 27.2 per cent. in 2001–02 to 29 per cent. in 2002–03.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the Answer of 30 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 559W, on long-term care, how the estimates for *(a)* income from user charges for personal care at home, *(b)* savings of disability benefits and *(c)* publicly funded residents with incomes high enough to meet some care costs were derived. [156350]

**Dr. Ladyman:** In 2001–02, councils received around £320 million in income from user charges for domiciliary services. This information can be found on the Department's website. This is assumed to rise to around £350 million in 2003–04.

Savings from disability benefits were estimated in the manner described in the reply of 25 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 466–67W.

The costs in respect of publicly funded residents with incomes high enough to meet care costs are an estimate, in the absence of data. A comparison of local authority data on the numbers of older supported residents in independent sector care homes and Department for Work and Pensions data on the numbers of older recipients of the residential allowance suggests that around 20 per cent. of older supported residents did not receive the residential allowance. This suggests that around 20 per cent. of supported residents have incomes above £168 per week, which is both the cut-off for receipt of residential allowance by older residents and the assumed level of hotel costs. This would amount to some 57,000 supported residents. If the average income of this subgroup—for which data are not available—was around £200 per week, the annual cost of free personal care for this group would be around £100 million.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 30 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 559W, on long-term care, whether there would be offsetting savings to the Department for Work and Pensions' expenditure on disability benefits for older people receiving care at home, if the personal care were to be provided free. [156466]

**Dr. Ladyman:** Free personal care would not result in any savings to the Department for Work and Pensions' expenditure on disability benefits for older people receiving care at home. This is because receipt of local authority funded home care, unlike receipt of local authority supported residential care, does not trigger loss of disability benefits.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people over 75 were admitted to long-term care following a fall in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [156644]

**Dr. Ladyman:** Information on the number of people over 75 admitted to long-term care following a fall is not centrally available.

### Waiting Lists/Times

**Sarah Teather:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how long on average patients suffering from Lupus (SLE) waited to obtain a hospital out-patient appointment following referral to a specialist unit by their general practitioner in *(a)* London and *(b)* England in the last period for which figures are available. [156161]

**Dr. Ladyman:** Data on waiting times for lupus patients are not collected centrally.

### Lymphoedema

**Mrs. Roe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidelines are in place to ensure that non-cancer related lymphoedema patients receive appropriate compression garments as part of their treatment for the condition. [156533]

**Dr. Ladyman** *[holding answer 2 March 2004]:* We have issued no specific guidance to hospital trusts and primary care trusts for the provision of compression garments to non-cancer related lymphoedema patients. Decisions on what treatments to offer to patients with lymphoedema are a matter for the clinicians in charge of their care.

### Medical Staff (Terms and Conditions)

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will investigate conformity with *(a)* his advice Amendments to the terms and conditions of service for hospital medical and dental practitioners and *(b)* his Advance Letter, AL MD 1/01 paragraph 22, m & n, published by the Department of Health in 2001. [R] [153417]

**Mr. Hutton:** The implementation of the terms and conditions of service is the responsibility of national health service employing organisations.

Monitoring of NHS employers' activities at this level of detail is not carried out centrally.

### Mental Health Services

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of the assertive outreach teams are operational 24 hours per day, seven days per week. [154408]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** As set out in the Mental Health Policy Implementation Guide (2001), assertive outreach teams do not need to be operational 24 hours per day, seven days per week, but provide evening and weekend cover.

According to the Durham adult mental health services mapping database, approximately 29 per cent. of assertive outreach teams provide access to a 24 hours per day, seven days per week on-call service. A further 41 per cent. provide evening and weekend cover.

This means that 30 per cent. of assertive outreach teams in operation do not fully comply with the service specification set out in the Mental Health Policy Implementation Guide as yet. We expect full compliance with NHS Plan targets for new teams and services by December 2004.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans his Department has to increase the number of beds for mental health trusts. [154742]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The Government set out priorities for local services for the reform and modernisation of mental health services in the "NHS Plan and the Priorities and Planning Framework 2003–06", supported by over £300 million extra investment announced in the NHS Plan.

In line with the "NHS Plan" and the "Priorities and Planning Framework 2003–06", 500 secure beds and 320 24-hour staffed beds have been created. A further 200 long-term secure beds and 140 secure personality disorder places will be in place by the end of the year.

The Government expect that the establishment of new teams and services, including a wider range of residential and secure provision for people with severe mental ill health, designed to ensure care and treatment tailored to individual needs, will ease pressure on the existing psychiatric beds provided by mental health trusts.

## Ministerial Speeches

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many speeches he made between 9 June 2003 and 1 February 2004; and where a copy of each speech can be obtained. [156150]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The information is as follows:

Between Monday 9 June 2003 and Sunday 1 February 2004:

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health delivered 12 speeches.

My right hon. Friend the Minister of State for Health (Mr. Hutton) delivered nine speeches.

My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Health (Miss Johnson) delivered 19 speeches.

My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Health (Dr. Ladyman) delivered 27 speeches.

My noble Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Health (Lord Warner) delivered seven speeches.

I have delivered 19 speeches.

These speeches were made outside of Parliament, in connection with official duties and copies of the speeches can be obtained from the Department of Health website at www.dh.gov.uk

## Nursing

**John Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many additional nurses have been employed in the Barking, Havering and Redbridge Hospitals Trust since *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2001. [157328]

**Mr. Hutton:** Barking, Havering and Redbridge Hospitals National Health Service Trust was established in 2001. Figures for qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff are shown in the table.

*NHS hospital and community health services: Qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff in the Barking, Havering and Redbridge Hospitals NHS Trust as at 30 September each specified year*

| | *Headcount and Percentage headcount* |
|---|---|
| 2001 | 1,761 |
| 2002 | 1,814 |
| Increase | 53 |
| Percentage increase | 3.0 |

*Source:*
Department of Health Non-Medical Workforce Census.

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures the Government are taking to ensure that the NHS does not employ nurses and other medical staff from developing countries with whom they do not have a bilateral agreement or memorandum of understanding. [157142]

**Mr. Hutton:** All national health service employers involved in international recruitment are strongly commended to adhere to the code of practice published by the Department in 2001. One of the guiding principles of this code is that developing countries should not be targeted for recruitment. We have issued a list of developing countries that the NHS should not actively recruit from. A copy of this code is available at: www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HumanResourcesAndTraining/MoreStaff/fs/en.

We publish a list of recruitment agencies who have agreed to comply with the code. NHS bodies are strongly commended to use recruitment agencies on that list. We monitor compliance to the code of practice through information supplied by strategic health authorities.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many nursing students qualified but did not join the Nursing Register in each year since 1996. [156280]

**Mr. Hutton:** This information is not collected centrally but can be obtained from the Nursing and Midwifery Council, which is an independent statutory body.

## Pharmacies (Security)

**Mr. Lansley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what measures he has taken in the context of the NHS contract with pharmacists to support security measures on their premises; [155583]

(2) how many pharmacists on contract to the NHS were victims of crime on their premises in 2003. [155584]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain's code of ethics and standards requires pharmacy premises to be safe for the public and staff working there. Currently, pharmacists can contact

their local pharmaceutical committee, primary care trust or police to find out what additional support and advice is available locally on security measures that they can employ.

The Counter Fraud and Security Management Service (CFSMS) was launched in April 2003 with a remit encompassing policy and operational responsibility for the management of security in the national health service. The remit can be defined as protecting people and property so that the highest standards of clinical care can be achieved. This includes tackling violence against staff and professionals working in the NHS.

From April 2004, all health bodies will be required to nominate a suitable person to perform the role of local security management specialists (LSMS). These LSMS will be trained by the CFSMS, so that they can take the lead for security management work within the NHS, including primary care.

While security has not been raised in recent contractual discussions, the CFSMS will shortly be meeting the pharmaceutical services negotiating committee to discuss what support on security management the CFSMS and the LSMS can give to community pharmacies.

Information on the number of community pharmacists owning, or employed by companies, with NHS contracts who were victims of crime on their premises is not collected or held centrally.

### Retirement Age

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to raise the normal retirement age for NHS staff; what estimate he has made of the cost savings from raising the pension age to 65; and if he will make a statement. [156576]

**Mr. Hutton:** There is no nationally determined retirement age for nurses and other non medical staff.

Hospital, public health and community doctors employed under the existing terms and conditions of service are required to retire at age 65, although there is provision for an employing authority to extend employment in a locum capacity beyond 65. Consultants are free to transfer to the 2003 consultant contract under which there is no age restriction to practice.

There is no age restriction on doctors in the personal medical services (PMS). The requirement that existing general medical services doctors cannot act as principals after age 70 is removed from 1 April 2004. Fitness to practice will be assessed by rigorous and objective tests which will replace the existing arbitrary age limit.

The national health service pension scheme is currently subject to review. It is too early to provide an estimate of the cost implications of any changes that may be considered as a part of that review.

### Rural Health Care

**Dr. Murrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on progress made towards primary care targets set out in the Rural White Paper. [154904]

**Mr. Hutton:** Progress made towards the primary care commitments set out in the Rural White Paper was included in the Rural White Paper Review, published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on Wednesday 14 January 2004.

### Schizophrenia

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the financial cost of schizophrenia to the NHS in 2003. [154574]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Information relating to the financial cost of treating schizophrenia is not collected centrally and no estimate can be made.

### Care Workers (Statutory Requirements)

**Phil Sawford:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the average cost of complying with statutory requirements for each individial care worker in respect of *(a)* criminal records checks, *(b)* NVQ training, *(c)* health and safety training, *(d)* manual handling training, *(e)* food hygiene training, *(f)* first aid training and *(g)* other statutory requirements. [158236]

**Dr. Ladyman:** The cost to an employer for a Criminal Records Bureau check is £29 for an enhanced check and £24 for a standard check. This will increase to £33 and £28 respectively as of 1 April 2004.

National Vocational Qualification training is not a statutory requirement on all individual social care workers. However the Department's National Minimum Standards set out the proportions of staff that should have achieved NVQ qualification in each type of service provision in order for that provision to be registered by the National Care Services Commission.

For strategic planning purposes, the Department accepts the cost estimate from Topss England, the national training organisation for social care, which is £1,000 per NVQ qualification. This is very approximate because NVQ qualifications differ substantially across the levels, and every worker brings different experience and learning capacity to their assessments.

In respect of other training, it is for the employer of social care workers to ensure that their staff training meets statutory requirements, which vary between different care settings, and no data collection is made centrally of the costs.

To assist employers in this, in addition to the substantial general finance settlement increases to local councils, and the existing Department's Training Support Programme Grant (£56 million), the Department introduced a new National Training Strategy Specific Grant to councils for 2003–04 of £25 million, rising to £31 million next year, and a provisional £95 million the year after. For 2003–04, this grant has a condition attached that councils must spend 50 per cent, of their allocation on workers in the private and voluntary sectors. For 2004–05 and 2005–06 this grant will become a Specific Formula Grant, and cease to be ring fenced, therefore without any conditions. Also the Department funds Topss England £15 million per annum to support the implementation of their National

Traininmg Strategy. In addition to the Department's grants, funding is being drawn into the system from many other sources, most notably the Learning and Skill Councils.

### Sunbeds

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent assessment he has made of the risk to health of sunbed use; what steps he has taken to ensure sunbed users are made aware of the health risks arising from sunbed use; and if he will make a statement. [156948]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Reports on the effects of ultra-violet radiation (UVR) from the National Radiological Protection Board, the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection and the British Medical Association conclude that there is no direct evidence that sunbed exposure causes skin cancer. By far the greatest source of UVR exposure is the sun. That is why we have taken measures to encourage the public to protect themselves and their children from the risks of unsafe exposure to the sun. We have, with key stakeholders, developed the SunSmart campaign, run by Cancer Research UK. The campaign was launched in March 2003 and funded by the United Kingdom Health Departments. Campaign leaflets and posters were sent to all general practitioner surgeries, secondary schools and health promotion units. Subject to further funding, the forthcoming campaign for summer 2004 will build on the success of last year's campaign.

The potential dangers involved in the use of sunbeds will be the subject of a meeting of experts and industry hosted by SunSmart on 29 March. The campaign will review the latest scientific evidence and develop practical recommendations for better self-regulation.

The Government acknowledge the risks to young people of exposure to UVR in all of its forms. On sunbeds specifically, the Health and Safety Executive has published guidance for operators and customers of solaria. Included in the advice was that people under 16-years-old should not use sunbeds and that a limit of 20 sessions per year should be observed. This advice was developed after consultation with leading experts and is accepted as good advice.

### Tuberculosis

**Dr. Murrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the reasons are for the increase in tuberculosis in London; and if he will make a statement on the remedial action he proposes. [153363]

**Mr. Hutton:** Homelessness, living conditions, ethnic distribution as well as improved reporting and surveillance have led to the increase of reported cases of tuberculosis in London.

### Wanless Report

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health which conclusions and recommendations in the report "Securing our Future Health: Taking a Long-Term View", by Mr. Derek Wanless, his Department does not accept. [153113]

**Mr. Hutton:** My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced in the 2002 Budget that the Government accepted the conclusions of the Wanless Review. In order to deliver reform, my right hon. Friend also announced in his 2002 Budget historic sustained levels of increase in national health service funding, an average annual increase of 7.3 per cent., in real terms for the five years 2003–04 to 2007–08.

# Written Answers to Questions

*Thursday 4 March 2004*

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### Agricultural Subsidies

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the cost of UK agricultural subsidies and price support in areas which are not dependent on the Common Agricultural Policy in the last year for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement. [156602]

**Alun Michael:** Commodities not subject to a Common Organisation of the Market include potatoes, horsemeat, honey, coffee, alcohol, cork and vinegars derived from alcohol. UK subsidies or price support for these areas are negligible or non-existent.

### Calf Passports

**Mr. Steen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what happens to male calves which are refused passports because the owner failed to register them within 27 days. [156044]

**Alun Michael:** In the first instance the animal's keeper has the right to appeal against the decision to refuse a passport if he thinks there are special or extenuating circumstances.

If the appeal is unsuccessful, the animal may live out its life on the farm it is on. It may not be moved to other premises and it may not enter the food chain at the end of its life.

If the keeper does not wish to keep the calf it may be moved under licence to a knacker's yard or other facility for destruction.

### Milk Pricing

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the Office of Fair Trading's recent re-examination of the supermarkets' code, with specific reference to milk pricing. [156442]

**Alun Michael:** The report of the review by the Office of Fair Trading of the operation of the Supermarket Code of Practice was published on 20 February 2004. It made no reference to milk pricing which falls outside the scope of the Code.

We welcome the publication of the report and the OFTs decision to undertake a focused compliance audit of the supermarkets' dealings with suppliers. We hope that this will provide a firm evidence base for future action.

### European Landscape Convention

**Mr. Gordon Prentice:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress the Government are making with the European Landscape Convention; and when it will be *(a)* signed and *(b)* ratified. [157480]

**Alun Michael:** Defra has been considering with other interested Government Departments and agencies the possible costs and benefits to the UK of signing and ratifying the Council of Europe European Landscape Convention. No decision has yet been taken as to whether the UK will sign and ratify but I expect a decision to be made later this year.

### Fisheries

**Mr. Paterson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the accuracy of assessments made by the *(a)* UK Government and *(b)* European Commission on the attributes of fish discarded by fishing vessels operating in UK waters. [152369]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** These data are obtained by discard officers employed by the UK fisheries research agencies. They are collected in accordance with EC Regulation 1639/, which applies to all member states, and the precision levels of data relating to discards are set out in Chapter III E(1)c, H(1)e of that regulation. The European Commission makes use of the estimates made by member states, and may aggregate them when required.

### Large Combustion Plants Directive

**Paddy Tipping:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how trading of sulphur dioxide and nitrous oxides within the national emission reduction plan proposed by her Department for implementation of the Large Combustion Plants Directive would operate, with particular reference to the Commission's decision that trading of pollutant emissions will only be allowed where emissions fall below best available techniques. [155897]

**Alun Michael:** The general principles of an emissions trading scheme were set out in the National Emissions Reduction Plan submitted to the European Commission in November 2003. The plan is available on the Defra website. The details of any such scheme would be defined in close consultation with the potential participants depending on the Government's final decision on the UK's approach to implementing the Large Combustion Plants Directive.

Plants within such a scheme would be able to trade allowances freely but would still have to comply, at all times, with all other relevant legislation, including the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control Directive which requires the application of best available techniques.

### Minor Highways and Byways (Vehicle Use)

**Mr. Laurence Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what discussions she has had with groups representing users

of mechanically propelled vehicles in connection with plans to restrict their use of minor highways and byways; and if she will make a statement; [157306]

(2) what representations she has had from groups representing users of mechanically propelled vehicles regarding their use of minor highways and byways; and if she will make a statement; [157307]

(3) if she will make a statement on plans to restrict the use of byways and minor highways by mechanically propelled vehicles. [157308]

**Alun Michael:** During the course of last year I met the Trail Riders Fellowship, the Land Access and Recreation Association, the Royal Automobile Club, the Byways and Bridleways Trust Council, and the Auto-Cycle Union last year to discuss the use of mechanically propelled vehicles on rights of way.

The Government have subsequently published a consultation paper setting out its proposals for tackling the problems which can arise. So far 10 groups representing users of mechanically propelled vehicles have responded.

The consultation period ends on 19 March. When I have had an opportunity to consider all the responses, I will invite representative groups to meet me to discuss the issues. We will announce the Government's intentions on the way ahead in due course.

### Scotland/UK Concordats

**Annabelle Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what amendments have been made to the Concordats between the Scottish Executive and the UK Government on co-ordination of European policy issues concerning agriculture; and what representations she has received from the Scottish Executive to amend the Concordats. [157869]

**Alun Michael:** There have been no amendments concerning agriculture made to any Concordats on co-ordination of European policy issues. Defra has not received any representations from the Scottish Executive to amend the Concordats.

### Beekeeping

**Chris McCafferty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many cases of highly resistant varroa mites have been reported in the last 12 months in *(a)* England, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* Wales. [157782]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** The number of new cases of pyrethroid-resistant varroa mites reported in apiaries in England and Wales in the last 12 months is 59 and nine respectively. There have been no such cases reported in Scotland.

## CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### Commonwealth Games

**Mr. Fallon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what representations were made by her Department to the Commonwealth Games Federation General Assembly concerning the selection of disabled sports for the 2006 Commonwealth Games; and whether she will make further representations on behalf of *(a)* bowls and *(b)* other excluded sports. [158832]

**Mr. Caborn:** None. The programme for elite athletes with disabilities at the 2006 Games was decided by the Commonwealth Games Federation General Assembly following representations made by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) and the Melbourne 2006 games committee. The General Assembly agreed to increase the number of disability events from 8 to 12 from a list of 17 submitted by the IPC.

This Government are committed to promoting disability sport and appreciates the popularity of bowls in this country. However, the selection process was the sole responsibility of the General Assembly and it would be inappropriate for Ministers from this Department to attempt to intervene.

The Federation believe that the selection by the General Assembly offers the widest range of opportunities—within a limited programme—for the majority of athletes with disabilities from across the Commonwealth.

### Regional Museums

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps she is taking to increase the funding of regional museums. [158144]

**Estelle Morris:** The Department for Culture, Media and Sport's allocation of resources from Spending Review 2002 already includes a very significant increase in funding for regional museums, from £10 million in 2003–04 to £30 million in 2005–06. One of our aims is to use that funding, which underpins the Renaissance in the Regions programme, to lever in funding from other sources.

Recently we have doubled our contribution to the joint DCMS/Wolfson museums and galleries improvement fund, to provide a total annual fund of £4 million, and have extended its coverage to regional museums with designated collections and to museums participating in Renaissance in the Regions. DCMS and the Department for Education and Skills are also investing £2.6 million in the current financial year in education and community projects carried out by partnerships of national and regional museums.

In preparing the Departmental submission to the 2004 Spending Review, we will consider the needs of regional museums alongside other priorities and pressures during the 2005–08 period.

### Television Reception

**Mr. Gibb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what measures she is taking to tackle problems caused to television reception as a consequence of transmissions by TETRA masts. [158566]

**Estelle Morris:** TETRA systems in the UK are licensed to operate on frequencies within the bands 380 to 385 MHz; 390 to 395 MHz; 410 to 430 MHz; 871 to 876 MHz and 916 to 921 MHz. Television broadcasting operates on channels outside these bands; within the range 470 to 862 MHz. Interference should not therefore

occur to TV reception from TETRA transmissions provided that the TETRA systems are operating in accordance with their licence conditions and the standard of installation of the TV receiver including its aerial system are satisfactory.

Ofcom, the independent regulator of communications is responsible for managing civil use of the radio spectrum including the investigation of legitimate reports of television and radio interference. Ofcom has published information on improving radio and TV reception to avoid interference, including specific advice on cases involving TETRA. In all such cases reported to Ofcom to date, the problems have been attributable to the performance of the consumers own TV aerial amplifiers which have been found to have a pass band wide enough to boost the TV signal and, inadvertently, the TETRA signals. In most cases a suitable filter between the amplifier and TV aerial will resolve the interference. Consumers in these cases have been advised to take up the problems with their suppliers.

## SCOTLAND

### Whisky

**John Thurso:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what meetings he has had with representatives of the Scottish whisky industry in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002, *(c)* 2003 and *(d)* 2004. [156802]

**Mrs. McGuire:** The Secretary of State for Scotland met representatives from the Scotch Whisky Association twice in 2001 and 2002, once in 2003 and thus far, once in 2004.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### Benefit Overpayments

**Mr. Webb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his latest estimate is of the amount of overpayments made owing to official error in each social security benefit paid by his Department; and if he will make a statement. [158768]

**Mr. Pond:** The latest available information is in the table.

*Estimates of the amounts of overpayments due to official error in 2002–03*

*£ million*

| *Benefit* | *Official error overpayment 2002–03* |
|---|---|
| Income Support | 140 |
| Minimum Income Guarantee | 50 |
| Jobseekers Allowance | 110 |
| Housing Benefit (see Note 2) | 100 |
| Incapacity Benefit and Severe Disablement Allowance | 43 |
| Long-Term Benefits (Retirement Pension, Widow's Benefit, and Bereavement Benefit) (see Note 3) | 14 |

*Notes:*

1. All figures are sample-based estimates and are subject to sampling error and other uncertainties.
2. The reported figure for housing benefit relates only to the 85 per cent. of expenditure covered by the housing benefit review. It does not include an allowance for overpaid expenditure due to non-residence at address, a small part of which may be the result of official error.
3. Official error on long-term benefits is a very low proportion of expenditure, and sample is a very small one which excludes some types of cases. The resulting estimate is the best available but is subject to considerable uncertainty.
4. The figures for income support, minimum income guarantee, jobseeker's allowance and housing benefit have been published in national statistics publications which report on the Department's performance against Public Service Agreement targets to reduce fraud and error.
5. Estimates are not available for official error in other benefits in 2002–03. Estimates of official error overpayments were published in reports on the benefit review exercises undertaken on disability living allowance, in 1997 and invalid care allowance (now called carer's allowance) in 1996. These out-of-date figures are not reliable indicators of the current level of official error in these benefits. A new review of disability living allowance will take place this year and provide an updated figure for that benefit.

### Benefit Payments (Pensioners)

**Mr. Willetts:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of pensioners he expects to be on means-tested benefits in 2005. [146749]

**Malcolm Wicks:** We estimate that 33 per cent. of individuals aged 60 years or older will be in receipt of either Pension Credit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit, or some combination of these benefits, in 2005.

### Medical Assessments

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many complaints he has received from hon. Members concerning disability living allowance and attendance allowance medical examinations in the areas covered by *(a)* Leeds, *(b)* Birmingham, *(c)* Manchester, *(d)* Newcastle, *(e)* Sutton, *(f)* Bootle, *(g)* Bristol, *(h)* Glasgow, *(i)* Wembley, *(j)* Edinburgh and *(k)* Cardiff disability benefit centres in the last 12 months. [156041]

**Maria Eagle:** The numbers of complaints from hon. Members, recorded by the Medical Services National Customer Relations Team (NCRT), concerning disability living allowance and attendance allowance medical examinations in the last 12 months is 48. Numbers cannot be broken down by region and relate to inquiries from MPs to the Secretary of State and the Group Director of the DCD.

*Source:*
Medical Services National Customer Relations Team database, covering the period 1 March 2003 to 27 February 2004

### Parliamentary Questions

**Mr. Brady:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many days on average his Department took in Session 2002–03 to give a substantive answer to a parliamentary Question for Ordinary Written Answer; and what the greatest number of days taken to answer such a Question was. [155919]

**Maria Eagle:** The average number of working days is 12.6 and the greatest number of working days is 130. We are committed to providing hon. Members with timely and accurate replies to Parliamentary questions.

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many Parliamentary Questions have been tabled to his Department since 1 January 2003, broken down by *(a)* Ordinary Written and *(b)* Named Day; what percentage in respect of *(a)* were answered within 10 working days; and what percentage in respect of *(b)* were answered by the specified date. [157748]

**Maria Eagle:** During the period from 1 January 2003 to 31 January 2004 we answered 2,335 ordinary written questions, of which 65 per cent. were answered within 10 working days. During the same period we answered 463 named day questions, of which 66 per cent. were answered on the day specified and 90 per cent. within 10 working days. We are committed to providing hon. Members with timely and accurate replies to Parliamentary questions.

### Pension Scheme Wind-ups

**Mr. Roy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the *(a)* total amount of money lost by pension holders in company schemes where that pension scheme has wound up after the failure of the company and *(b)* the number of people who have lost pension provision in such circumstances. [158152]

**Malcolm Wicks:** Estimating the value of pensions lost and the number of people affected due to scheme wind-up and company insolvency, is fraught with numerous difficulties. We do not have information that tells us whether a scheme wind-up is due to company insolvency. Nor do we have information at an aggregate level on the fund assets and liabilities of schemes winding-up.

The extent of pensions lost depends on many different factors—such as the maturity of the scheme (that is, the age profile and retirement status of members), and the funding position before starting winding-up. The latter in turn is highly sensitive to investment decisions and conditions in the financial markets.

Data is severely limited in these areas, and as a result the Government does not have reliable estimates of the amount of money lost or the number of people affected.

### Pensions

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on delays to processing entitlement to retirement pensions for the recently widowed. [158702]

**Malcolm Wicks:** Where pensioners are recently widowed, they may be entitled to have their pensions increased by virtue of the National Insurance contributions paid by their deceased spouses. The assessment of any entitlement to an increased pension is carried out by the National Pension Centre in Newcastle. While this assessment is being carried out, widows will continue to receive their own pensions and can also apply for interim payments to top this up.

The National Pension Centre also deals with new claims for pensions from people who have previously been divorced or widowed, and changes of circumstances for over four million pensioners who have their pensions paid direct into a bank account.

A recent build up of work in the Centre has been caused largely as a result of the Centre temporarily dealing with some work appropriate to the 26 Regional Pension Centres. As that work will return to the Regional Centres, and an additional 100 staff have been employed, the work at the National Pension Centre should be returned to normal levels by June. The number of cases outstanding where the pensioner has been recently bereaved has been reduced from over 20,000 at the end of December to just over 14,000 currently.

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what target has been set for the processing of entitlements to retirement pensions for the recently widowed; and whether this target is being met. [158703]

**Malcolm Wicks:** There is no target set specifically for the processing of entitlements to retirement pensions for the recently widowed. Where pensioners are recently widowed, they may be entitled to have their pensions increased by virtue of the National Insurance contributions paid by their deceased spouses. The assessment of any entitlement to an increased pension is carried out by the National Pension Centre in Newcastle.

When notified that a pensioner has been recently widowed, The National Pension Centre will assess whether the bereaved spouse can have their own pension increased, based on the contribution payments of their deceased partner. The National Pension Centre aims to deal with 95 per cent. of such changes within 17 days. As at the end of December performance against this target for the year was at 90.6 per cent.

**Mr. Webb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many people above state pension age he estimates are not drawing a state retirement pension because they have deferred taking a state pension; and if he will make a statement; [158767]

(2) how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women drawing state retirement pensions are receiving increments because they deferred drawing that pension beyond state pension age, broken down by the length of time for which that pension was deferred. [158770]

**Malcolm Wicks:** It is not possible to say exactly how many people are deferring their State Pension at a single point in time because it is not necessary to inform the Department for Work and Pensions of an intention to defer.

However, estimates from the Government Actuary's Department suggest that approximately 120,000 pensioners in total are not drawing their state pension at the moment.

Information on current pensioners who have deferred their pension is not available in the form requested, but there are currently around 1.14 million pensioners in total with increments, of whom 893,000 are women. These figures include a small number of people who have inherited increments from their partner's contribution record and will have not actually deferred retirement themselves.

## WALES

### Former Departmental Officials

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales which former officials of the Department have asked for permission to join *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* Deloitte & Touche, *(c)* Ernst & Young and *(d)* KPMG. [156889]

**Mr. Hain:** The Wales Office has been staffed entirely by secondees from other Government Departments who would need to seek any necessary permission from their parent Department.

### New Hospitals

**Mr. Jon Owen Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what the value of the capital expenditure on new hospitals built in Wales is in the last five years for which records are available. [156960]

**Mr. Touhig:** Capital expenditure for building new hospitals in Wales comes from different sources that are not identified in central recording systems as exclusively for building new hospitals.

The following table contains information on the total value of capital expenditure on the NHS in Wales for the last five years.

| *Financial year* | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1998–99 | 110.288 |
| 1999–2000 | 97.713 |
| 2000–01 | 91.611 |
| 2001–02 | 140.176 |
| 2002–03 | 123.388 |

### New Schools

**Mr. Jon Owen Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what the value of the capital expenditure on new schools built in Wales is in the last five years for which records are available. [156961]

**Mr. Touhig:** Capital expenditure for building new schools in Wales comes from different sources that are not identified in central recording systems as exclusively for building new schools.

The following table contains information on the total value of capital expenditure on schools in Wales for the last five years, and includes pre-primary, primary, secondary and special schools.

| *Financial year* | *£000* |
|---|---|
| 1998–99 | 55,323 |
| 1999–2000 | 51,727 |
| 2000–01 | 70,421 |
| 2001–02 | 84,215 |
| 2002–03 | 89,926 |

### Secondments

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what secondments *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* Deloitte & Touche, *(c)* Ernst & Young and *(d)* KPMG have made to his Department since 2001; for what (i) periods and (ii) tasks the secondments were made; whether secondments of staff from his Department have been made to those firms; and for what (A) periods and (B) tasks. [156917]

**Mr. Hain:** None.

## TREASURY

### Public Spending and Employment

14. **Dr. Desmond Turner:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the relationship between levels of public spending and levels of employment. [158480]

**Dawn Primarolo:** UK public spending as a percentage of GDP is close to the OECD average, but the UK has one of the highest employment rates in the OECD. Across OECD countries there is no systematic relationship between levels of public spending and levels of employment.

### Crossrail Project

15. **Simon Hughes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department of the Government agreeing to support the Crossrail project following the completion of the Montague Report; and if he will make a statement. [158481]

**Mr. Boateng:** Crossrail is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport. I understand he is now considering the detailed advice that he has received from Adrian Montague.

### Growth/Consumer Spending

16. **Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the last three years UK economy trend figures for growth and consumer spending; and if he will make a statement. [158482]

**John Healey:** Over the past three years real consumer spending has grown at a faster rate than GDP, supporting the economy through a prolonged period of subdued global demand.

### IMF Expenditure Forecasts

17. **Mr. Forth:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent discussions he has had with representatives of the International Monetary Fund regarding expenditure forecasts. [158483]

**Mr. Boateng:** The Chancellor of the Exchequer and officials from HM Treasury had detailed discussions with representatives from the IMF during December in preparation for the UK's Article IV Report. The concluding statement of the IMF's Mission was published immediately after the visit on 18 December.

### Tax Credits

18. **Kevin Brennan:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the net direct taxation payable in this financial year by a married

couple with two children and an income of £20,000 from one partner's work, taking into account the impact of tax credits. [158484]

**Dawn Primarolo:** The direct tax burden on a single earner family with two children and gross earnings of £20,000 per year is 9.5 per cent. in 2003–04.

**Mr. George Osborne:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he has had with officials from *(a)* the Department for Work and Pensions and *(b)* the Inland Revenue regarding take-up ratio of tax credits. [158267]

**Dawn Primarolo:** Officials from the Inland Revenue and HM Treasury have had discussions on the size of the population expected to benefit from the Child and Working Tax Credits. The Department for Work and Pensions does not administer tax credits.

### Employment Target

19. **Mr. Blizzard:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on his aim to achieve full employment. [158485]

**John Healey:** The Government's long-term goal is employment opportunity for all—the modern definition of full employment. Its aim is to ensure a higher proportion of people in work than ever before by 2010. The Government's strategy for delivering employment opportunity for all is based on maintaining macroeconomic stability and ensuring a dynamic and flexible labour market that equips people to adapt to change.

### Disabled People

20. **Mr. Goodman:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent discussions he has had with the Inland Revenue relating to people with disabilities. [158487]

**Dawn Primarolo:** Treasury Ministers discuss a range of issues with the Inland Revenue, including those relating to people with disabilities.

### Tax Concessions (Works of Art)

21. **Chris Bryant:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to extend tax concessions for those who give major works of art to UK national galleries. [158488]

**Dawn Primarolo:** The Chancellor of the Exchequer considers all taxes as part of his annual Budget judgment.

### Civil Servants (Relocation)

22. **Mr. Grogan:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to publish Sir Michael Lyons' report on the relocation of civil servants and other public sector workers to the regions. [158489]

**Mr. Boateng:** Sir Michael Lyons intends to publish his final report into the scope for relocating public sector activities out of London and the South East later this month. I understand that no specific date has yet been determined.

### International Development

23. **Mr. Tom Harris:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list his public spending commitments to 2006 for International Development. [158490]

**Mr. Boateng:** As set out following the conclusion of Spending Review 2002 in July 2002, the Department for International Development's budget for this Financial Year is £3.64 billion. This will rise to £3.78 billion next year and will reach £4.53 billion in financial year 2005–06. This represents the largest ever increase in UK aid levels.

### Euro (Ministerial Speeches)

24. **Keith Vaz:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many speeches he has made in the last 12 months in support of the Government's policy on the euro. [158491]

**John Healey:** My right hon. Friend the Chancellor said in his EMU statement to the House on 9 June:

"a modern long-term and deep-seated pro-European consensus in Britain about Britain's role in Europe and Europe's role in the world can and will be built."

Since then Treasury Ministers, have held a variety of meetings to discuss the euro in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In addition, Treasury officials have held over 150 meetings with opinion formers in Britain and Europe.

### Aggregates Levy

**Annabelle Ewing:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what estimate he has made of the cost to industry in Scotland of the aggregates levy since its introduction; [157858]

(2) what estimate he has made of the impact on local authorities in Scotland of the aggregates levy since its introduction; [157859]

(3) what change there has been in imports of aggregates into the UK since the introduction of the aggregates levy. [157860]

**John Healey:** I refer the hon. Lady to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for North-West Leicestershire (David Taylor) on 21 January 2004 *Official Report*, column 1256W).

### Customs and Excise

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the amount of *(a)* illegal fuel, *(b)* beer, *(c)* wine and spirits, *(d)* cigarettes and *(e)* counterfeit goods seized in each of the last three years in (i) the UK, (ii) the North West and (iii) Lancashire. [157975]

**John Healey:** HM Customs and Excise routinely publish UK seizures statistics for oil, alcohol and cigarettes. The latest published figures are contained in Customs' Annual Report 2002–03 (HC 52). Regional figures are not available.

Data on non-excise counterfeit products seized by Customs is contained in the European Commission's annual report on counterfeit and pirated goods, which is available on their website at www.europa.eu.int

### Earnings

**Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the rise in earnings was for each region of the UK for 2002–03, listed in descending order. [157661]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

*Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Martyn Jones, dated 4 March 2004:*

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question on the rise in earnings for each region of the UK between 2002 and 2003. I am replying in his absence. (157661)

Average earnings are estimated from the 2003 New Earnings Survey (NES) and are provided for full-time employees on adult rates of pay whose pay was unaffected by absence during the pay period. This is the standard definition used for NES tables.

The following table gives the percentage increase in gross weekly pay for 2002 to 2003 for the regions as requested.

*Percentage increase in average gross weekly earnings[1] between 2002 and 2003 in each of the regions of the United Kingdom (ranked in descending order of earnings increase)*

*Percentage*

| *Region* | *Percentage increase in average weekly earnings* |
|---|---|
| South West | 4.2 |
| East | 4.2 |
| Wales | 3.7 |
| Yorkshire and The Humber | 3.7 |
| Northern Ireland | 3.7 |
| East Midlands | 3.6 |
| North West | 2.6 |
| Scotland | 2.3 |
| London | 2.0 |
| North East | 2.0 |
| West Midlands | 2.0 |
| South East | 1.4 |

[1] Earnings of full time employees in the UK on adult rates, whose pay for the pay period was unaffected by absence

*Source:*
ONS New Earnings Survey, April 2003

### Customs and Excise

**Mr. Gardiner:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment has been made of the effectiveness of the customs strike force and the level of protection provided in Welsh ports of entry. [155390]

**John Healey:** To meet the challenge of 21st century smuggling, HM Customs and Excise, in Wales and across the UK, have developed their tactics, replacing traditional, predictable and less productive activities with more intelligence-led targeted operations. Experience demonstrates that the most efficient and effective way to do this in many areas is to use flexible mobile strike force teams. With these teams, Customs can deploy larger numbers, less predictably and with greater impact.

### Road User Pricing

**Mr. Damian Green:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the *(a)* the proposed date for implementation of the Lorry Road User Charge and *(b)* its tax implications for the UK haulage industry. [158221]

**John Healey:** The Government published "Modernising the taxation of the haulage industry—lorry road user charge: progress report two" in May 2003, in which we set out the timescale on which we hoped the Lorry Road User Charge would be implemented, depending on what the market tells us can be delivered by when. We also said that the charge would be offset through fuel duty reductions for lorry operators, so that overall those who buy fuel in the UK will pay no more tax as a result of the introduction of the charge. A further progress report will be issued shortly.

### Supporting People Programme

**Mr. Dhanda:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what guarantee he is able to give about funding levels for the Supporting People programme in 2004–05. [156878]

**Yvette Cooper:** I have been asked to reply

On 12 February, the Government announced funding of £1.8 billion for the Supporting People programme in 2004–05.

### Taxation

**Mr. Redwood:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost to public funds would be of abolishing capital gains tax, but charging all gains made in less than two years to income tax. [157573]

**Dawn Primarolo:** The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

## DEFENCE

### Administrative Expenditure

**Mr. Soames:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library a copy of the financial delegation for the Ministry of Defence relating to running costs and other current administrative expenditure relating to personnel costs of the armed forces. [158776]

**Mr. Ingram:** I have today placed a copy of the delegation in the Library of the House.

### Defence Finance

**Angus Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will estimate the current value of investments held by the *(a)* Army, *(b)* Navy and *(c)* RAF; and if he will make a statement. [142029]

**Mr. Ingram:** The total value of MOD investments as at 31 March 2003 was some £430 million. Further information is published in Note 9 of the Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts 2002/03 (HC1125 of 30 October 2003). This document is available in the Library of the House and on the MOD's website. The investments are mainly managed centrally and therefore are not attributed by Service.

### Future Rapid Effects System

**Mr. Robathan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) whether his Department classifies the Future Rapid Effects System programme as *(a)* a system and *(b)* a vehicle; [157596]

(2) whether the winner of the Future Rapid Effects System Systems House competition will be disqualified from playing a major role on the industrial side of the programme; [157597]

(3) whether the proposed Systems House approach is the preferred way forward for the Future Rapid Effects System programme. [157598]

**Mr. Ingram:** The Future Rapid Effect System (FRES) will provide a family of network-capable armoured vehicles that will form a key part of network enabled capability. We expect to make an announcement on the assessment phase for the FRES programme shortly.

### Gurkhas

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on *(a)* the future of Gurkha regiments in the British Army and *(b)* back filling by Gurkhas in other regiments. [158262]

**Mr. Ingram:** There are currently no plans regarding the future of Gurkha regiments. The Defence White Paper published last December provides the policy context for shaping the structure of the armed forces. Subsequently, the details of individual units within that structure will need to be further developed, but presently no decisions have been taken.

Gurkhas are not routinely tasked as individuals to back fill other army regiments. Previously, specific Gurkha sub-units, known as Gurkha Reinforcement Companies, were established in order to fill a specific operational manning requirement during a period of under-recruiting. However, improved manning levels have since reduced this requirement.

### Heavy-lift Aircraft

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many aircraft were hired to help with heavy lift in each of the last three years; and what types of aircraft were hired. [158260]

**Mr. Ingram:** The following heavy-lift aircraft have been chartered in the last two financial years and in the current financial year to date:

| | *Antonov AN-124* | *Ilyushin IL 76* |
|---|---|---|
| 2001–02 | 86 | 23 |
| 2002–03 | 176 | 23 |
| 2003–04 | 52 | 7 |

### Iraq

**Mr. Keetch:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many complaints against UK troops in Iraq have been upheld; what action has been taken; and if he will make a statement. [142178]

**Mr. Ingram** *[holding answer 9 December 2003]:* Complaints against UK troops in Iraq are dealt with by local commanders in accordance with established disciplinary procedures. The vast majority of complaints are of a minor nature and are, as a result generally not recorded centrally.

**Mr. Barnes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement concerning the death in British Army custody in September 2003 of Baha Mousa in Basra; what action has been taken or is pending against the soldiers involved; whether compensation has been *(a)* offered to and *(b)* accepted by his family; and whether he will accept an independent inquiry into the circumstances of Mr. Mousa's death. [147706]

**Mr. Ingram:** The death of Baha Mousa is the subject of an ongoing investigation by the Royal Military Police who, in exercising their constabulary powers, are fully independent of the Army chain of command. It would be inappropriate to comment until their investigation is complete.

The UK has not admitted liability for Baha Mousa's death but a payment has been accepted by Mr. Mousa's family.

**Mr. Swayne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much was spent to repair and reconstruct civilian infrastructure by UK forces within the first 100 days of the end of high intensity fighting in Iraq. [150220]

**Mr. Ingram:** In collecting the costs incurred by UK forces, we do not separately identify those incurred on repair and reconstruction of civilian infrastructure. However, it is estimated that, in 2003–04, some £9.9 million will be spent on quick impact projects, which enhance the security of UK forces. Such projects include the refurbishment of schools and health clinics, renovation of police stations, supplying oxygen to hospitals, and the repairing and re-supplying of water and sewerage works. This is separate from the cost of reconstruction, on which the Department for International Development is leading.

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what budget his Department has allocated for entertaining troops in Iraq. [158223]

**Mr. Ingram:** There is no specific budget set aside for the entertainment of troops in operational locations. Instead, an assessment, based on the number of troops deployed on the operation, is made to determine how many events should be provided.

Just over £0.5 million has been approved to be spent on entertainers visiting troops in Iraq in 2003–04. No costs were incurred in 2002–03. In addition to this cost, entertainers may be provided with some limited non-cash assistance, such as transport, accommodation or food, should this be possible given operational pressures. The Services Sound and Vision Corporation incur an additional cost, extending their normal peacetime service to the United Kingdom forces stationed overseas, to those deployed operationally in Iraq. For 2003–04, the additional cost for that activity is estimated at around £4 million.

It might be helpful to put these figures in the context of the overall net additional cost of military operations in Iraq which, for 2003-04, is forecast at around £1,500 million.

**Sir John Stanley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what date the Permanent Secretary in his Department was first informed as to which Iraqi weapons the 45 minute claim in the Iraqi weapons of mass destruction dossier applied. [158773]

**Mr. Hoon:** The Permanent Secretary first became aware of the intelligence which indicated that chemical and biological munitions could be with Iraqi military units and ready for firing within 45 minutes in early September 2002. He became aware that the intelligence referred to battlefield weapons soon after the publication of the Government's dossier on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

### RAF Colerne

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the plans for the United States Emergency Hospital planned for RAF Colerne in 1984 were ever implemented; and whether there are similar plans now. [157923]

**Mr. Ingram** *[holding answer 2 March 2004]:* I am not aware of any plans for a United States Emergency Hospital at Colerne in 1984, and there are no such plans for the future. The army took over the site from the RAF in 1978, and it is now the base for the 21 Signal Regiment (Air Support).

### Royal Yeomanry

**Mr. Soames:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the future of the Royal Yeomanry. [158775]

**Mr. Ingram:** There are currently no plans to change the role of the Royal Yeomanry. The Defence White Paper published last December provides the policy context for shaping the structure of our armed forces. The detailed roles, function and tasks of individual units within that structure are being developed, but no decisions have been taken.

### War Veterans (Ireland)

**Andrew Mackinlay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Second World War *(a)* veterans and *(b)* war widows he estimates are resident in the Irish Republic; and if he will make a statement. [158833]

**Mr. Ingram:** This information is not available in the format requested.

Available data shows that the number of war pensions in payment in respect of post 1939 service, for those where residence is recorded as being in the Republic of Ireland, is as follows; War Disablement Pension 825 and War Widows Pension 255.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Iraq

**Sir Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the contracts let by the Coalition Provisional Authority for selling Iraqi oil and gas. [155286]

**Mr. Timms:** The State Oil Marketing Organisation (SOMO) sells all exportable hydrocarbons on behalf of the Ministry of Oil. SOMO forms part of the Ministry of Oil.

### Balance of Trade

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the balance of trade between Greater London and *(a)* the rest of the United Kingdom, *(b)* the European Union and *(c)* the rest of the world was for each year since 1997. [158433]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** According to information published by HM Customs and Excise, the balance of trade in goods between the London region and EU and non-EU countries are given in the following table. Information on trade between regions of the United Kingdom is not available. Information on trade in services cannot be cross-classified by UK region and partner country.

*Greater London Balance of Trade in goods*

*£ billion*

| | [1]*EU* | *Non-EU* |
|---|---|---|
| 1997 | -5.8 | -12.1 |
| 1998 | -7.5 | -13.1 |
| 1999 | -8.5 | -13.8 |
| 2000 | -8.0 | -13.2 |
| 2001 | -5.0 | -12.4 |
| 2002 | -0.8 | -12.1 |

[1] Figures for trade with the EU refer only to traders above the Intrastat threshold. Nationally, such traders account for over 97 per cent. of the value of UK trade in goods.

### Biomass Electricity Project, Winkleigh

**Mr. Burnett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what financial and other inquiries were made by *(a)* her Department and *(b)* the South West Regional Development Agency before it announced the conditional grant made to Peninsula Power in respect of the proposed Biomass Electricity project at Winkleigh, Devon; and what inquiries are being made now. [157144]

**Mr. Timms** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]:* South West RDA made no financial inquiries into Peninsula Power since it is not funding the core operation costs of that company. The RDA purchased 36 acres of land at Winkleigh Airfield to ensure that the opportunity to build the proposed biomass plant is not lost before the issues are properly considered as part of the planning process. The RDA has undertaken the necessary due diligence in relation to the acquisition of the land.

The RDA has also provided further funds to ensure feasibility studies are comprehensively carried out and fully available to the public. It will insist that the

consultants appointed to undertake the studies provide a "Deed of Warranty" to ensure the quality of the work undertaken.

The DTI grant to the developer from the Capital Grants Scheme is an arrangement under which payments are only made in arrears of agreed milestones and where matching funding has been provided. As yet no payments have been made under the DTI grant. When assessing the original application for the grant, the DTI followed its laid-down procedures and which involved the advice of independent advisers.

Should the plant obtain all the necessary planning and environmental consents, then Peninsula Power has an option to purchase all or part of the site from South West RDA at market value. At that point, the RDA will not dispose of the land to Peninsula Power unless it is satisfied that all the necessary funding to complete any approved project is in place, necessitating the undertaking of financial checks at the appropriate time.

**Mr. Burnett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps *(a)* she and *(b)* the South West Regional Development Agency have taken to satisfy themselves that the advanced gasification and turbine technology for the proposed Biomass Electricity project at Winkleigh, Devon is proven and will not fail; and what their findings were. [157143]

**Mr. Timms** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]:* The DTI has considered the technology as part of its Bio-Energy Capital Grant scheme which allows development of technology processes. The South West RDA does have a wider interest in gasification technology in the region and will be appointing independent consultants to appraise the technology. The consultants will specifically report on the gasification technology proposed at Winkleigh and will liaise closely with DTI. The findings will be made available to the public.

**Mr. Burnett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the payments *(a)* authorised and *(b)* paid by (i) her Department and (ii) the South West Regional Development Agency towards the proposed Biomass Electricity Generation project at Winkleigh, Devon. [157146]

**Mr. Timms** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]:* The South West RDA authorised project funding of £623,900 to acquire 36 acres of land and pay for feasibility studies (an Environmental Impact Assessment, a Biomass Feedstock and Market Development Study and an Economic Impact Assessment) and limited technical costs (including costs towards a public consultation exercise).

The feasibility studies and technical work will provide results that will have wider implications for other, similar, projects in the region. The studies will also be made fully available to the public, including the local community, key regional partners and other developers.

To date (26 February 2004) the SWRDA has paid £338,200 for the acquisition of the land. In total £384,391 has been paid to date (26 February 2004) including other associated costs.

### Broadband

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of UK domestic broadband connections use services with downstream specifications in excess of 2Mbps. [157189]

**Mr. Timms:** The proportion of UK domestic broadband connections using services with downstream specifications in excess of 2Mbps is not held by the Department.

Telecommunications operators have assured the Department they review regularly their range of broadband services to see whether they are meeting consumer demand for higher speed services. It is estimated by Analysys Consulting Ltd. that by end December 2003, mass-market asymmetric 4Mbps services were available to 11 per cent. of the UK population from exchanges where the local loop has been unbundled.

### Broadband/Mobile Phones

**Michael Fabricant:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with representatives of other political parties concerning her strategy to encourage growth in the broadband and third-generation mobile phone sectors; and if she will make a statement. [156179]

**Mr. Timms:** There have been no formal discussions with representatives of other political parties concerning our strategy to encourage growth in the broadband and third-generation mobile phone sectors.

### Business Links

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what her estimate is of the current levels of *(a)* prompted and *(b)* unprompted awareness of Business Link branded services among small businesses. [157197]

**Nigel Griffiths:** In December 2002, prompted awareness of Business Link was 74 per cent. and unprompted awareness was 17 per cent. A further survey measuring awareness of Business Link is currently being undertaken.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action the Small Business Service can take in relation to an underperforming Business Link operator. [157206]

**Nigel Griffiths:** The actions available to the SBS, under the terms of section 5 of the Business Link Operator (BLO) Operator Agreement, in full to address underperformance by BLOs are:

to write formally to the BLO highlighting concern over performance levels and advising them that should performance not improve further action would be taken; requiring the BLO to undergo a Business Performance Review (BPR), that examines the problems faced by the BLO and recommends actions to resolve the problems. The BLO would then need to agree a remedial plan with their SBS or RDA contract management team based on the outcome of the BPR, the implementation of which is closely monitored by the SBS or RDA contract management team;

not automatically extending the BLO's contract to a third year and serving notice that unless performance significantly improves, the contract will terminate in two years;

if an agreed remedial plan has not been fully implemented the SBS can withhold funding from the BLO until it is satisfied the plan has been implemented in full. The amount of withheld funding can be up to 33 per cent. (depending on the extent of the failure to implement the remedial plan) and;

in extreme circumstances the failure to implement a remedial plan can be considered a material breach of the contract and a written notice to terminate the contract served.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of businesses helped by each of the UK business link organisations are still operating. [157209]

**Nigel Griffiths:** While information is not collected from individual business link organisations regarding the survival of businesses that they have assisted. A tracking study of a group of Barclay's bank business customers demonstrated that businesses that received help from Business link organisations and business agencies had a higher survival rate, with 76 per cent. still trading after two years, compared with 63 per cent. of the control group.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures are in place to encourage businesses to use Business Link; and what proportion of applicants for *(a)* the Smart Scheme and *(b)* the Grant for Research and Development has (i) discussed their application with their local Business Link operator and (ii) maintained dialogue with Business Link throughout the period of their project. [157227]

**Nigel Griffiths:** Businesses are encouraged to use Business Link by a nationally-undertaken programme of paid advertising, including online advertising, sponsorship, events, public relations activity and publications distribution. Businesses are also encouraged to use Business Link through partnerships with third parties and intermediaries, such as banks.

In addition, businesses are encouraged at a local and regional level to use Business Link through promotional activity undertaken by individual Business Link Operators.

*(a)* The most recent, independent evaluation of Smart, which published its findings in 2001, found that 50 per cent. of those surveyed had used public business service providers, including Business Link, as a source of additional support in relation to their projects, either at the application stage or subsequently,

*(b)* The Grant for Research and Development was introduced in June 2003 and early indications are that two fifths of applicants have used Business Link services in preparing their applications. The proportion which has maintained a dialogue is not known.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of time her Department's Business Link staff spent on managing the Business Link Network in each year since its inception. [157229]

**Nigel Griffiths:** The current Business Link network of 42 Operators over 45 areas in England was launched in April 2001. The Small Business Service's nine regional teams (around 50 staff), with support from their Head Office set up and managed the contracts. The majority of their time was spent working with Business Link Operators and regional partners to develop the network. The Small Business Service is now increasingly concentrating on influencing policy and delivery decisions across government both in Whitehall and in the regions, and up to a third of the regional staff will be undertaking different roles in line with this new strategy by the end of March 2004.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people are employed as part of the national network of e-business advisers located in the Business Link. [157247]

**Nigel Griffiths:** 151.

### Business Support

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many firms have been helped by the Small Firms Loan Guarantee scheme since its introduction. [157192]

**Nigel Griffiths:** Since the Small Firms Loan Guarantee began in June 1981, up to the end of January 2004, 88744 loans have been guaranteed. Some small firms may have benefited from more than one loan.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much money has been spent on *(a)* grants for research and development, *(b)* grants for investigating an innovative idea and *(c)* knowledge transfer partnerships since they were introduced; and of each total, how much has been spent on administration. [157193]

**Mr. Timms:** *(a)* and *(b)* expenditure for the Grant for R and D and Grant for III from 1 June 2003 to 31 January 2004 is as follows:

| | *Programme spend (£)* | *Administration*[1] *(£)* |
|---|---|---|
| Grant for R and D | 950,000 | |
| Grant for Investigating an Innovative Idea | 270,000 | 3,189,000 |
| Former Smart scheme[1] | 32,768,000 | |

[1] From 1 April 2003 to 31 January 2004

*Note:*
Administration of all three programmes is unified.

*(c)* Since Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (including the former TCS programmes) were introduced approximately £20.5 million has been spent. The administration costs to date are approximately £1.75 million.

### Business Support Schemes

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 5 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 998W, on business support schemes, if she will list the *(a)* service costs to run and *(b)* cost of the programme delivered by (i) the Small Firms Loan Guarantee, (ii) Grant for Research and Development, (iii) Grant for Investigating an Innovative idea and (iv) Knowledge Transfer Partnerships between 2003–07. [155357]

**Nigel Griffiths:** The forecast costs of the new Business Support Products for the financial years 2003–04 and for

2004–05 are listed in the table below. Allocations for future years will be agreed as part of the 2004 Spending Review process. Grant for Research and Development and Grant for Investigating an Innovative Idea were introduced on 1 June 2003 to replace and enhance the Smart scheme. Since that date administration of all three has been unified and it is not possible to apportion service costs between them. The same applies to Knowledge Transfer Partnerships which was introduced in 1 June 2003 to replace TCS.

*£ million*

| *Business support product* | *2003–04 Service costs* | *2003–04 Cost of programme* | *2004–05 Service costs* | *2004–05 Cost of programme* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Small Firms Loan Guarantee | 0.702 | 52.85 | 0.702 | 65 |
| Grant for Research and Development (including Smart) | 3.83 | 40 | 3.83 | 26 |
| Grant for Investigating an Innovative Idea | | 0.6 | | 3 |
| Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (formerly TCS) | 2.4 | 25. 6 | 2.4 | 25. 6 |

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 5 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 998W, on business support schemes, (1) if she will list the new business support products that are due to be made available in April; and how much money is to be spent on these products;. [157178]

(2) she will list the new products that have replaced business support schemes that are *(a)* already in place and *(b)* to be introduced this year; and what the projected cost is of each product. [157224]

**Ms Hewitt:** Four new business support products are already in place. These are: Grant for Investigating an Innovative Idea, Grant for Research and Development, Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, and Small Firms Loan Guarantee.

Five further new business support products will be introduced in the first half of this year. These are Knowledge Transfer Networks, Grant for Collaborative Research and Development, Access to Best Business Practice, Support to Implement Best Business Practice, and Finance to encourage investment in specific areas of England.

The timing of the introduction of the tenth business support product, Enterprise Capital Fund, is dependent upon the current notification to the European Commission for State Aids Clearance.

The Department's annual expenditure on each product will be kept under review by the Investment Committee to ensure products' impact on productivity and value for money.

The Business Cases presented to the Investment Committee currently project expenditure to be as follows:

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| Grant for Collaborative Research and Development | 134 |
| Knowledge Transfer Partnerships | 36 |
| Grant for Research and Development | [1]33 |
| Knowledge Transfer Networks | 17 |
| Grant for Investigating an Innovative Idea | 3 |
| Small Firms Loan Guarantee | 49 |
| Access to Best Business Practice | 10 |
| Support to Implement Best Business Practice | 20 |
| Finance to encourage investment in specific areas (provisional title) | 125 |
| Enterprise Capital Fund | Subject to EU notification |

[1] £100 million over three years

## Call Centres

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on *(a)* call centres and *(b)* call centre jobs in (i) the North West and (ii) Lancashire. [157083]

**Ms Hewitt:** The Government is well aware of the heightened interest and concerns expressed about the offshoring of UK service operations, including call centre operations. My Department has commissioned research on the key factors contributing to the relative competitiveness of UK call centre operations to help identify any appropriate actions which need to be taken by industry or Government in response to the increasingly global market for call centre services. This will include an examination of the main product areas in the UK call and contact centre industry that are vulnerable to growing competition from lower-wage economies, which types of call and contract centre activity and which regions have been most affected or are most likely to be affected in the near future.

The North West Development Agency is working with the University of Central Lancashire and a wide range of other private and public sector partners on a new initiative, Call North West, in an aim to drive up the skills and productivity of the region's contact centres. Call North West will be formally launched on 24 March.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many jobs in *(a)* the north west and *(b)* Lancashire in call centres have relocated abroad in each of the last three years. [157084]

**Ms Hewitt:** Existing information does not enable us to provide reliable figures. Official statistics do not generally separate call centre activities from the main activity of a firm or enterprise (e.g. banking). The term "call centre" can be used to describe a broad variety of functions and activities across a wide range of commercial, industrial and public sectors. Difficulties and differences in definition are reflected in commercial market research on call centres where estimates on the number of call centres and call centre employees vary substantially.

## Colombia

**Jeremy Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what support her Department has

offered to BP for its exploration activities in Colombia; and what meetings have been held with company representatives in the last six months. [157711]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** Through the British embassy in Bogota, in particular, UK Trade and Investment offers a range of services to UK exporters and to UK investors in Colombia. While London based officials have had little contact with BP there, officials in Bogota have regular contact with the company (the largest foreign investor in Colombia) on a range of issues of mutual interest. In October 2003, the embassy's First Secretary (Trade and Investment) made an introductory call on the new company president offering support to their activities in Colombia and, in February, the ambassador hosted a dinner, offered to the Minister of Mines and Energy where BP's president, and heads of other British companies were present.

Further meetings at various levels will continue to be held with BP over the coming months.

### Enterprise Culture

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions her Department has had with *(a)* other Government departments and *(b)* the EU to develop a strategy promoting an enterprise culture. [157235]

**Nigel Griffiths:** The Small Business Service has recently co-ordinated and published a cross government action plan for small business based around seven strategic themes, one of which relates to the development of an enterprise culture. The development of that strategic theme involved discussions with a number of other departments, including the Department for Work and Pensions, the Department for Education and Skills, and the Home Office.

At EU level, we responded to the European Commission's Green Paper on Entrepreneurship at the end of June 2003, including references to actions which could raise the level of awareness of enterprise, such as an enterprise day or week across the EU, which would complement the UK strategy.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what initiatives her Department is supporting to encourage entrepreneurial attitudes among young people; what discussions her Department has had with the Department for Education and Skills about building enterprise awareness in schools and universities; and whether her Department expects to implement the recommendations of the Davies review on enterprise activity offered to pupils by 2005–06. [157236]

**Ms Hewitt:** The DTI has supported Enterprise Insight in developing a national campaign to promote enterprise to young people and those who influence them (including teachers, careers advisers etc). This campaign will have as its focal point an annual Enterprise Week the first of which will be from 15 to 21 November this year. Enterprise Week will include national and regional activities and celebrations of entrepreneurial achievement.

The DTI also supports the activities of Young Enterprise, in offering young people practical experience of what enterprise entails through simulated entrepreneurial situations. Specifically, through the SBS it supports YE's Graduate Programme, Masterclass and Innovation Awards.

The DTI is also working closely with the DfES and the Treasury in taking forward the recommendations of the Davies Review. From 2005–06 all Key Stage 4 pupils will receive the equivalent of 5 days enterprise activity, which develops enterprise capability—innovation, creativity, risk-management and risk-taking, and financial and business understanding. 151 Enterprise Pathfinder projects were launched last September, covering nearly 400 secondary schools in England, from which DfES will derive guidance for all schools prior to launching the £60 million enterprise education entitlement in September 2005. A second wave of Pathfinders will start in September 2004.

The two Departments are also supporting the National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship. Building on existing good practice, the aims of the council will be to raise the profile of entrepreneurship and starting a business as a career option within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), including both universities and other higher education establishments, with the objective of increasing the numbers of students and graduates who give serious thought to this. It will therefore work with all interested parties to encourage and create an entrepreneurial culture amongst students and graduates.

### Enterprise Shows

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry where enterprise shows have been held this year; and what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of enterprise shows in encouraging business start-up. [157234]

**Nigel Griffiths:** As stated in the Government's[1] Action Plan for Small Business, we are collaborating with the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) to run a programme of enterprise shows which are being planned.

[1] A government action plan for small business : making the UK the best place in the world to start and grow a business, published by DTI January 2004 (DTI/Pub 6993/10k/01/04/NP. URN 03/1592).

### Export Licences

**Mr. Godsiff:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many export licences have been granted for the delivery of gas centrifuges or parts thereof over the last five years; and in respect of which countries. [158063]

**Nigel Griffiths:** Since May 1997, the Government have published an Annual Report on Strategic Export Controls containing details of all goods authorised for export from the UK and to which destinations. Copies of the Annual Report (up to and including 2002) are available from the Libraries of the House. Details of export licences approved in 2003 will be published later this year in the 2003 Annual Report. The annual report summary for the goods in question is 'Uranium isotope separation equipment'.

### Internet Security

**Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures her Department is taking to ensure that small businesses are adequately protected from internet hackers and fraudsters. [157809]

**Mr. Timms:** I refer the hon. Member to my answer given to the hon. Member for Eddisbury (Mr. O'Brien), on 1 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 633–34W.

### Miners' Compensation

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the death of a miner after a filed compensation claim changes the claim's level of priority, with particular reference to the status of the miner's wife. [157218]

**Nigel Griffiths:** No.

### Non-departmental Public Bodies

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list *(a)* executive non-departmental public bodies and *(b)* advisory non-departmental public bodies sponsored by her Department; and what budget was set for each year between 1998 and 2008. [155323]

**Ms Hewitt:** The Department's Executive and Advisory NDPBs are listed in the Cabinet Office's annual publication "Public Bodies".

The following bodies have been formed as Executive or Advisory NDPBs since 1 April 2003 and will be included in the Public Bodies 2004.

Competition Service—Executive NDPB

Hearing Aid Council—Executive NDPB

Advisory Committee on Carbon Abatement Technologies—Advisory NDPB

Sustainable Energy Policy Advisory Board—Advisory NDPB

UK National Authority Advisory Group—Advisory NDPB

Budgets for individual NDPBs, which may reflect income in addition to Grant in Aid, are typically settled in separate corporate or business planning discussions. Details could be supplied only at disproportionate cost.

However, Grant in Aid support for these bodies is published annually in DTI's entry in Central Government Supply Estimates (Main Supply Estimates).

Grant in Aid for future years will be published annually in Central Government Supply Estimates (Main Supply Estimates).

Copies of "Public Bodies" and the Department's estimates are available in the Libraries of the House.

### Nuclear Decommissioning

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the cost of *(a)* building, *(b)* operating and *(c)* decommissioning (i) next generation nuclear and (ii) combined cycle gas turbine facilities. [158561]

**Mr. Timms:** The Department has published estimates of the cost of electricity generation from a variety of technologies, including next generation nuclear and combined cycle gas turbine facilities. These are contained in a report published in February 2002 available at: www.dti.gov.uk/energy/greenhousegas/index.shtml.

The Performance and Innovation Unit at the Cabinet Office also published similar estimates in its 2001 Energy Review. These are available at: www.number-10.gov.uk/su/energy/1.html

### One NorthEast (UK Land Estates Partnership Deal)

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the value was of the assets of One North East which were included in the partnership deal with UK Land Estates; and what the value of contracts placed with UK Land Estates by ONE has been since its commencement. [157047]

**Nigel Griffiths:** The contractual documentation for the limited partnership, which is proposed will be called North East Property Partnership, is not yet complete.

The Agency has placed no contracts with the partnership to date as it has yet to come into existence.

### Parliamentary Questions

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many parliamentary questions have been tabled to her Department since 1 January 2003, broken down by *(a)* ordinary written and *(b)* named day; what percentage in respect of *(a)* were answered within 10 working days; and what percentage in respect of *(b)* were answered by the specified date. [157746]

**Ms Hewitt:** The following figures are for the whole of the 2002–03 sessions. Of the 2,867 ordinary written questions, 2,706 (94 per cent.) were answered within 10 working days. Of the 723 named day written questions, 247 (34 per cent.) received a substantive reply on the named day.

### Post Office

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the average percentage decline in post office business between March 2000 and March 2003 was for post offices in *(a)* the top 10 per cent.of urban deprived wards and *(b)* urban areas; and what percentage of the decline during that period she attributes to changes in the benefits system. [156482]

**Mr. Timms** *[holding answer 26 February 2004]:* The information sought relates to operational matters and I have asked the Chief Executive of Post Office Ltd. to reply direct to the hon. Member.

**Mrs. Calton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much money has been paid in compensation to sub-post masters and mistresses of closing post offices; and how many post offices have been closed in each of the last five years. [158586]

**Mr. Timms:** I understand from Post Office Ltd. that net closures of post offices in each of the last five years were:

| *Year to end March* | |
|---|---|
| 1999 | 233 |
| 2000 | 382 |
| 2001 | 547 |
| 2002 | 262 |
| 2003 | [1]345 |

[1] Including 102 closures under the urban reinvention programme which commenced in October 2002.

Compensation is paid only to those subpostmasters whose office close under the terms of the urban reinvention programme. Post Office Ltd. produces data on branch closures, including those under the urban reinvention programme, on a quarterly basis. The total amount paid in compensation to subpostmasters in respect of the 694 post offices closed under the urban reinvention programme to end December 2003, the latest quarter for which this information is available was £38,111,410.

**Mrs. Calton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the part played by *(a)* Postwatch and *(b)* Post Office Limited in the Urban Network Reinvention Programme. [158594]

**Mr. Timms:** Post Office Ltd.'s urban reinvention programme is essential if a viable and sustainable countrywide post office network is to be maintained and to meet the changing needs of customers. The company will ensure that at the end of the programme, at least 95 per cent. of the population in urban areas will still live within a mile of their nearest post offices.

Postwatch has an important role in the programme in examining each individual closure proposals and monitoring the programme overall. I understand that, of some 1,600 closure proposals notified to them, over 200 have been withdrawn, deferred or modified during or after the consultation process.

Although the vast majority of urban reinvention closure proposals have attracted little criticism, concerns expressed about the consultation arrangements led me to ask Post Office Ltd. to review the arrangements and to propose changes to make them more inclusive and responsive. These changes were announced in my written statement of 5 February.

### Regulatory Impact Assessments

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether regulatory impact assessments undertaken in relation to EU legislation are full assessments. [155259]

**Nigel Griffiths:** All regulations, including those resulting from EU legislation, that have a cost to or benefit for business are required to have a full Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA). Copies are placed in the Libraries of the House.

While EU legislation is being developed, a partial RIA is prepared in order to inform the policy development process. The RIA remains a partial RIA while the legislative proposal itself is under development.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 2 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 649W, on regulatory impact assessments, what assessment she has made of the frequency with which the costs and benefits of regulations to consumers are considered in the course of regulatory impact assessments. [155490]

**Nigel Griffiths:** The Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) process requires policy makers to assess the impact on all areas of society affected by a proposal. Where appropriate, therefore, the impact on consumers will be assessed in the RIA.

An estimate of the frequency with which consumers are referred cannot be provided without incurring disproportionate cost.

All RIAs must include a competition assessment which looks at the impact of a proposal on UK customers.

### Regulatory Reform Orders

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which regulatory reform order have been used to amend burdensome primary legislation since 2001. [155319]

**Nigel Griffiths:** The Department is currently committed to a total of 10 Regulatory Reform Orders by the end of 2005.

The Department has completed one Regulatory Reform Order removing the 20 Partner Limit on business partnerships. A further two removing the Sunday Trading Reporting Requirements for large stores and Patent Law improvements are undergoing Parliamentary scrutiny.

### Russia (Nuclear Co-operation)

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority was involved under the G8 Global Partnership Programme or its predecessor bilateral nuclear co-operation agreements with Russia in the towing of the Russian nuclear submarine K159 (November Class SSN) to the breaker's yard. [157498]

**Nigel Griffiths:** No.

### Secondments

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the secondees from outside organisations working in her Department, stating in each case *(a)* the name of the person, *(b)* the name of the organisation, *(c)* the post held and *(d)* the start and finish dates of the secondment; and which are involved in drafting parliamentary answers. [158052]

**Ms Hewitt:** The following table shows all secondees from external organisations presently working in the Department of Trade and Industry. The table indicates the name of the secondee, their employer, the position of

the secondee and the name of the DTI directorate to which the secondee is attached, and the secondment start and finish dates.

Secondees may, where appropriate in the course of their responsibilities, be asked to contribute to the drafting of parliamentary answers.

| *Name* | *Employer* | *DTI post held* | *Secondment start date* | *Secondment finish date* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Christine Adams | SIRA Ltd. | Project Manager, Technology Transfer Best Practice Project in Technological Innovation and Sustainable Development | 1/8/03 | 31/3/04 |
| Lew Adams | Strategic Rail Authority | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 1/4/02 | 31/3/04 |
| Colin Ager | National Physical Laboratory | Programme Supervisor in Technological Innovation and Sustainable Development | 16/12/02 | 31/12/04 |
| Silu Ali | Oracle Corporation UK Ltd. | Assistant Director in Business Relations | 4/8/03 | 3/8/04 |
| Martyn Allen | BAE Systems | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 4/2/02 | 3/2/05 |
| Helen Almey | dstl | Assistant Director in Office of Science and Technology | 11/8/03 | 12/8/05 |
| Haakan Andresen | Tripleplay Services Ltd. | Assistant Director in Business Relations | 5/11/02 | 31/3/04 |
| Erica Antonelli | BT | Policy Advisor in Environmental Technologies | 29/4/03 | 31/3/04 |
| Alan Baldwin | BT | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 26/7/99 | 25/4/04 |
| Malcolm Barents | UKAEA | Deputy Director in the Nuclear and Coal Liabilities Unit | 22/4/02 | 22/4/04 |
| Natasha Barnett | BDO Stoy Hayward | Investigator in Corporate Law and Governance | 2/12/02 | 31/5/04 |
| David Basford | Smiths Aerospace | Assistant Director in Business Relations | 31/3/03 | 30/3/05 |
| Frederick Bassnett | Raylian London | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 25/4/00 | 24/4/04 |
| Fahima Begum | BT | Policy Analyst in Business Relations | 9/2/04 | 8/11/04 |
| James Benn | SBAC | Project Co-ordinator in Business Relations | 6/10/03 | 5/10/04 |
| David Bill | Balfour Beatty | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 1/1/02 | 2/1/04 |
| Norman Bolton | TUV NEL | Programme Supervisor in Technological Innovation and Sustainable Development | 1/7/02 | 30/9/04 |
| Debbie Boswell | British Jewellery and Giftware Federation | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 15/7/03 | 11/7/05 |
| Edwin Bowles | Exploration Consultants Ltd. | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 2/1/02 | 31/3/04 |
| Carol Brady | Kent County Council | Assistant Director in Consumer and Competition Policy | 19/1/04 | 31/10/04 |
| Christopher Bruce | BT Group plc | Assistant Director in Business Relations | 2/6/03 | 28/5/04 |
| Geoff Cathcart | Cambridgeshire County Council | Assistant Director in Business Relations | 20/11/02 | 31/3/04 |
| Mike Chadwick | Shared Intelligence | Senior Research Officer in the Small Business Service | 2/6/03 | 30/6/05 |
| Jeff Chapman | Combined Heat and Power Association | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 1/4/00 | 31/3/04 |
| Jennifer Churchward | Ernst & Young | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 3/2/03 | 2/2/05 |
| Jos Cleare | Hill & Knowlton | Assistant Director in Business Relations | 1/1/04 | 5/10/04 |
| Peter Concannon | FaberMaunsell | Assistant Director in Business Relations | 6/5/03 | 31/10/04 |
| Hugh Crooks | Enterplan Ltd. | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 5/11/01 | 2/4/04 |
| Adam Dawson | Shell Information Technologies International | Director in Business Relations | 29/7/02 | 31/5/04 |
| Alexander Stewart Dickey | Barclays Bank plc | Consultant in the Consumer Credit Review Team in Consumer and Competition Policy | 10/11/03 | 30/4/04 |
| Mark Donougher | PricewaterhouseCoopers | Deputy Director, Entrepreneurial Inward Investment in UK T&I | 25/3/02 | 31/3/04 |
| Ian Downey | Science Systems (Space) Ltd. | Head of Applications of Market Development in the British National Space Centre | 4/12/01 | 3/12/04 |
| Fabien du Fraisse | Bio-Industry Association | Deputy Director and Bioscience Industry Adviser in Business Relations | 1/10/02 | 31/3/04 |
| Lynn Duggan | London Borough of Camden | Senior Policy Adviser in Consumer and Competition Policy | 2/2/04 | 31/7/05 |
| Peter Dunkley | Leicestershire City Council | Senior Policy Adviser in Consumer and Competition Policy | 1/2/03 | 1/8/04 |
| Alan Eastwood | Chemical Industries Association | Assistant Director in Chemicals Unit, Business Relations | 4/1/00 | 31/12/04 |
| Louise Edwards | Rolls-Royce plc | Policy Advisor In Employment Relations | 1/9/03 | 27/8/04 |
| Tony Emes | Mott MacDonald Group Ltd. | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 1/6/99 | 31/5/04 |
| Philip Evans | British Nuclear Fuel plc | Liabilities Manager in the Nuclear and Coal Liabilities Unit | 1/4/02 | 31/3/04 |
| Andy Feest | AEA Technology plc | Assistant Director in the Technology and Innovation Team, Business Relations | 21/1/04 | 20/1/06 |
| John Fitton | Foster Wheeler Energy Ltd. | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 3/4/00 | 2/7/04 |
| Simon Ford | British Telecommunications | Telecomms and e-business specialist in UK T&I | 30/5/00 | 29/5/04 |
| Christian Franceschi | DSL Consultants Ltd. | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 18/11/02 | 17/11/04 |
| Richard Francis | RWE NUKEM Ltd. | Assistant Director in the Nuclear and Coal Liabilities Unit | 2/5/00 | 30/4/04 |
| Tony Godley | UKAEA | Assistant Director in the Nuclear and Coal Liabilities Unit | 6/1/03 | 5/1/05 |
| Paul Gower | Financial Services Authority | Assistant Director in Corporate Law and Governance | 5/1/04 | 31/12/05 |

| Name | Employer | DTI post held | Secondment start date | Secondment finish date |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Elizabeth Grant | IBM (UK) | Director of UK Online for Business in Business Relations | 15/7/02 | 30/4/04 |
| Malcolm Gresty | ARUP | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 28/1/02 | 27/1/04 |
| Hilary Hartigan | NPL Management Ltd. | Programme Supervisor in Technological Innovation and Sustainable Development | 12/1/04 | 31/3/04 |
| Kevin Hatt | Security Service | Administrator in Export Control and Non-Proliferation | 20/10/03 | 30/4/04 |
| Nick Heyes | Marine Electronic Services Ltd. | Assistant Director in Business Relations | 1/3/03 | 31/3/05 |
| Christopher Hill | Shell UK Exploration and Production | Assistant Director in Energy Innovation and Business Unit | 3/11/03 | 2/5/05 |
| Mark Holt | Business Link Cheshire and Warrington | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 18/6/02 | 17/6/04 |
| Judith Hopson | Marine Electronic Services Ltd. | Administrator in Business Relations | 3/3/03 | 31/3/05 |
| Nicole Hough | UKAEA | Assistant Director in Nuclear and Coal Liabilities Unit | 22/4/02 | 22/4/04 |
| Diane Houston | University of Kent | Head of Research in the Women and Equality Unit | 1/9/03 | 31/8/05 |
| Robert Hudson | Hyder Consulting | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 1/9/01 | 31/8/05 |
| John Neale Hutchinson | Gardenex | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 1/2/99 | 29/2/04 |
| John Ireland | British Nuclear Fuel plc | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 1/9/99 | 31/8/04 |
| Marcus Jackson | Ernst & Young | Deputy Director in the Industrial Development Unit | 14/1/04 | 13/1/06 |
| Mike Jewitt | Business Link Leicester | Deputy Director in Small Business Service | 1/2/04 | 31/3/05 |
| James Johnstone | NPL Management Ltd. | Technology Adviser in Technological Innovation and Sustainable Development | 6/10/03 | 3/9/04 |
| Alexia Jones | Deluca | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 15/8/02 | 14/2/04 |
| Briony Jones | Lloyds TSB Group plc | Director of the Industrial Development Unit | 29/10/01 | 29/10/05 |
| Jane Kilgannon | Disability Rights Commission | Assistant Policy Adviser in the Women and Equality Unit | 14/7/03 | 13/7/05 |
| David King | Cambridge University | Chief Scientific Adviser and Head of Office of Science and Technology | 2/10/00 | 30/12/05 |
| Nigel Lawson Dick | Waitrose | Assistant Director in the Retail Unit in Business Relations | 13/3/03 | 31/3/04 |
| Errol Levy | Astrium UK | Assistant Director in the British National Space Centre | 2/4/01 | 30/4/04 |
| Jonathan Lonsdale | Ecotec Research & Consulting Ltd. | Project Manager in the Joint Environment Markets Unit | 1/4/03 | 31/3/05 |
| Tom MacKeown | Bertrams Group | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 1/3/03 | 1/4/05 |
| Peter Maggs | BP plc | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 1/10/01 | 31/12/03 |
| Christopher Mansfield | Shell UK Exploration and Production | Senior Economist in Energy Markets Unit | 21/1/04 | 31/12/04 |
| Joanne Marsden | Dstl | Assistant Director in Foresight Directorate, Office of Science and Technology | 1/12/03 | 30/4/05 |
| Alan McArthur | Middlesbrough College | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 27/5/03 | 26/5/05 |
| Anne McFarlane | Natural Environment Research Council | Assistant Director in the Office of Science and Technology | 3/2/03 | 2/2/05 |
| Christian Mole | Ernst & Young | Deputy Director in the Industrial Development Unit | 15/4/02 | 16/4/04 |
| Gill Money | National Physical Laboratory | Assistant Director in Office of Science and Technology | 16/2/04 | 31/3/04 |
| Barrie Morris | Grant Thornton | Assistant Director in the Small Business Service | 20/10/03 | 19/10/04 |
| Barbara Morton | Manchester School of Management | Project Manager—Sustainable Procurement in the Joint Environment Markets Unit | 10/6/03 | 9/6/05 |
| Richard Mrowicki | British Nuclear Fuel plc | Deputy Director in the Nuclear and Coal Liabilities Unit | 1/4/02 | 31/3/04 |
| Andrew Nelson | PricewaterhouseCoopers | Assistant Director in the Industrial Development Unit | 4/11/02 | 29/10/04 |
| Adrian Nicholls | Ernst & Young | Deputy Director in the Industrial Development Unit | 2/9/02 | 1/9/04 |
| Ray Parkinson | British Nuclear Fuel plc | Assistant Director in the Nuclear and Coal Liabilities Unit | 1/6/02 | 31/3/04 |
| Richard Pascoe | Reuters Ltd. | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 9/12/02 | 9/6/04 |
| Phillip Patterson | Association of Independent Music Ltd. | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 2/4/03 | 2/10/04 |
| Nicholas Peace | The Newbrook Engineering Company Ltd. | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 24/5/99 | 31/5/04 |
| Robert Quarshie | Corus | Deputy Director in Business Relations | 1/6/03 | 2/6/04 |
| Peter Revill | E-skills nto | Deputy Director in Business Relations | 1/6/01 | 31/5/04 |
| Jeremy Robinson | Allen and Overy | Assistant Director in Consumer and Competition Policy | 20/1/03 | 29/2/04 |
| Philippa Ryan | East Midlands Development Agency | Deputy Director in Facilitating Innovation | 10/3/03 | 31/7/03 |
| Robert Saunders | BP plc | Head of Downstream Oil in the Energy Markets Unit | 1/5/02 | 30/4/04 |
| Alison Scott | Gardenex | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 1/12/99 | 19/4/04 |

| Name | Employer | DTI post held | Secondment start date | Secondment finish date |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Robin Sellers | British Nuclear Fuel plc | Deputy Director in the Nuclear and Coal Liabilities Unit | 1/4/02. | 31/3/04 |
| Nicholas Sharman | London Development Agency | Director, Regions | 22/9/03 | 17/9/04 |
| Elaine Simpson | British Nuclear Fuel plc | Assistant Director in the Nuclear and Coal Liabilities Unit | 1/4/02 | 31/3/04 |
| Nicola Simpson | Citizens Advice Bureau | Assistant Director in the Better Regulation Team | 16/6/03 | 15/6/04 |
| Martyn Skinner | Tate & Lyle plc | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 10/4/00 | 9/4/04 |
| Robin Sloan | Ove Arup & Partners | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 1/4/02 | 2/4/04 |
| Jacqueline Somers | Traditional Weatherwear Ltd. | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 2/5/00 | 1/5/04 |
| Gordon Stevenson | Lee & Allen Consulting Ltd. | Investigator in Company Investigations | 20/10/03 | 19/10/04 |
| David Still | AMEC Project Investments | Renewables Advisor in the Energy Innovation and Business Unit | 6/1/03 | 5/1/05 |
| Gill Street | Kid's Club Network | Policy Adviser in the Women and Equality Unit | 8/9/03 | 23/4/04 |
| Sheena Sullivan | PKF | Tax Specialist in the Small Business Service | 7/4/03 | 31/3/04 |
| Alan Talbot | BAE Systems | Assistant Director in Business Relations | 31/3/03 | 30/3/05 |
| Peter Tandy | British Nuclear Fuel plc | Assistant Director in the Nuclear and Coal Liabilities Unit | 1/4/02 | 31/3/04 |
| Gary Taylor | British Nuclear Fuel plc | Assistant Director in the Nuclear and Coal Liabilities Unit | 1/4/02 | 31/3/04 |
| Helen Taylor | Ernst & Young | Director Internal Audit | 18/3/02 | 21/3/04 |
| Michael Thomas | Middle East Association | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 2/1/01 | 1/1/04 |
| Bob Thompson | Shell UK Products Ltd. | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 6/1/03 | 5/1/05 |
| Ian Thompson | Forensic Accounting Ltd. | Investigator in Company Investigations | 6/10/03 | 5/10/04 |
| Oliver Towers | Rolls-Royce plc | Deputy Director in the Aerospace Innovation And Growth Team in Business Relations | 1/9/03 | 31/8/04 |
| Anil Vaidya | Goldshield Pharmaceuticals | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 1/3/00 | 28/2/04 |
| John Varney | Nottingham Trent University | Deputy Director in Europe and World Trade | 1/9/02 | 26/10/04 |
| John Vernon | Drinks Marketing Consortium | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 14/2/00 | 14/2/04 |
| Alan Vicars | British Nuclear Fuel plc | Assistant Director in the Nuclear and Coal Liabilities Unit | 1/4/02 | 31/3/04 |
| John Vimpany | Exhibition Consultants Ltd | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 1/9/03 | 31/8/05 |
| John von Speyr | DSL Consultants Ltd. | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 1/10/02 | 3/10/03 |
| Trevor Vyze | British Standards Institute | Manager in Facilitating Innovation | 16/3/02 | 15/3/04 |
| James Walpole | BP Amoco | Deputy Director in Business Relations | 2/1/01 | 31/3/04 |
| David Warner | British Nuclear Fuel plc | Assistant Director in the Nuclear and Coal Liabilities Unit | 1/4/02 | 31/3/04 |
| David Waters | AMEC | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 2/4/01 | 31/3/04 |
| Peter Watford | Commonwealth Business Council | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 1/10/02 | 31/8/04 |
| Frank Watson | IBM (UK) | Deputy Director in the Office of Science & Technology | 2/2/04 | 28/1/05 |
| Peter Whateley | IBM (UK) | Assistant Director in Business Relations | 6/5/03 | 6/5/04 |
| David Williams | Gilbert Gilkes & Gordon | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 7/8/00 | 6/8/04 |
| Barbara Wilson | Corgi Hosiery Ltd. | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 1/9/01 | 31/8/04 |
| Edward Wilson | Vexamus Water Ltd. | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 2/9/02 | 2/9/04 |
| Tony Woodhouse | GKN | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 1/6/99 | 31/5/04 |
| Gordon Wright | BAE Systems plc | Export Promoter in UK T&I | 21/7/03 | 20/7/05 |

### World Trade Organisation

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will remove at least two of the Singapore issues from the remaining trade negotiations in the interest of multilateral trade. [156329]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** EU Trade Ministers agreed on 2 December 2003 that the European Community should "unbundle" the four Singapore issues and explore alternative, more flexible approaches, including the possibility of removing some, or all, of the Singapore issues from the Doha Round.

The UK has made clear since before Cancun that we do not see investment and competition as priorities in the Doha Development Agenda. It is clear there is substantial opposition to negotiations on these issues in the WTO on the part of developing countries and we should take account of these views.

### Small Business Representation

**Brian Cotter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the small business representatives on each of the Department's group boards. [156680]

**Nigel Griffiths:** Of the current group board independent members, four have a background in small business: Richard Maudslay (Business Group Board), Patricia Calway (Fair Markets Group Board), Caroline Whitfield (Innovation Group Board) and Shahzad Khan MBE (Innovation Group Board).

Advice to DTI on the needs of small business comes from the Small Business Council (SBC) and the Ethnic Minority Business Forum (EMBF). The SBC advises on the needs of existing and potential small business in order to increase their opportunities for success and growth. It also advises on the effects on such businesses of the activities and potential activities of Government. The EMBF advises on the right help and advice that

black and ethnic minorities need to start and successfully grow their businesses. The majority of members of both these advisory non-departmental public bodies are small business representatives. Further information on both can be found on the Small Business Service website at www.sbs.gov.uk.

### Smart Award Scheme

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures she is taking to improve the effectiveness of the Smart scheme in increasing the profitability of award-winners' businesses. [155260]

**Nigel Griffiths:** Business Link engage with businesses in receipt of Smart as well as other SMEs to help them build their capability for growth.

### UK Online for Business

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will publish the feedback received by her Department from stakeholders in UK online for business. [157242]

**Nigel Griffiths:** Useful feedback has been received from a variety of Intermediaries, major IT partners and business organisations on the value of the UK online for Business programme. The feedback is for internal use and is not being published.

Some objective feedback came in the form of the report published by the Economist Intelligent Unit in 2003 on e-Readiness, which described UK online for business as one of the world's strongest and most innovative government projects supporting e-business.

### University Challenge Seed Funds

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when it was decided to withdraw separate funding for University Challenge Seed Funds; and why this decision was taken. [157214]

**Ms Hewitt:** The Government announced in July 2002 in its strategy document "Investing in Innovation—A strategy for science, engineering and technology", that it would increase the funds available for the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF). In addition it would combine funding previously allocated to University Challenge and Science Enterprise Challenge into the budget for the second round of HEIF. In this way the Government is supporting knowledge transfer in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) through a single stream of funding, alongside that for teaching and research, simplifying the funding landscape and allowing HEIs greater flexibility in targeting available resources at their identified priority areas.

£45 million has been invested in University Challenge since 1999

£78 million was invested in the first round of the Higher Education Innovation Fund (three year period)

£187 million will be invested in the second round of the Higher Education Innovation Fund (two year period)

### Vehicle Disposal

**Mr. Bill O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures will be put in place to inform the public about the disposal of end of life vehicles in relation to the End of Life Vehicles Directive; and if she will make a statement. [157981]

**Mr. Timms:** A number of publicity initiatives are to be taken, at the most appropriate times, to inform the public about their rights and responsibilities in regard to end-of-life vehicles (ELVs), as a consequence of the regulations which bring the ELV Directive into effect in the UK. Aspects of the regulations to be covered by publicity include the Certificate of Destruction to be issued by authorised treatment facilities, and the entitlement to "free take-back" of ELVs, of any age, from 2007. The system which the Government is proposing to introduce to deliver this last aspect is set down in a Consultation Document, issued by the Department on 4 February, entitled the End-of-Life Vehicles (Producer Responsibility) Regulations 2004, copies of which have beenplaced in the Libraries of the House.

## INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Burma

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of his Department's contribution to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee's protection role on the Burma-Thailand border. [157617]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** In 2001–02, DFID provided £1 million to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) programme 'Care and Protection for Refugees from Burma in Thailand'. This programme was targeted towards the Burmese refugees residing in Thailand (approximately 110,000 at that time) and focused on:

ensuring the admission and reception procedures for new arrivals in Thailand adhere to international standards;

seeking access to asylum seekers at the border and working with the Thai authorities to establish a fair and transparent procedure for determining admission of new asylum seekers;

continuing to search for a durable solution for this refugee population;

facilitating, in cooperation with other UN agencies and NGOs, provision of care and social support to the refugee population;

continuing to promote accession to the 1951 Refugee Convention.

UNHCR faced many challenges during the period of activities which impacted on its ability to progress its objectives, including lack of access to both sides of the Thai-Burma border, continued insecurity in border areas of Burma, and continued problems with the definition and application of refugee admission criteria in Thailand. However, despite these constraints UNHCR continued the critical dialogue with the Government of Thailand on protection-related issues, including conducting re-registration of new arrivals and continued advocacy to prevent forced return. UNHCR also liaised with operational UN agencies and NGOs to facilitate provision of adequate living conditions within the camps. Within its care and protection activities, UNHCR implemented programmes to identify, prevent and respond to sexual and gender based violence,

provided vocational training for refugees, educational materials for school age children, and mine risk education.

In addition to supporting UNHCR Thailand, my Department also provided £607,000 to UNHCR Burma in 2002–03. The UNHCR Burma programme focused on Repatriation and Reintegration for a target population of 86,000 returnees from Bangladesh in Northern Rakhine State. Its purpose is to help establish conditions for safe, dignified, and sustainable reintegration of Burmese refugees and to mitigate potential obstacles to successful reintegration. The programme includes monitoring of forced labour, issuance of identity and residency documents for new returnees, training for returnees in language and market oriented skills, health and education services through the Myanmar Mother and Child Welfare Association, and training for the authorities in refugee and human rights law.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will break down by programme his Department's £4 million allocation for the bilateral programme for Burma. [157619]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** DFID's projected expenditure on bilateral programmes from its Burma aid framework allocation during the current financial year breaks down as follows:

| | £ |
|---|---|
| a. Grant to UN Administered Fund for HIV/AIDS in Burma | 2,200,000 |
| b. DFID financed Technical Assistance for work of UN HIV/Aids Fund | 120,779 |
| c. Grant to the BBC World Service Trust for Radio Soap Opera in support of HIV/AIDS education and improved livelihoods of poor people | 588,972 |
| d. Grant to NGO for Basic Health Care Programmes in Wa and Kachin | 125,071 |
| e. Grant to Christian Aid for Burmese Border Consortium food aid and relief programmes on the Thailand-Burma Border | 450,000 |
| g. Grant to World Health Organisation (WHO) for co-ordination of health services at Thailand-Burma Border | 220,000 |
| h. Small grants to civil society organisations | 90,000 |
| Total projected expenditure in 2003–04 | 3,794,822 |

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance with the supply of medicines his Department is providing for the 995 Karenni and 678 Karen internally displaced persons in the Muthraw district of Burma. [157625]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** DFID is not providing assistance with the supply of medicines that target internally displaced persons in the Muthraw district of Burma. We provide support, through the Small Grants Scheme managed by the British Embassy in Rangoon, for a community based organisation to operate a mobile medical clinic in Kayah State which has also visited the Muthraw district.

## CDC

**Gregory Barker:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the cost of corporate entertaining by CDC was for the last seven years; and what the budget for corporate entertainment by *(a)* CDC and *(b)* Actis is for the next three years. [157842]

**Hilary Benn** *[pursuant to his reply, 1 March 2004, Official Report, c. 618W]:* The costs of corporate entertainment by CDC over the last seven years were as follows:

| | £ |
|---|---|
| 1997 | 66,000 |
| 1998 | 101,000 |
| 1999 | 114,000 |
| 2000 | 88,000 |
| 2001 | 78,000 |
| 2002 | 81,000 |
| 2003 | 66,000 |

The corporate entertainment budgets for CDC and Actis for 2004 are £16,000 and £118,000 respectively. Although the combined level is higher than recent years, it reflects the need for the new investment management company, Actis, to establish itself in all its the markets worldwide, to promote its investment Funds and to attract third party investors.

Budgets for subsequent years have not yet been set.

## Iraq

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what representations he has made to the Agricultural Reconstruction and Development Programme for Iraq to ensure that poorer farmers do not suffer from higher prices for irrigation water; and if he will make a statement. [157435]

**Hilary Benn:** The USAID-supported Agricultural Reconstruction and Development Program for Iraq (ARDI) is undertaking surveys in the agriculture and natural resources sectors in Iraq in order to provide information for future policy-making by the Iraqi Ministry of Water Resources.

As part of this work, ARDI advisers are working with the Ministry to consider options for the reform of tariffs on water used in irrigation. The aims of such reforms would be to generate revenue to cover the operating expenses of the irrigation system and to encourage the efficient and sustainable use of scarce water resources.

DFID secondees are not closely involved in the agriculture or water resources sectors in Iraq. However, advisers from other Coalition partners in these sectors are aware of the need to put in put in place measures which will improve the situation of poor farmers on a long-term sustainable basis.

### United Nations Officials Transcripts

**Clive Efford:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development on which dates his Department received transcripts of telephone conversations of the Secretary General of the UN; what action was taken in response to the information they contained; and whether the Department raised concerns about how the transcripts were acquired with the relevant authorities. [158400]

**Hilary Benn:** It has been the practice of successive Governments neither to confirm nor to deny allegations relating to the security and intelligence agencies.

## CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

### Public Record Office (Irish Historical Documents)

**Mr. Paul Marsden:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will list documents on Kilmainham Gaol held by the Public Record Office. [156299]

**Mr. Leslie:** Information is available on the National Archives' electronic catalogue, 'available at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk An initial search revealed that some of the documents are held in the following series: AO2, HO45, SP34 and Tl. The National Archives of Ireland in Dublin also holds some material relating to Kilmainham Gaol.

**Mr. Paul Marsden:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will list the documents relating to the courts-martial of those indicted following the Easter Uprising in Dublin in 1916 held by the Public Record Office. [156300]

**Mr. Leslie:** Information is held on the National Archives' electronic catalogue, available on the internet at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk An initial search revealed that some documents are held in Series WO71 and WO141.

**Mr. Paul Marsden:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs which documents are held by the Public Record Office written by *(a)* P. H. Pearse, *(b)* Thomas J. Clarke, *(c)* Thomas Macdonagh, *(d)* Edward Daly, *(e)* William Pearse, *(f)* Michael O'Hanrahan, *(g)* Joseph Mary Plunkett, *(h)* John MacBride, *(i)* Sean Heuston, *(j)* Michael Mallin, *(k)* Eamonn Ceannt, *(l)* Con Colbert, *(m)* Thomas Kent, *(n)* Sean MacDiarmada, *(o)* James Connolly and *(p)* Sir Roger Casement. [156304]

**Mr. Leslie:** It is not possible to identify documents which may have been written by the names listed, without detailed research into the records held by the National Archives. Because this research would have to cover a very large number of documents, a full answer to the hon. Member could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, more information about Government records which have been transferred to the National Archives can be accessed through its web site at: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

### Small Claims Track

**Vera Baird:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what percentage of the cost of running the small claims track was recovered from the payment of court fees by litigants in the last period for which figures are available; [155383]

(2) what percentage of the costs of the small claims track in Middlesbrough court was recovered from court fees paid by litigants in the last year for which figures are available. [155384]

**Mr. Leslie:** The approximate unit cost to the Court Service of processing a claim from issue of proceedings to judgment at a small-claims hearing in 2002–03 was £527. For the purpose of calculating the unit cost the divisor is the number of claims allocated to the small claims track. In 2002–03 this was 80,496 (England and Wales). The total cost of small claims that are defended is therefore £42,421,392.

The percentage of cost recovered from fees paid by litigants was 103 per cent. This allows for income and cost associated with small claims that did not go to a hearing or were not defended. The cost of the small claims hearing itself, (included in the figure of £527) is based on the average length of a small claims hearing published in Judicial Statistics 2002 (table 4.11).

In 2003 a total of 482 small claims were allocated to track at Middlesbrough county court, indicating a total cost of £254,014. It is impossible to carry out valid comparisons of cost and income at local level. This is because a significant proportion of fee revenue is accounted for centrally at the Claims Production Centre (Northampton). The CPC issues claims on behalf of all county courts in England and Wales.

### University Complaints

**Ms Walley:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the Government's policy is in respect of the availability of legal aid for those intending to refer university complaints to the proposed new Independent Adjudicator as set out in the Higher Education Bill; and if he will make a statement. [158299]

**Mr. Lammy:** It is intended that the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA), which has been established by the higher education sector, will be the designated operator of a scheme for the review of student complaints should the Higher Education Bill become law. The OIA is not a judicial scheme. It operates along similar lines to other Ombudsman-type schemes and will be free to complainants, and therefore legal aid should be unnecessary.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Burma

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Burmese Government about the country's procedure for trial. [157462]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** We are concerned about the Burmese authorities' procedure for trial. We believe that Burmese trials continue to fall short of international fair

trial standards. I regularly raise our concerns on human rights issues with the Burmese authorities, most recently when I met the Burmese ambassador on 23 February.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what representations he has made to the Burmese Government to review the sentences of those political prisoners who have been sentenced in trials which did not meet international standards of fairness; [157464]

(2) what representations he has made to the Government of Burma about the continued detention of 23 people arrested on 30 May 2003. [157724]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** We have repeatedly called on the Burmese regime to fully release all political prisoners and to allow them to play an active role in national reconciliation in Burma.

We are concerned about the Burmese authorities' procedure for trial. We believe that Burmese trials continue to fall short of international fair trial standards. I regularly raise our concerns on human rights issues with the Burmese authorities, most recently when I met the Burmese ambassador on 23 February.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what representations he has made to the Burmese Government about ensuring that the National Convention incorporates extensive human rights safeguards in a new constitution for the country; [157465]

(2) what discussions he has had with the Burmese Government about the timetable for reconvening the National Convention to draft a new constitution and conduct the transition to democracy. [157623]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** The Burmese ambassador called on me on 23 February to discuss the State Peace and Development Council's plans to reconvene the National Convention. We had a full and frank discussion. I made clear that the National Convention should be an inclusive, transparent process with a clear timeframe. I have repeatedly called on the Burmese regime to ensure that human rights in Burma are fully respected.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the level of access of the Rohingya people in Burma to *(a)* markets, *(b)* employment, *(c)* education and *(d)* medical care. [157472]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** Many people in all parts of Burma have only limited access to employment opportunities, education, and medical care. These problems are compounded in Northern Rakhine State by the additional travel and other restrictions placed on the Rohingya people, which in some cases also limit their access to markets. We provide support to the United Nation High Commission for Refugees who are working to improve conditions in Northern Rakhine State.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the extent of the confiscation of Rohingya land for *(a)* use as Burmese army camps and *(b)* the settlement of other people. [157473]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** We are aware of allegations of land confiscation but are unable to independently verify these.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the extent of the use of human minesweepers in Burma. [157629]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** We are aware of allegations of instances where villagers or prisoners have been forced to assist with mine clearance, including by inappropriate and dangerous methods. The 2003 Landmine Monitor, published by the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, alleges three cases of 'atrocity demining' in 2002.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the extent of the destruction of crops and food supplies by the State Peace and Development Council in Burma. [157633]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** Instances of destruction of crops and food supplies by the State Peace and Development Council forces is rare in the large parts of the country. However, there are credible reports of such activity in areas where armed conflict continues.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the extent of *(a)* looting, *(b)* burning and *(c)* extortion by the State Peace and Development Council in Burma. [157636]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** Instances of looting and burning by State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) forces or other authorities are rare in the majority of the country. However, in the areas where armed conflict continues there are numerous allegations of looting and burning of property, and other human rights abuse, by SPDC forces. We judge that some of these allegations are credible. Restrictions on travel by British embassy personnel in Rangoon makes it impossible to independently verify individual allegations.

A certain level of extortion is widespread throughout the country. At the lowest and most common level it includes the extraction of small sums of money, by police and military personnel, at roadside and other checkpoints. We are aware also of frequent instances where 'contributions' to local projects, entertainment for VIP guests, additional charges for electricity and other services, etc. are extracted from householders under threat of jail sentences or other punishment, by civilian authorities.

Within conflict affected areas there are reports of threats and extortion being used, by military and anti-SPDC forces, to extract food, labour, information and other assistance from local villagers.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the number of deaths from the use of landmines in Burma in each of the last five years. [157641]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** A reliable estimate of the number of deaths from landmines is not possible, since many deaths (as opposed to injuries which require medical treatment) are unreported and unrecorded.

The 2003 Landmine Monitor (published by the International Campaign to Ban Landmines) notes that in 2002 there were at least 114 landmine casualties reported in Burma, but only one of these, a military officer, was reported as being killed. It also notes that the number of landmine casualties appears to have been increasing in the last 5–6 years.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the number of internally displaced people in Burma who have died of starvation in each of the last five years. [157642]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** We do not hold figures for the number of internally displaced people (IDPs) in Burma who have died of starvation in each of the last five years.

IDPs are largely concentrated in areas where there is continuing conflict between the State Peace and Development Council forces and forces belonging to ethnic nationality organisations. Some have been forcibly relocated to 'resettlement' camps and villages. Others remain in hiding in remote areas. All IDPs, particularly those hiding in the jungle, are extremely vulnerable to a range of ills—including starvation, but also to disease, lack of medical care, lack of shelter, ongoing fighting and abuse by armed forces.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last had contact with the Karenni National Progressive Party; and what was discussed at that meeting. [157644]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** I have had no direct contact with the Karenni National Progressive Party.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Government of Burma about the Emergency Provisions Act 1950. [157725]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** None.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the number of people in Karenni state who remain in need of *(a)* food, *(b)* shelter and *(c)* protection. [157639]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** Karenni State has an estimated population of 259,000 people. It is one of the least developed areas in Burma. There are large numbers of people who suffer from deficiencies in food, shelter and protection (as there are in other parts of Burma).

Between two thirds and three quarters of the area of the state is believed to be under the control of various armed ethnic organisations who have reached ceasefire agreements with the State Peace and Development Council. Although many problems remain in these ceasefire areas, the situation for ordinary villagers is better than in the areas where armed conflict continues.

In the areas of Karenni State where armed conflict continues, food, shelter and protection needs are particularly severe. Population displacement means that the numbers of people involved is probably considerably less than a quarter of the state's population. Among the most vulnerable are those internally displaced people who have been forced to leave their villages and who remain hiding in the jungle. Accurate estimates are hard to obtain, but their number probably reaches several thousand.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the numbers of Burmese State Peace and Development Council soldiers brought into Karenni state from Karen areas since 1 December 2003. [157640]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** We are aware of reports of increased military activity in southern Karenni State since December 2003. We are also aware of reports of an associated increase in instances of human rights abuse and internally displaced people. Some estimates of numbers and disposition of troops are available. The most comprehensive of these are provided by the Karen People's Progressive Party and Karen National Union forces and publicised by groups such as the Free Burma Rangers. They state that up to 1,000 new troops have been brought into the region. Other evidence for increased activity in this area is quite strong. But independent verification of troop numbers is not possible.

## Iraq

**Sir John Stanley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he received advice from officials within his Department that a war against Iraq might be illegal. [158143]

**Lynne Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the Government received advice on the legality of war on Iraq from Government legal advisers which did not concur with the advice given by the Attorney-General. [158522]

**Mr. Straw:** The Government's legal advice on the legal basis for the use of force against Iraq came from the Attorney-General, who made a statement in Parliament on 17 March 2003 which set out his view.

I supplemented this with a letter of the same date to the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, which was also sent to every right hon. and hon. Member.

**Sir John Stanley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on what date the Permanent Secretary in his Department was first informed as to which Iraqi weapons the 45 minute claim in the Iraqi weapons of mass destruction dossier applied. [158774]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** I refer the right hon. Gentleman to the answer given to him by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary on 10 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1305W. The Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office was informed of the particular weapons referred to in similar circumstances and with the same timings as the Foreign Secretary.

## Russia

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what sanctions against Russia are planned by EU member states if Russia does not accept the terms of the partnership and trade agreements within the European Union. [157396]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** We are currently working on the basis that Russia will agree to extend the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement (PCA) to the enlarged EU from May 1.

The European Commission, in consultation with member states, is seeking to agree a text of a Draft Protocol with Russia to extend the PCA, while expressing willingness to address Russia's legitimate concerns about EU enlargement.

The Commission has yet to present formal proposals to member states for sanctions in the event that Russia fails to extend the PCA to the new member states from 1 May.

### Secret Intelligence Service

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether members of the secret intelligence services were in New York in February 2003. [158112]

**Mr. Straw:** In line with the long-standing practice of successive Governments, to comment on the deployment of security and intelligence service officials would be inappropriate. The security and intelligence services are not within the scope of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information (Part 1, paragraph 6).

### Sudan

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, (1) what action he is taking to find an independent mediator, acceptable to both sides, to bring an end to the conflict in Darfur; [158093]

(2) what contribution the UK will make to ensure that the peace agreement in Darfur is maintained. [158094]

**Mr. Mullin:** We are urging all parties to the conflict in Darfur to re-establish a ceasefire, preferably with international monitoring, permit humanitarian access to all those in need, and resume talks to find a peaceful solution.

We are in almost daily contact with the Government of Sudan and the various Darfur groups. We are working closely with the EU and the US, and have offered to facilitate the peaceful resolution of the conflict. We have suggested that there may be a role for the international community, including the UK, in assisting in the implementation of a peace agreement.

### United Nations (Surveillance)

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations the Government have received from the Governments of *(a)* Angola, *(b)* Cameroon, *(c)* Chile, *(d)* Guinea, *(e)* Mexico and *(f)* Pakistan in respect of allegations made by Katharine Gun that the diplomatic missions of these states in New York were electronically bugged by British and United States security services. [158113]

**Mr. Straw:** The British embassy in Mexico City received a Note Verbale from the Mexican Government on this issue. We have not received such correspondence from the other countries mentioned.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Anaesthetists

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many anaesthetists were working in the NHS in Northern Ireland in each year since 2000, broken down by health board area. [157658]

**Angela Smith:** The information requested is provided in the following table.

*Number of anaesthetists working within HSS[1] trusts as at 31 December 2000, 31 December 2001, 31 December 2002 and 31 December 2003 broken down by health board area (headcount and WTE)*

| | *31 December 2000* | | *31 December 2001* | | *31 December 2002* | | *31 December 2003* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Health board* | *Headcount* | *WTE[2]* | *Headcount* | *WTE[2]* | *Headcount* | *WTE[2]* | *Headcount* | *WTE[2]* |
| Eastern board | 101 | 97.87 | 101 | 98.78 | 107 | 103.20 | 116 | 112.20 |
| Northern board | 14 | 13.64 | 17 | 16.64 | 17 | 16.64 | 16 | 15.64 |
| Western board | 20 | 20.00 | 21 | 21.00 | 22 | 22.00 | 26 | 25.50 |
| Southern board | 19 | 19.00 | 19 | 19.00 | 20 | 20.00 | 20 | 19.71 |
| Total | 154 | 150.51 | 158 | 155.42 | 166 | 161.84 | 178 | 173.05 |

[1] Health and Social Services.
[2] Whole-time equivalent.

### Curriculum

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in what ways the Northern Ireland curriculum differs from the National Curriculum. [157848]

**Jane Kennedy:** The National Curriculum is similar, though not identical, to the Northern Ireland Curriculum. Both prescribe a number of compulsory subjects at different key stages. The main difference lies in the fact that Northern Ireland has six compulsory cross-curricular themes which are taught through a range of subjects. These cover Information Technology, Education for Mutual Understanding, Cultural Heritage, Health Education and at post primary level, Economic Awareness and Careers Education.

### Football

**Kate Hoey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 161W, on football, on what governance and accountability arrangements agreement has not yet been reached. [158323]

**Angela Smith:** Agreement has not yet been reached between the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and the Irish Football Association (IFA) on recommendations for the re-structuring of the IFA that have emerged from an independent economic appraisal process commissioned by the Sports Council for Northern Ireland in accordance with normal accountability arrangements for public funds.

### New Acute Hospital (South-west)

**Mr. Tony Clarke:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what consultations have been held on the location for the new acute hospital in the South West of Northern Ireland; what discussions he has had on this with *(a)* his predecessor and *(b)* members of the suspended executive; and what views they held. [157439]

**Angela Smith:** The report of the Acute Hospitals Review Group, which included a recommendation on the location of the new acute hospital for the South West, was issued for consultation between 30 June 2001 and 31 October 2001. The paper "Developing Better Services: Modernising Hospitals and Reforming Structures", which set out proposals for future hospital services in Northern Ireland including the location of the new acute hospital for the South West, was issued for consultation between 12 June 2002 and 31 October 2002. I have had no discussions on this matter with my predecessor, Des Browne, or with former members of the Executive Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly. I have, however, held discussions with a number of MLAs who have requested to meet me to give me their views on the implications of the decision on the location for the new acute hospital for the South West. These views have extended from a wish to have the decision overturned to a concern to have enhanced services for people in the Tyrone and Mid-Ulster area.

### New Schools

**Mr. Jon Owen Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the *(a)* value and *(b)* number of new schools built in Northern Ireland is in the last five years for which records are available. [156959]

**Jane Kennedy:** Records are not readily available about the value and number of new schools that have been built in each of the last five years. However, over the last five years significant investment has been announced for new schools, and for major extensions and refurbishment of existing schools, as follows:

| | *Projects* | *£ million* |
|---|---|---|
| 1999–2000 | 16 | 67.1 |
| 2000–01 | 18 | 72.2 |
| 2001–02 | 25 | 132 |
| 2002–03 | 33 | 175.2 |
| 2003–04 | 43 | 263 |

This is a total of 135 school projects at a total value of £709.5 million.

### Threshold Payments

**Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what schools are experiencing a financial deficit as a result of the payment of threshold payments, broken down by area board; and if he will make a statement. [157455]

**Jane Kennedy:** Teachers' threshold costs are part of a teacher's salary. They form only one element of a range of costs that have to be met from a school's budget. It is not possible to establish the precise reasons why a school's delegated budget is in deficit as there can be many factors involved.

### Windsor Park, Belfast

**Kate Hoey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what element of soccer strategy money has been set aside for improvements to Windsor Park, Belfast. [158324]

**Angela Smith:** To date no element of Soccer Strategy money has been set aside for improvements to Windsor Park, Belfast. However, an indicative sum of £3 million is earmarked from Soccer Strategy money for playing facilities generally. The playing facilities component of the Soccer Strategy is currently being subjected to independent economic appraisal. Improvements to Windsor Park could be considered as part of that component. I will, though, wish to be satisfied that recommendations in relation to Governance and that accountability arrangements provide appropriate safeguards for public funds, before any element of Soccer Strategy money, including that for playing facilities, could be released.

## EDUCATION AND SKILLS

### Child Care

**Mr. Goodman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many civil servants in his Department are assisting with the review of childcare policy; what *(a)* organisations from outside the Department and *(b)* other Departments are assisting with the review; what body or committee within the Department is co-ordinating the review; when he expects to publish the review; and if he will make a statement. [158131]

**Dawn Primarolo** *[holding answer 2 March 2004]:* I have been asked to reply.

The Childcare Review was announced by the Chancellor in Budget 2003. An inter-departmental ministerial steering group was set up to oversee the review, jointly chaired by Margaret Hodge and me.

A working group of officials, supporting the ministerial steering group, is chaired by HM Treasury, with representatives from the Department for Education and Skills, Department for Work and Pensions, Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Health, the Women and Equality Unit, the Social Exclusion Unit at the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and No. 10. Within HM Treasury and the Sure Start Unit most of the work being done by the review would have been required anyway for the Spending Review. There are no civil servants working

full time on the Childcare Review and those working on it have taken it on as part of their normal responsibilities.

The review has consulted external bodies, receiving 50 responses, and held bi-lateral meetings with the main groups working in this area.

The results of the review will be reflected in the Spending Review, the outcome of which will be published in the summer.

### Foundation Degrees

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* women and *(b)* men (i) applied to, (ii) enrolled in and (iii) graduated in courses in higher education in each year since 1997, broken down by (A) humanities, social studies and languages courses, (B) physical sciences and mathematics courses, (C) engineering and technology courses, (D) medicine and dentistry and (E) other courses. [143148]

**Alan Johnson:** The information requested is taken from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). Figures are given in the table.

I apologise to the hon. Member for the delay in replying. There have been an unusually high number of questions over the last few months, and the data for 2003 graduates did not become available until after Christmas.

*Applicants, accepted applicants and first degree graduates by subject and gender. 1997/98 to 2002/03*

| | | *Applicants* | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Academic year/subject* | *Men* | *Women* | *Total* |
| *1997/98* | | | |
| Humanities, Law, Social Studies and Languages | 31,977 | 51,068 | 83,045 |
| Physical Sciences, Computer Science and Mathematics | 30,317 | 10,437 | 40,754 |
| Engineering and Technology | 23,104 | 3,375 | 26,479 |
| Medicine and Dentistry | 7,076 | 7,417 | 14,493 |
| Other Courses | 128,259 | 165,751 | 294,010 |
| Total | 220,733 | 238,048 | 458,781 |
| *1998/99* | | | |
| Humanities, Law, Social Studies and Languages | 29,852 | 49,298 | 79,150 |
| Physical Sciences, Computer Science and Mathematics | 31,798 | 11,079 | 42,877 |
| Engineering and Technology | 21,541 | 3,295 | 24,836 |
| Medicine and Dentistry | 6,730 | 7,168 | 13,898 |
| Other Courses | 122,804 | 162,892 | 285,696 |
| Total | 212,725 | 233,732 | 446,457 |
| *1999/2000* | | | |
| Humanities, Law, Social Studies and Languages | 29,268 | 48,016 | 77,284 |
| Physical Sciences, Computer Science and Mathematics | 34,166 | 11,856 | 46,022 |
| Engineering and Technology | 20,233 | 3,006 | 23,239 |
| Medicine and Dentistry | 5,927 | 6,862 | 12,789 |
| Other Courses | 120,619 | 162,978 | 283,597 |
| Total | 210,213 | 232,718 | 442,931 |
| *2000/01* | | | |
| Humanities, Law, Social Studies and Languages | 28,454 | 47,353 | 75,807 |
| Physical Sciences, Computer Science and Mathematics | 35,960 | 12,480 | 48,440 |
| Engineering and Technology | 19,258 | 2,926 | 22,184 |
| Medicine and Dentistry | 5,301 | 6,620 | 11,921 |
| Other Courses | 119,456 | 164,220 | 283,676 |
| Total | 208,429 | 233,599 | 442,028 |
| *2001/02* | | | |
| Humanities, Law, Social Studies and Languages | 28,919 | 47,911 | 76,830 |
| Physical Sciences, Computer Science and Mathematics | 39,669 | 13,128 | 52,797 |
| Engineering and Technology | 18,485 | 2,765 | 21,250 |
| Medicine and Dentistry | 5,069 | 6,750 | 11,819 |
| Other Courses | 122,360 | 168,777 | 291,137 |
| Total | 214,502 | 239,331 | 453,833 |
| *2002/03* | | | |
| Humanities, Law, Social Studies and Languages | 29,322 | 44,401 | 73,723 |
| Physical Sciences, Computer Science and Mathematics | 35,367 | 12,404 | 47,771 |
| Engineering and Technology | 19,899 | 2,835 | 22,734 |
| Medicine and Dentistry | 5,668 | 7,976 | 13,644 |
| Other Courses | 127,027 | 176,466 | 303,493 |
| Total | 217,283 | 244,082 | 461,365 |

| Academic year/subject | Accepted applicants: Men | Women | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| *1997/98* | | | |
| Humanities, Law, Social Studies and Languages | 26,934 | 43,784 | 70,718 |
| Physical Sciences, Computer Science and Mathematics | 29,536 | 11,152 | 40,688 |
| Engineering and Technology | 22,316 | 3,717 | 26,033 |
| Medicine and Dentistry | 2,713 | 3,158 | 5,871 |
| Other Courses | 82,725 | 110,303 | 193,028 |
| Total | 164,224 | 172,114 | 336,338 |
| *1998/99* | | | |
| Humanities, Law, Social Studies and Languages | 25,156 | 42,051 | 67,207 |
| Physical Sciences, Computer Science and Mathematics | 30,551 | 1,375 | 41,926 |
| Engineering and Technology | 20,743 | 3,511 | 24,254 |
| Medicine and Dentistry | 2,699 | 3,263 | 5,962 |
| Other Courses | 80,330 | 110,109 | 190,439 |
| Total | 159,479 | 170,309 | 329,788 |
| *1999/2000* | | | |
| Humanities, Law, Social Studies and Languages | 25,064 | 41,970 | 67,034 |
| Physical Sciences, Computer Science and Mathematics | 32,273 | 12,113 | 44,386 |
| Engineering and Technology | 19,568 | 3,394 | 22,962 |
| Medicine and Dentistry | 2,721 | 3,473 | 6,194 |
| Other Courses | 80,714 | 113,304 | 194,018 |
| Total | 160,340 | 174,254 | 334,594 |
| *2000/01* | | | |
| Humanities, Law, Social Studies and Languages | 25,299 | 42,265 | 67,564 |
| Physical Sciences, Computer Science and Mathematics | 33,096 | 12,390 | 45,486 |
| Engineering and Technology | 18,647 | 3,266 | 21,913 |
| Medicine and Dentistry | 2,825 | 3,767 | 6,592 |
| Other Courses | 81,614 | 116,578 | 198,192 |
| Total | 161,481 | 178,266 | 339,747 |
| *2001/02* | | | |
| Humanities, Law, Social Studies and Languages | 26,455 | 44,118 | 70,573 |
| Physical Sciences, Computer Science and Mathematics | 36,112 | 12,542 | 48,654 |
| Engineering and Technology | 18,297 | 3,243 | 21,540 |
| Medicine and Dentistry | 2,988 | 4,173 | 7,161 |
| Other Courses | 86,448 | 123,665 | 210,113 |
| Total | 170,300 | 187,741 | 358,041 |
| *2002/03* | | | |
| Humanities, Law, Social Studies and Languages | 27,573 | 42,651 | 70,224 |
| Physical Sciences, Computer Science and Mathematics | 33,465 | 12,435 | 45,900 |
| Engineering and Technology | 20,782 | 3,576 | 24,358 |
| Medicine and Dentistry | 3,088 | 4,749 | 7,837 |
| Other Courses | 89,460 | 130,336 | 219,796 |
| Total | 174,368 | 193,747 | 368,115 |

| Academic year/subject | First degree graduates: Men | Women | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| *1997/98* | | | |
| Humanities, Law, Social Studies and Languages | 22,516 | 34,888 | 57,404 |
| Physical Sciences, Computer Science and Mathematics | 18,303 | 8,923 | 27,226 |
| Engineering and Technology | 19,321 | 3,253 | 22,574 |
| Medicine and Dentistry | 2,876 | 3,024 | 5,900 |
| Other Courses | 59,274 | 86,375 | 145,649 |
| Total | 122,290 | 136,463 | 258,753 |
| *1998/99* | | | |
| Humanities, Law, Social Studies and Languages | 21,925 | 36,007 | 57,932 |
| Physical Sciences, Computer Science and Mathematics | 18,674 | 9,012 | 27,686 |
| Engineering and Technology | 18,758 | 3,254 | 22,012 |
| Medicine and Dentistry | 2,849 | 2,993 | 5,842 |
| Other Courses | 59,470 | 90,729 | 150,199 |
| Total | 121,676 | 141,995 | 263,671 |

| Academic year/subject | First degree graduates Men | Women | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| *1999/2000* | | | |
| Humanities, Law, Social Studies and Languages | 22,387 | 37,519 | 59,906 |
| Physical Sciences, Computer Science and Mathematics | 19,327 | 9,162 | 28,489 |
| Engineering and Technology | 17,337 | 3,214 | 20,551 |
| Medicine and Dentistry | 2,881 | 3,085 | 5,966 |
| Other Courses | 59,249 | 91,106 | 150,355 |
| Total | 121,181 | 144,086 | 265,267 |
| *2000/01* | | | |
| Humanities, Law, Social Studies and Languages | 21,370 | 37,051 | 58,421 |
| Physical Sciences, Computer Science and Mathematics | 20,175 | 9,570 | 29,745 |
| Engineering and Technology | 16,734 | 3,068 | 19,802 |
| Medicine and Dentistry | 2,799 | 3,165 | 5,964 |
| Other Courses | 57,793 | 93,621 | 151,414 |
| Total | 118,871 | 146,475 | 265,346 |
| *2001/02* | | | |
| Humanities, Law, Social Studies and Languages | 20,593 | 36,334 | 56,927 |
| Physical Sciences, Computer Science and Mathematics | 20,573 | 9,537 | 30,110 |
| Engineering and Technology | 16,770 | 2,990 | 19,760 |
| Medicine and Dentistry | 2,786 | 3,293 | 6,079 |
| Other Courses | 58,102 | 96,076 | 154,178 |
| Total | 118,824 | 148,230 | 267,054 |
| *2002/03* | | | |
| Humanities, Law, Social Studies and Languages | 24,886 | 43,872 | 68,758 |
| Physical Sciences, Computer Science and Mathematics | 23,202 | 11,464 | 34,666 |
| Engineering and Technology | 15,702 | 3,072 | 18,774 |
| Medicine and Dentistry | 2,777 | 3,337 | 6,114 |
| Other Courses | 53,730 | 91,378 | 145,108 |
| Total | 120,297 | 153,123 | 273,420 |

*Source:*
Universities and Colleges Admissions Service and Higher Education Statistics Agency.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list by education authority in England and Wales the proportion of school leavers who have entered higher education in each of the last five years. [149188]

**Alan Johnson:** The available information is taken from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and covers applicants, domiciled in English Local Education Authorities, accepted onto full time first degree and HND courses at UK institutions. Figures for Wales are the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Figures are given in a table that has been placed in the Library.

### School Meals

**Helen Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what steps he is taking to reduce the amount of salt in school meals; and if he will make a statement; [158647]

(2) what research his Department has carried out into the salt content of school meals; and if he will make a statement. [158648]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** The Department's guidance 'Healthy School Lunches' makes various recommendations for reducing salt in cooking and what to use as an alternative. The guidance can be viewed on the website www.dfes.gov.uk/schoollunches

The Department for Education and Skills, together with the Food Standards Agency, has taken forward a project looking at school meals in 80 secondary schools in England. The project is assessing the food provided; consumption; and nutrient intake. The project is also looking at the use of salt in food preparation and availability at meal times. The results of this research will be published late spring 2004, and will inform future policy decisions on this issue.

### School Photos

**Mr. Burns:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) whether he plans to issue clarification to local education authorities on the guidance he has issued on the photographing of children at school; and if he will make a statement; [150531]

(2) when the hon. Member for Chelmsford will receive an answer to his question reference 150531 which received a holding answer on 26 January 2004. [157919]

**Margaret Hodge** *[holding answers 26 January 2004 and 2 March 2004]:* My Department has published information on its website in response to inquiries from schools about using video and photographic images of pupils in school publications, or on the internet. In brief, that advises that schools should obtain parental permission to publish images of pupils, they should not identify individual pupils, and that photographs of pupils should be kept secure.

We were told last year that some local authorities and schools had misinterpreted that advice: either applying it to the use of cameras and videos by parents when

filming or photographing school events, or using it to form the basis of policies relating to the publication of photographs in local newspapers. As a result we revised the advice to make it clear that it does not apply to those areas and that schools and local education authorities are free to set their own policies about those issues in light of local circumstances and sensitivities.

The Newspaper Society and the Society of Editors recently raised concerns about some schools unwillingness to allow the publication of photographs of pupils in the local press. Representatives of both societies met with officials of my Department last week to discuss the issues and officials agreed to consider amplifying the information on the Department's website about that.

### Schools (Vending Machines)

**Mr. Ben Chapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many schools he estimates raise funds from food and drink vending machines; [158686]

(2) what estimate he has made of the number of schools raising funds from food and drink vending machines. [158947]

**Mr. Miliband:** This information is not collected centrally. Schools are free to install food and drink vending machines and collect income from them. We would encourage schools to consider doing this as part of a whole-school approach to promoting a healthy diet rather than for purely financial reasons, and to strike a sensible balance in the food and drink sold. This policy underlies the 'Food in Schools' initiative, which will include projects on healthier vending as announced on 5 January 2004.

### Specialist Schools

**Mr. Chaytor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list each *(a)* specialist school and *(b)* non-specialist school designated under section 104 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, together with the number of pupils they have selected in each of the last six years. [155623]

**Mr. Miliband:** The information requested has been placed in the Libraries.

### Student Loan/Debt

**Dr. Cable:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the outstanding stock of student debt owed to public funds was *(a)* on 1 March 1997 and *(b)* on the latest date for which figures are available; and how much of each sum was (i) debt in arrears and (ii) debt written off. [158653]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The total amount outstanding for publicly-owned debt, the arrears value, and the amount which has been written off or cancelled during the financial year are shown in the table. The data reflect the position at the end of each financial year. Data at 1 March are not available. The answer refers to both mortgage-style and income-contingent loans.

*Publicly-owned student loan debt: United Kingdom*

*£ million*

| | *1996–97* | *2001–02*[3] | *2002–03*[1] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total amount outstanding at the end of the financial year[2,3] | 2,691.0 | 8,394.0 | 10,827.5 |
| *Of which:* | | | |
| Arrears value[4] | 11.2 | 131.7 | [5] — |
| Amount written off/cancelled during the financial year | 0.9 | 1.4 | 2.6 |

[1] Provisional.
[2] The amount outstanding is after repayments of income contingent loans according to the latest known information. The SLC are notified of repayments by the Inland Revenue usually within one year of the end of the tax year they relate to, e.g. there will be some borrowers who have repaid their accounts in full in financial year 2002–03 but this will not be reported until the reconciliation has been made with SLC records.
[3] Includes loans not yet due for repayment.
[4] The arrears value is the overdue amount and does not include administration charges
[5] Not yet available.
*Source:*
Student Loans Company.

**Dr. Cable:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what information on individual student debt is made available to credit rating agencies. [158654]

**Alan Johnson:** We do not make information on student loans available to credit reference agencies (CRAs) for credit scoring. CRAs do, however, have access to information in the public domain, including county court judgments (CCJs), which may be obtained by the Student Loans Company against default on student loans.

**Dr. Cable:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what order of precedence state student debt has in relation to other creditors in personal bankruptcy proceedings. [158655]

**Alan Johnson:** Student debt in relation to other creditors in bankruptcy proceedings is treated like all other non-preferential debts and has no precedence over any of these debts.

There is a clause amendment relating to preferential creditors which will be debated in the Higher Education Bill Standing Committee on Tuesday 9 March (afternoon session).

**Mr. Pickthall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to extend the incentive for teachers on repayment of student loans beyond June 2005. [157850]

**Mr. Charles Clarke:** An evaluation of the current pilot of the Repayment of Teachers' Loans scheme is under way. This will inform decisions on the future of the scheme.

## PRIME MINISTER

### Iraq

**Sir John Stanley:** To ask the Prime Minister on what date the Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee was first informed as to which Iraqi weapons the 45-minutes claim in the Iraq's weapons of mass destruction dossier applied. [158771]

**The Prime Minister:** The Joint Intelligence Committee Chairman was aware in September 2002 that the 45 minutes claim referred to battlefield munitions. As he told Lord Hutton, battlefield munitions were interpreted as covering multiple rocket launchers and artillery with ranges of up to 40 kilometres.

**Sir John Stanley:** To ask the Prime Minister on what date the Cabinet Secretary was first informed as to which Iraqi weapons the 45-minutes claim in the Iraq's weapons of mass destruction dossier applied. [158772]

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the right hon. Member to the answer the Foreign Secretary gave him on 10 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1305W. The Cabinet Secretary was informed of the particular weapons referred to in similar circumstances and with the same timings as my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary.

### Official Secrets Act

**Mr. Shepherd:** To ask the Prime Minister who is to chair the review of the Official Secrets Act 1989; and if he will make a statement. [158687]

**The Prime Minister:** The Official Secrets Act, as with all areas of the criminal law, is kept under review. The Home Secretary has made it clear that the Home Office is considering the implications of recent events for this legislation.

### People's Peers

**Mr. Andrew Mitchell:** To ask the Prime Minister what the *(a)* attendance and *(b)* voting records have been of each People's Peer since each was appointed. [157460]

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Pendle (Mr. Prentice), on 13 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 430W.

### Sensory Deprivation

**Adam Price:** To ask the Prime Minister what the Government's policy is on the use of sensory deprivation by members of the security forces. [158883]

**The Prime Minister:** Members of the armed forces may only use blindfolds on apprehended individuals for reasons of operation security, such as the movement through military sensitive areas. No other forms of sensory deprivation are permitted.

### Temporary Staff

**Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Prime Minister how many staff his Office employs on a temporary basis through employment agencies; what percentage this is of total staff employed; and how much his Office paid employment agencies to supply temporary staff in *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2002–03 and *(c)* 2003–04 to the most recent date for which figures are available. [158242]

**The Prime Minister:** As at 1 October 2003, there were five temporary members of staff, approximately 2.3 per cent. of the total staff in my Office. These were to fill vacancies in information technology and in secretarial and administrative support. Final cost figures for 2003–04 are not yet available.

The total cost for temporary staff for 2001–02 was £99,249 (five temporary staff) and in 2002–03 was £165,554 (eight temporary staff).

A difference in costs may occur because of the nature of the temporary post and the number of temporary staff required, for example to cover the significant increase in volume of correspondence to my Office resulting in over one million letters over the last year alone.

## DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

### Supporting People Programme

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the funding levels for Supporting People are in Lancashire in 2003–04. [157692]

**Yvette Cooper:** The final Supporting People grant awarded to Lancashire in 2003–04 was £30,781,847 to meet the costs of housing related support services and in 2004–05 it is £30,728,125. The Lancashire Supporting People team also received £767,000 to help with the administration of the programme in 2003–04 rising to £814,000 in 2004–05.

**Mr. Dhanda:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the future of the Supporting People programme. [156812]

**Yvette Cooper:** On 12 February, the Government published the report of the Independent Review and announced funding of £1.8 billion for the Supporting People programme in 2004–05.

The review has found that there are wide variations in unit costs between authorities and that £1.8 billion is too much to pay for the legacy services. The Government are concerned to ensure that value for money is achieved and that valuable services for the vulnerable are sustained. That is why the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has asked the Audit Commission to undertake detailed inspections of local authorities with high unit costs, to inform the Spending Review and funding allocations for 2005–06.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is also drawing up a comprehensive programme of work to take forward some of the recommendations of the review.

**Mr. Dhanda:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects to announce funding levels for the authorities administering the Supporting People programme. [156819]

**Yvette Cooper:** On 12 February, the Government announced funding of £1.8 billion for the Supporting People programme in 2004–05. Administering Authorities were informed of their individual allocations on the same day.

**Mr. Dhanda:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer in connection with funding for the Supporting People programme in 2004–05. [156820]

**Yvette Cooper:** On 12 February, the Government announced funding of £1.8 billion for the Supporting People programme in 2004–05. This announcement followed an extensive consideration of the Independent Review report of the programme and discussions between the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and partner Departments.

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the review of the budget of the Supporting People programme will be completed; and when the Supporting People teams will be advised of their budgets for 2004–05. [156880]

**Yvette Cooper:** The Independent Review of the Supporting People programme is now complete. On 12 February, the Government published the report of the Independent Review and announced funding of £1.8 billion for the Supporting People programme in 2004–05. Administering authorities were informed of their individual allocations on the same day.

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will implement procedures for Supporting People teams to bid for growth monies in making capital bids to the Housing Corporation. [156886]

**Yvette Cooper:** The 2004–05 Supporting People grant allocations includes a one off revenue allocation for the current round of Housing Corporation capital awards. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not intend introducing a Supporting People bidding round to provide additional revenue for new schemes in future years.

The total Supporting People grant in England for 2004–05 is £1.8 billion. The management of these grants is now firmly a matter for each Supporting People Administering Authority.

In the longer term the intention is to introduce an allocations formula. If authorities wish to commission new services the necessary revenue may be achieved through the re-modelling or de-commissioning of existing services.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on funding for the Supporting People programme in Lancashire for 2004–05. [157734]

**Yvette Cooper:** The Supporting People grant allocated to Lancashire for 2004–05 is £30,728,125 to meet the costs of housing related support services. In addition to this grant the Lancashire Supporting People team will also receive £814,000 during 2004–05 to help with the administration of the programme.

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to redefine the definition of housing-related support under Supporting People. [151772]

**Yvette Cooper:** Following the recommendations in the Independent Review of the Supporting People Programme, we will be looking at whether there is a need to make clearer the definition of what is housing-related support.

### Area-based Initiatives

**Mr. Edward Davey:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the projected budgets are for each area-based initiative which receives funding from his Department, for *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06, broken down by English region. [156471]

**Yvette Cooper:** The allocations issued to area-based initiatives by region for the years sought are set out in the following tables.

*2004–05*

*£ million*

| *Region* | *Coalfields* | *Community Chests* | *European Regional Development Fund Areas* | *Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders*[1] | *Liveability*[1] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| North East | 2.90 | 3.55 | 23.90 | 28.00 | — |
| North West | 1.40 | 6.49 | 69.80 | [1]89.00 | — |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 6.20 | 3.36 | 50.70 | [1]— | — |
| East Midlands | 4.80 | 1.74 | 14.10 | — | — |
| West Midlands | 1.90 | 2.89 | 29.10 | [1]— | — |
| East of England | — | 0.34 | 5.80 | — | — |
| London | — | 5.31 | 9.40 | — | — |
| South East | 0.30 | 0.59 | 1.50 | — | — |
| South West | — | 0.73 | 18.70 | — | — |
| Total | 17.50 | 25 | 223.00 | 150.00 | 40.50 |

*£ million*

| *Region* | *Neighbourhood Management* | *Neighbourhood Renewal Fund* | *Neighbourhood Wardens/Street Wardens* | *New Deal for Communities* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| North East | 2.34 | 59.43 | 0.85 | 27.78 |
| North West | 3.28 | 124.54 | 2.86 | 41.25 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 2.58 | 62.76 | 1.95 | 27.10 |
| East Midlands | 1.64 | 29.05 | 0.76 | 22.54 |
| West Midlands | 1.88 | 56.28 | 2.18 | 39.90 |
| East of England | 0.94 | 3.50 | 0.68 | 10.52 |
| London | 2.11 | 100.74 | 6.95 | 62.30 |
| South East | 1.18 | 4.56 | 1.78 | 12.40 |
| South West | 1.64 | 9.13 | 1.17 | 12.80 |
| Total | 17.59 | 449.99 | 19.18 | 256.59 |

*2005–06*

*£ million*

| *Region* | *Coalfields* | *Community Chests* | *European Regional Development Fund Areas* | *Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders*[1] | *Liveability*[1] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| North East | — | 3.55 | 23.90 | 38.00 | — |
| North West | — | 6.49 | 69.80 | [1]101.00 | — |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | — | 3.36 | 50.70 | [1]— | — |
| East Midlands | — | 1.74 | 14.10 | — | — |
| West Midlands | — | 2.89 | 29.10 | [1]— | — |
| East of England | — | 0.34 | 5.80 | — | — |
| London | — | 5.31 | 9.40 | — | — |
| South East | — | 0.59 | 1.50 | — | — |
| South West | — | 0.73 | 18.70 | — | — |
| Total | 17.65 | 25.00 | 223.00 | 290.00 | 40.50 |

*£ million*

| *Region* | *Neighbourhood Management* | *Neighbourhood Renewal Fund* | *Neighbourhood Wardens/Street Wardens* | *New Deal for Communities* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| North East | 2.20 | 69.14 | 0.00 | 30.40 |
| North West | 1.85 | 149.06 | 1.44 | 40.50 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 2.20 | 65.97 | 0.84 | 27.60 |
| East Midlands | 1.35 | 33.62 | 0.36 | 19.68 |
| West Midlands | 1.70 | 59.71 | 1.24 | 44.10 |
| East of England | 0.85 | 3.50 | 0.00 | 10.61 |
| London | 2.05 | 128.79 | 5.14 | 68.10 |
| South East | 1.20 | 4.56 | 0.98 | 13.40 |
| South West | 1.35 | 10.65 | 0.37 | 13.80 |
| Total | 14.75 | 525.00 | 10.37 | 268.19 |

[1] Not all of the budget has yet been allocated to individual initiatives.

### Audit Commission

**Sir Paul Beresford:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the gross expenditure of the Audit Commission was in each year since 1992–93; and how many full-time equivalent staff it had in each year. [158650]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The information requested is as follows:

£000s

| | 12 months to 31 October: | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *2003* | *2002* | *2001* | *2000* | *1999* | *1998* |
| Gross Income | 217,100 | 213,917 | 178,524 | 144,345 | 111,596 | 105,156 |
| Gross Expenditure | 216,300 | 213,695 | 178,119 | 143,940 | 110,561 | 104,850 |
| Operating surplus/deficit | 800 | 222 | 405 | 405 | 1,035 | 306 |
| FTE | 2,392 | 2,437 | 2,271 | 1,885 | 1,600 | 1,403 |

| | *7 months to 31 October 1997* | 12 months to 31 March: | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *1997* | *1996* | *1995* | *1994* | *1993* | *1992* |
| Gross Income | 57,574 | 91,945 | 92,395 | 88,881 | 82,864 | 77,479 | 63,765 |
| Gross Expenditure | 58,236 | 93,175 | 92,509 | 88,979 | 82,788 | 74,334 | 61,639 |
| Operating surplus/deficit | -662 | -1,230 | -114 | -98 | 76 | 3,145 | 2,126 |
| FTE | 1,306 | 1,300 | 1,324 | 1,354 | 1,299 | 1,265 | 1,154 |

*Notes:*
1. Source is the AC Statutory accounts published annually, except for the forecast to 31 October 2003 which is based on Management accounts.
2. Operating expenditure is before notional costs of capital applied, in accordance with Government Accounting requirements.
3. Increase in headcount and expenditure since 1992 reflect increases in the role and responsibilities of the AC, as follows:
In April 2000 the Audit Commission was given additional responsibility for carrying out Best Value Inspections of local government services. During 2002 Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) was introduced and since rolled out to all local authorities.
In 2003 the Commission took on responsibility for Inspecting Housing associations.
Between 1997 and 1998 the AC gained new responsibilities for joint inspections of LEA's with Ofsted.
In 1996 the AC gained new responsibilities for joint inspections of social service authorities with Department of Social Security

### Casinos

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to create a separate use class for casinos. [158352]

**Keith Hill:** On 27 November 2003 I issued a Written Ministerial Statement setting out the changes the Government intends to make to the Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order. The Government have no plans to create a separate use class for casinos.

**Jim Knight:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what requirements he is considering to link future casino developments to regeneration in areas of deprivation; and if he will make a statement. [156195]

**Yvette Cooper:** As explained in the Joint Statement issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in August 2003, the Government consider that leisure developments of regional significance are likely to provide a major contribution to regeneration, and therefore expects regional planning bodies to identify suitable broad locations for such uses, where they deem it appropriate.

The largest casinos (such as 'resort' casinos) are candidates for this approach, although the Government are still considering the types of casino to which regional planning policy should apply.

### Council Tax

**Mr. Keetch:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions he has had with the leader of Herefordshire Council about its setting of council tax in Herefordshire for 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [158646]

**Phil Hope:** My right hon. Friend, the Member for Greenwich and Woolwich and I have held a number of private meetings with individual local authorities to discuss their planned council tax rises for 2004–05. I met Herefordshire Council on 24 February.

### Departmental Spending

**Mr. Curry:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost of information and public relations campaigns conducted by his Department was since May 2002. [146049]

**Yvette Cooper:** Since May 2002 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has spent £10,600,767 on information or public relations campaigns. The majority of this (93 per cent. or £9,858,713) was in connection with the on-going fire safety campaign.

**Mr. Pickles:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much his office spent on information campaigns and advertising in 2003–04 to date. [145275]

**Yvette Cooper:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has spent to date a total of £6,882,000 on information campaigns and advertising in the financial year 2003–04, of which 93 per cent. was for the Fire Safety Campaign.

### Fire Safety

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has for regulations specifying that *(a)* alarms and *(b)* sprinklers be present and functioning in all homes. [158278]

**Phil Hope:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's approach to the provision of smoke alarms is primarily based upon regulation for new and altered buildings and education for elsewhere. Since 1992, the guidance which supports the fire safety aspects of the Building Regulations, known as Approved Document B, has suggested, in the case of new houses (including bungalows), that at least one electrically operated smoke detector should be provided on every storey. The requirement is enforced through the building control system.

For existing properties we pursue a policy of persuasion and education on the benefits of such devices. The Government have undertaken a number of national television campaigns promoting smoke alarm ownership and maintenance. This has been very successful. Ownership has increased from nine per cent. in 1987 to its present figure of 80 per cent. of households.

In addition, Part 1 of the Housing Bill provides for the replacement of the housing fitness standards by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), which brings a risk assessment approach to the assessment of hazards in housing, including fire. Where a hazard from fire has been assessed, local authorities will have discretion to require such things as adequate means of escape from fire, appropriate fire detection and alarm systems and sprinkler systems. This does not mean that such measures will be required in every building but they may be appropriate where justified by the risk.

In relation to sprinklers we commissioned, in April 2001, an extensive research project with the Building Research Establishment (BRE) to consider fully the effectiveness of residential sprinklers. BRE published their research in February and a summary document of the work can be found on the Building Regulations section of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website www.odpm.gov.uk.

As part of our current review of the fire safety aspects of the Building Regulations the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will be considering the findings of the BRE research to see if there is a case for introducing amendments that enable us to target the provision of sprinklers in those new and altered residential premises where the people are considered to be most vulnerable.

### Homeless Units (Lancashire)

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many homeless units operate in Lancashire; and how many homeless units are to be built in Lancashire. [154317]

**Yvette Cooper:** Specific information on the number of existing homeless dwellings operating in Lancashire and the number of homeless dwellings to be built in Lancashire is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

In 2003–04 there were an estimated completion of 160 dwellings in Lancashire for social rent of which some, for example, could be used to accommodate homeless households.

### Housing Targets

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what targets his Department has set for *(a)* rented, *(b)* affordable and *(c)* part rent-part buy housing in council districts. [158127]

**Keith Hill:** No such targets have been set centrally. Local authorities are however required under section 87 of the Local Government Act 2003 to draw up housing strategies for their area and should include targets for affordable housing and other housing needs based on up to date survey information.

### Indices of Local Deprivation

**Ms Buck:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will publish revised indices of local deprivation. [156879]

**Yvette Cooper:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister hopes to publish the revised Indices of Deprivation (ID 2004) in spring 2004.

### Correspondence

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will reply to the letter to his Department of 29 January from the Leader of the Isle of Wight Council. [158826]

**Yvette Cooper:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's records show that only one letter has been received from the Leader on the Isle of Wight Council this year. This letter was dated 26 February. A reply was sent on 4 March.

### Landfill

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions he has had with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs concerning the role of local authorities in meeting the requirements of the Landfill Directive. [159038]

**Keith Hill:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister works closely with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to achieve sustainable waste management. This involves discussions, both bilaterally and collectively across Government, on a range of matters including meeting the requirements of the Landfill Directive and the role of local authorities.

### Neighbourhood Warden Schemes

**John Cryer:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions officials at his Department have had with *(a)* councillors and *(b)* officers at the London Borough of Havering regarding the continuation of neighbourhood warden schemes; and if he will make a statement on their outcome. [157325]

**Yvette Cooper:** Officials from the Government Office for London met with the neighbourhood warden scheme manager and a councillor from Havering on 11 February.

The warden scheme has yet to secure mainstream funding from the London Borough of Havering and they are still considering their options.

**John Cryer:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance he has issued to local authorities to assist them in mainstreaming funding for neighbourhood wardens schemes; and what the estimated cost to local authorities is of mainstreaming funding of neighbourhood warden schemes. [157326]

**Yvette Cooper:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has provided no direct advice to local authorities but it has provided a raft of information and advice to warden schemes themselves on how they might raise funding from mainstream funding.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's funding to neighbourhood warden schemes for 2003–04 was £4.7 million. Local authorities would need to find this level of funding if they wished to fund all warden schemes at the same level.

**John Cryer:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which *(a)* local authorities and *(b)* housing associations in England (i) are and (ii) are not mainstreaming funding for neighbourhood warden schemes. [157329]

**Yvette Cooper:** The following table lists the areas where housing associations and local authorities are committed to sustaining their first round warden schemes after March 2004, when the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister funding for their pilot schemes ceases.

| | *Area* | *Accountable body* |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Dacorum | LA |
| 2. | Huntingdon | HA |
| 3. | Norwich | LA |
| 4. | Lincolnshire | LA |
| 5. | Leicestershire | HA |
| 6. | Nottingham | LA |
| 7. | Derby | HA |
| 8. | Liverpool (1 of 2 schemes) | LA |
| 9. | West Lancashire | LA |
| 10. | Longsight | LA |
| 11. | Sale West | LA |
| 12. | Wirral | LA |
| 13. | Burnley | LA |
| 14. | Manchester Longridge | HA |
| 15. | Macclesfield | HA |
| 16. | Knowsley | LA |
| 17. | Breightmet and Bolton | HA |
| 18. | Bury | Voluntary Sector |
| 19. | Oldham | LA |
| 20. | North Manchester | LA |
| 21. | Bolton | HA |
| 22. | Salford | LA |
| 23. | Lewisham | LA |
| 24. | Merton | LA |
| 25. | Southwark | LA |
| 26. | Sutton | LA |
| 27. | Birmingham Atwood Green | LA |
| 28. | Wolverhampton | LA |
| 29. | Walsall | LA |
| 30. | Stoke | HA |
| 31. | Wyre Forest | HA |
| 32. | Coventry | LA |
| 33. | Leeds | LA |
| 34. | Sheffield | LA |
| 35. | Kirklees | LA |
| 36. | Sheffield | Voluntary Sector |
| 37. | Barnesley | LA |
| 38. | Doncaster | LA |
| 39. | Wakefield | LA |
| 40. | Rotherham | LA |
| 41. | Exeter | AL |
| 42. | Portsmouth | LA |
| 43. | Horsham | AL |
| 44. | Milton Keynes | LA |
| 45. | Canterbury | LA |
| 46. | Slough | LA |
| 47. | Guildford | LA |
| 48. | Hastings | LA |
| 49. | Rushmore | HA |
| 50. | Stockton | LA |
| 51. | Darlington | LA |
| 52 | South Tyneside | LA |
| 53. | Middlesbrough | HA |
| 54. | Sedgefield | LA |
| 55. | Sunderland Plains Farm | HA |
| 56. | North Tyneside | LA |
| 57. | Merthyr Tydfil | LA |
| 58. | Cardiff | LA |
| 59. | Gwynedd | LA |
| 60. | Caerphilly | LA |
| 61. | Swansea | LA |

Local Authorities (LAs) in Barnet, Hillingdon, Avon and Somerset and Wigan as well as a Housing Association (HA) in Islington have decided not to sustain their wardens schemes. In two cases the wardens will be replaced by Police Community Support Officers.

13 LAs, three HAs and two voluntary schemes have not yet made a final decision about the future of the warden scheme.

### Planning Advice (Showmen)

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what advice his Department gives to local councils on the provision of planning permission for the storing of showmen's equipment and living quarters; and if he will make a statement on the need for this provision. [158581]

**Keith Hill:** Planning policy relating to travelling showpeople is set out in DOE Circular 22/91 'Travelling Showpeople' which gives advice to local planning authorities on how to address the needs of travelling showpeople. Emphasis is placed on local authorities engaging in early discussion with travelling showpeople before planning applications are made, and in order to ensure that their needs are taken into account in preparing their Local Plans. Local authorities are also urged to give every assistance to help showpeople identify sites to buy or rent.

### Police/Fire Authorities (Funding)

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the percentage increase in funding that he deems to be reasonable for *(a)* fire authorities and *(b)* police authorities in the next financial year. [158506]

**Phil Hope:** The 2004–05 Local Government Finance Settlement was approved by Parliament on 5 February.

Single service fire authorities (i.e. the metropolitan fire authorities and the combined fire authorities in shire areas) plus the fire-part of the GLA received a 4.23 per cent. increase in grant on a like-for like basis with 2003–04 (i.e. after adjusting for changes in function and funding). Fire services in shire areas that have not been subject to Local Government Reorganisation are provided by the Shire County. Shire Counties also provide services such as education, social services and highway maintenance for these areas. It is not possible to identify the amount of grant such authorities receive for fire.

Police authorities excluding the City of London and the Metropolitan Police Authority plus the police-part of the GLA received a 3.26 per cent. increase in grant on a like-for-like basis with 2003–04. The City of London also provides services such as education, social services and highway maintenance. It is not possible to identify the amount of grant it receives for police.

**Port Clarence, Stockton**

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much English Partnerships plans to invest in the development of Port Clarence in Stockton. [156613]

**Yvette Cooper:** English Partnerships and One North East are looking at options for the re-development of Port Clarence. A decision about English Partnerships' involvement has yet to be made.

**Regeneration (Havering)**

**John Cryer:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much funding was allocated for regeneration in the London Borough of Havering in the last six years. [157330]

**Yvette Cooper:** The London Borough of Havering have advised the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister that the amount of funding which has been allocated to regeneration projects in the borough since 1997 is as follows:

| *Programme* | *Source* | *Date* | *Funding £ million* | *LBH Match Funding £ million* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| London Riverside—ODPM allocation from Sustainable Communities Funding | ODPM | 2004–2008 | 8 | n/a |
| New Horizons for Harold Hill Regeneration of deprived communities | SRB Allocation administered through LDA | 1999–2004 | 3.8 | 2 |
| London Riverside in the Heart of the Thames Gateway | SRB Allocation administered through LDA | 1999–2007 | [1]32.2 | 2.2 |
| Centre of Excellence in Manufacturing and Engineering | DTI | 2002–2004 | 4.3 | — |
| London Riverside—site preparation | EU Objective 2 | 2001–2002 | 5.4 | — |
| Romford Town Centre | SRB administered through LDA/ Groundwork | 1997–2006 | 1 | 1.7 |

[1] Programme covers London Boroughs of Barking and Dagenham and Havering and Thurrock. Havering is likely to have received 60–70 per cent. of the total allocation by the end of the programme although this includes contributions to the Centre of Excellence in Manufacturing and Engineering, which is in Havering, but serves a wider area.

In addition to these allocations there have been further allocations to the borough from the LDA 2 programme and significant direct investment from the LDA in site acquisition and development.

London Borough of Havering (LBH) match funding is included specifically and related to the regeneration programmes listed. In addition the Council has allocated approximately a further £3.5 million towards regeneration activity from 1997–98 to 2003–04 to support and deliver a variety of programmes over that period.

**Regional Assemblies**

**Mr. Jenkin:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to paragraph 6.7 of Cm.5511, where the Government intends that elected regional assemblies for *(a)* the North East, *(b)* the North West and *(c)* Yorkshire and the Humber would initially be accommodated. [155144]

**Mr. Raynsford:** Before reaching a decision, the Government will consult the regional chambers in the North East, North West and Yorkshire and the Humber and take their views on the preferred initial locations.

**Regional Development Agencies**

**Mr. Edward Davey:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what contribution his Department has made, or plans to make, to the regional development agencies' single pot for each financial year from 2003–04 to 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [156474]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's planned contribution is as follows:

| | *ODPM contribution (£ million)* |
|---|---|
| 2003–04* | 1,524 |
| 2004–05 | 1,456 |
| 2005–06 | 1,513 |

*Note:*
Includes HM Treasury cost of capital charge at 3.5 per cent. and * 2003–04 figures includes End Year Flexibility drawn down at spring Supplementary Estimates.

These very substantial sums reflect the Regional Development Agencies' crucial role as partners in the delivery of the Government's plans for sustainable communities. The RDAs are key agents in achieving, for example, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's objectives for raising the levels of regional prosperity and social inclusion and for delivering effective programmes to help raise the quality of life for all in urban areas and other communities.

### Single Neighbourhood Renewal Unit

**Mr. Edward Davey:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the *(a)* budget or projected budget for the Single Neighbourhood Renewal Unit wardens funding channel and *(b)* budget or projected budget for all area-based initiatives funded by the Single Neighbourhood Renewal Unit wardens funding channel is for financial years (i) 2002–03, (ii) 2003–04, (iii) 2004–05 and (iv) 2005–06, broken down by English region. [156476]

**Yvette Cooper:** The following table outlines the budgets for Neighbourhood Renewal Unit warden funding for years 2002–03, 2003–04, 2004–05 and 2005–06. The Wardens budget does not fund any other area based initiatives.

*NRU warden funding*

£000

| English regions | 2002–03 | 2003–04 | 2004–05 | 2005–06 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| London | 5,274 | 7,909 | 6,955 | 5,145 |
| South West | 763 | 1,319 | 1,170 | 370 |
| South East | 2,068 | 2,248 | 1,782 | 980 |
| North West | 3,166 | 3,753 | 2,860 | 1,440 |
| North East | 1,367 | 966 | 846 | 0 |
| East Midlands | 884 | 895 | 763 | 346 |
| West Midlands | 2,239 | 2,635 | 2,177 | 1,239 |
| Yorkshire and the Humber | 2,206 | 2,606 | 1,946 | 841 |
| Eastern | 1,038 | 945 | 682 | 0 |
| Total | 19,005 | 23,276 | 19,181 | 10,361 |

### Traffic Wardens

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many traffic wardens were employed by each local authority area in each of the last three years, broken down by police authority area. [158215]

**Caroline Flint:** I have been asked to reply.

Our information relates only to traffic wardens employed by police authorities, not local authority parking attendants. I refer my hon. Friend to the chart attached to the answer I gave to Question Number 259.

No record is kept centrally of the number of parking attendants employed by local authorities or by contractors who carry out enforcement on their behalf..

### Urban Regeneration Companies

**Mr. Edward Davey:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what funding was provided *(a)* by his Department in total and *(b)* through non-departmental public bodies to each Urban Regeneration Company for 2003–04; and what funding is projected in each case for 2004–05. [156475]

**Yvette Cooper:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not provide funding directly to any Urban Regeneration Company (URC). All funding is provided by the partners in each URC. This usually comprises the local Regional Development Agency (RDA), the local authority or authorities, and English Partnerships (EP). The table below shows the estimated revenue funding provided/projected by EP and the various RDAs to the individual URCs for 2003–04 and 2004–05. Funding for development projects is not normally provided to the URCs themselves; expenditure on projects is incurred by the partners on the basis of strategies agreed by the URCs.

*Revenue allocations to URCs*

£

| URC | 2003–04 | 2004–05 |
|---|---|---|
| Bradford City Regeneration | 710,000 | 360,000 |
| CPR Regeneration | 500,000 | 500,000 |
| Catalyst Corby | 500,000 | 500,000 |
| Derby Cityscape | 500,000 | 500,000 |
| Gloucester Heritage | n/a | 500,000 |
| Hull Citybuild | 650,000 | 650,000 |
| Leicester Regeneration | 500,000 | 500,000 |
| Liverpool Vision | 791,000 | 791,000 |
| New East Manchester | 620,000 | 620,000 |
| Sandwell | 500,000 | 500,000 |
| Sheffield One | 710,000 | 710,000 |
| Sunderland Arc | 520,000 | 520,000 |
| The New Swindon Company | 500,000 | 500,000 |
| Tees Valley Regeneration | 500,000 | 500,000 |
| Walsall | n/a | 470,000 |
| West Lakes Renaissance | 200,000 | 200,000 |

*Notes:*
1. Bradford and West Lakes do not receive revenue funding from English Partnerships (EP)
2. All other figures are collated EP and Regional Development Agency estimates
3. Gloucester and Walsall were only established towards the end of FY 2003–04

## HEALTH

### Bed Rails

**Sandra Gidley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many bed sides of double-bar design with more than 120mm between the rails he estimates are in use in *(a)* the NHS and *(b)* residential and nursing homes; and if he will make a statement. [158055]

**Dr. Ladyman:** This information is not held centrally.

### Bed-blocking

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent assessment he has made of the performance of East Sussex county council in tackling bed-blocking. [158881]

**Dr. Ladyman:** Between 111 and 132 East Sussex residents have been reported as delayed for the past four weeks, with just over half of these delays attributable to social services reasons. This highlights some of the problems that can occur without effective partnership working between health and social care providers.

### Cycle Accidents

**Mark Tami:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many serious accidents involving cyclists there were in the UK in each of the last five years. [156551]

**Mr. Jamieson:** I have been asked to reply.

The following table shows the number of fatal and serious accidents involving pedal cyclists in the UK in each of the last five years.

*Numbers of accidents involving pedal cyclists: UK*

| *Year* | *Fatal or serious accident* |
|---|---|
| 1998 | 3,477 |
| 1999 | 3,358 |
| 2000 | 2,938 |
| 2001 | 2,812 |
| 2002 | 2,571 |

### Dentistry

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS orthodontists there have been in each year since 1997. [154436]

**Mr. Hutton:** The information requested is shown in the table.

*Hospital/Public Health Medicine and Community Health Services (HCHS): Dental staff within the Orthodontics specialty*

*Numbers (headcount)*

| | *All staff* | *Of which: Consultant* |
|---|---|---|
| 1997 | 509 | 153 |
| 1998 | 501 | 153 |
| 1999 | 504 | 157 |
| 2000 | 513 | 161 |
| 2001 | 506 | 154 |
| 2002 | 508 | 161 |
| March 2003 | n/a | 174 |
| June 2003 | n/a | 181 |

[1] Data as at 30 September each year, except 2003 data which is at 31 March and 30 June.
n/a = Data not available due to data being taken from the mini censuses that collected consultants only.
*Source:*
Department of Health medical and dental workforce census

The number of national health service consultant orthodontists, working in the NHS, increased by 18 per cent. between September 1997 and June 2003.

### Foundation Trusts

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what safeguards are in place to prevent foundation trust boards of governors being taken over by special interest groups. [154011]

**Mr. Hutton:** All National Health Service foundation trusts are required to have a majority of governors elected by members of the public and patient constituencies. The Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 requires all NHS foundation trusts to take steps to ensure that the membership is representative of those eligible to be members. The democratic process is designed to secure a balance of interests on the board of governors. In addition, NHS foundation trusts may include provisions in their constitution, and in particular the provisions relating to elections to the board of governors, designed to prevent the board from becoming dominated by a single issue group. The Independent Regulator will want to be satisfied that the provisions proposed by the applicant trust meet the statutory requirements before granting an authorisation.

### General Practitioners

**Andy Burnham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioner vacancies there were in each primary care trust on 1 March. [158689]

**Mr. Hutton:** The last Recruitment and Retention Vacancy (RRV) survey took place between 1 April 2002 and 31 March 2003. Information on the number of general practitioners (GP) vacancies in each primary care trust (PCT) that occurred during this period has been placed in the Library.

The RRV survey is a count of all GP vacancies that have occurred during each year. It will include existing posts that doctors have left and also new posts created to increase the workforce, even where they were filled very quickly. The number of vacancies in part, is a result of there being more posts overall, reflecting the Government's plan to increase the GP workforce.

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners there were per head of population in *(a)* England and *(b)* each London primary care trust in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [155274]

**Mr. Hutton** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* The latest available data for unrestricted principals and equivalents (UPEs) per 100,000 population is September 2002. Information is available since 1998 for England and information is available since 2001 at a London primary care trust level and has been placed in the Library.

### Health (Government Funding)

**David Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent from central Government funds per capita on health in *(a)* the East Riding of Yorkshire and *(b)* the UK for each of the last five years. [155328]

**Mr. Hutton:** Information relating to the per capita expenditure in the East Riding area and England is shown in the table. The information is based on the East Riding and Hull Health Authority area up to 2001–02 and then the North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire Strategic Health Authority for 2002–03. Information for the rest of the United Kingdom is a matter for the devolved administrations and the Northern Ireland Office.

*£ per head*

| | *1998–99* | *1999–2000* | *2000–01* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| East Riding and Hull Health Authority | 624.72 | 722.28 | 787.13 | 863.59 | n/a |
| North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire Strategic Health Authority | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | 943.10 |
| England | 659.76 | 763.79 | 825.38 | 926.13 | 991.07 |

*Notes:*

1. The total amount of central Government funds spent on health cannot be analysed by health authority area. Expenditure per capita is calculated on health authority areas from the expenditure reported in health authorities and related primary care trusts.

2. The health authority and all England expenditure figures are not prepared on a consistent basis as some elements cannot be accounted for at the health authority level. The majority of general dental services expenditure and an element of pharmaceutical services expenditure is included in the England total but not in the individual health authority accounts or primary care trust summarisation schedules. This expenditure is separately accounted for by the Dental Practice Board and Prescription Pricing Authority respectively.
3. Expenditure is taken from audited health authority summarisation forms and primary care trust summarisation schedules which are prepared on a resource basis and therefore differ from cash allocations in the year. The expenditure is the total expenditure by the relevant health authorities, and the commissioner costs of the primary care trusts. Figures are given in cash terms.
4. Allocations per weighted head of population provide a much more reliable measure to identify differences between funding of health authorities and primary care trusts.
5. Figures for 1998–99 to 2001–2002 have been prepared using gross expenditure figures. This is to ensure consistency between years. Figures for 2002–2003 based on strategic health authority areas have been adjusted to eliminate expenditure which would be double counted where an authority acts as a lead in commissioning healthcare or other services.
6. In many health authorities, there are factors which distort the expenditure per head. These include:
the health authority acting in a lead capacity to commission healthcare or fund training on behalf of other health bodies; and
asset revaluations in NHS Trusts being funded through health authorities or primary care trusts.
7. For these reasons expenditure per head cannot be compared reliably between health authorities or between different years.
*Sources:*
1. Health authority audited summarisation forms 1998–99 to 2001–02.
2. Strategic health authority audited summarisation forms 2002–03.
3. Primary care trust audited summarisation schedules 2000–01 to 2002–03.
4. Weighted health authority population figures 1998–99 to 2002–03.

### Infection Control

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much of the additional funding announced in January 2001 for infection control has been spent. [157569]

**Mr. Hutton:** The additional funding announced in January 2001 was for improving decontamination in national health service hospitals in England. £112 million has been allocated to NHS trusts for that purpose so far.

### Information Technology

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the projected cost of the National Programme for Information Technology in the NHS was when it was originally announced; what the latest available projected cost is; and if he will make a statement. [154989]

**Mr. Hutton:** The projected costs for the national programme for information technology (NpfIT) in the national health service were announced in the strategy document, "Delivering 21st Century IT in the NHS", as £2.3 billion for the period up to March 2006. Central funding for the NPfIT is to be made available from the Spending Review 2002 as follows—£370 million in 2003–04, £730 million in 2004–05 and £1.2 billion in 2005–06.

We are on schedule and on budget to spend £2.3 billion on centrally procured IT by March 2006.

Future expenditure will form part of the ongoing financial management processes within Spending Review 2004 and future envelopes. By 2008, IT funding will be in line with the levels proposed within the Wanless Review; that is, 4 per cent., of total NHS expenditure.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the cost of *(a)* training and *(b)* installation for the National Programme for Information Technology in the NHS; and from which budgets the funding will be taken. [154990]

**Mr. Hutton:** Central funding for the National Programme for Information Technology (NPfIT) in the national health service is to be made available from the Spending Review 2002 as follows—£370 million in 2003–04, £730 million in 2004–05 and £1.2 billion in 2005–06.

Training plans are still evolving as is to be expected when approaching a phased programme of implementation and roll out of new applications, systems and services. The training requirements are not solely related to the NPfIT as general IT skills are now an everyday element for any public service and service-based organisation. The move to e-learning and development and the NHSU will both create more demand for computer and online skills and provide more channels and solutions to bring training to people.

As the Department completes the more detailed plans for each geographical cluster and local service provider contract, it will be able to map out the extent of IT support for clinical practice and patient care over the phased implementation of the NPfIT. This will generate clearer training requirements and will enable the Department to consider the most appropriate ways of providing training and development and produce firmer costs.

The delivery of the NPfIT and any costs related to the implementation are included within the overall envelope of central funding. In line with normal commercial practice, the final pricing structure included in each contract and the fine details of the bids are confidential.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what restrictions have been placed on bidders for the National Programme for Information Technology in the NHS making public statements about the project; whether these restrictions are usual Government practice; and what the reasons are for the restrictions. [154991]

**Mr. Hutton:** The National Programme for Information Technology (NpfIT) in the national health service follows normal Government and commercial practice in regard to managing procurements and contracts and has drawn upon standard guidance from the Office of Government Commerce. This is available at www.ogc.gov.uk/sdtoolkit/reference/ogc library/procurement/cup59d.pdf. This precludes suppliers from

discussing their contracts or the key elements relating to the subject matter of their contracts without the agreement of the Department.

Contractors and employees of the programme are contractually required to comply with this protocol. The reasons for this are to ensure consistency, avoid confusion, and to enable any issues or proposals to be managed efficiently. It is also important to ensure that normal commercial and business rules of confidentiality are observed.

### Medicines Management

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the National Care Standards Commission will publish its findings on the medicines management standard in care homes. [156295]

**Dr. Ladyman:** Yes. The National Care Standards Commission expects to publish its findings in a report to be issued in March.

### Midwifery Council (Registration Fees)

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment his Department has undertaken of the impact of the Nursing and Midwifery Council's proposed fee increase on the number of nurses nearing retirement renewing their registration; and if he will make a statement. [154586]

**Mr. Hutton:** It is for the Nursing and Midwifery Council to decide and justify any increase in registration fees that it proposes. Any increase is subject to Privy Council approval, and the Privy Council will carefully consider all arguments expressed when the time comes.

### NHS Consultants

**Tony Baldry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many staff grade posts within the NHS he expects will be made consultant posts in the next 12 months. [156458]

**Mr. Hutton:** There are no central plans to convert staff grade posts into consultant posts over the next 12 months. National health service trusts can, if they feel there is a need, make proposals to their postgraduate deanery to increase the numbers of locally funded specialist training posts. These may be funded by conversion of staff grade posts and may eventually lead to additional consultant posts.

### NHS Finances

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the *(a)* information requests and *(b)* data collections (i) made by and (ii) supplied to his Department concerning NHS finances; when they are collected; when they are available for publication; and at what level of NHS organisation the information is collected. [154584]

**Mr. Hutton:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 10 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1411W.

In addition, special health authorities also supply annual accounts, capital charge estimates and financial monitoring data to the Department.

Annual accounts are published locally by individual national health service bodies. The accounts data collected by the Department is summarised and published. The most recent such publication was in March 2003, in respect of the summarised 2001–02 accounts.

NHS annual accounts data is also used by the Department in the preparation of the Departmental Resource Account. The 2002–03 Resource Account was published in January 2004.

### NHS Land

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much NHS land has been included on the register of surplus public sector land which can be sold off on the open market. [154099]

**Mr. Hutton:** This Department has recently agreed that surplus property owned by National Health Service trusts and primary care trusts are no longer required for the benefit of the NHS should be placed on the newly established Register of Surplus Public Sector Land. This will further the Government's objective of making the best use of such land. The NHS has been informed and detailed guidance on these arrangements will shortly be issued. It is anticipated that the NHS will be major users of the register, including as purchasers of surplus public land owned by other bodies.

### NHS Services (Greater London)

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much money has been allocated to NHS services in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough in each of the last three years. [158440]

**Mr. Hutton** *[holding answer 3 March 2004]:* The following tables show the allocations for health authorities and primary care trusts in London over the last three years. The Department does not have a breakdown by London borough.

*Allocations to London health authorities: 2001–02 and 2002–03*

*£000*

| *Health authority*[1] | *2001–02* | *2002–03* |
|---|---|---|
| Barking and Havering | 305,009 | 333,897 |
| Barnet | 248,445 | n/a |
| Barnet, Enfield and Haringey | n/a | 725,055 |
| Bexley and Greenwich | 345,432 | n/a |
| Bexley, Bromley and Greenwich | n/a | 635,109 |
| Brent and Harrow | 371,479 | 432,599 |
| Bromley | 218,662 | n/a |
| Camden and Islington | 396,403 | 477,910 |
| Croydon | 242,431 | 274,247 |
| Ealing, Hammersmith and Hounslow | 581,735 | 676,038 |
| East London and The City | 598,866 | 702,986 |
| Enfield and Haringey | 387,770 | n/a |
| Hillingdon | 184,100 | 203,317 |
| Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster | 361,234 | 436,168 |
| Kingston and Richmond | 256,722 | 284,506 |
| Lambeth Southwark and Lewisham | 695,407 | 829,552 |
| Merton, Sutton and Wandsworth | 498,646 | 563,125 |
| Redbridge and Waltham Forest | 351,329 | 399,542 |
| Total | 6,043,669 | 6,974,051 |

[1]There were health authority mergers on 1 April 2001

*Allocations to London primary care trusts—2003–04*

*£000*

| *Primary care trust* | *2003–04* |
|---|---|
| Barking and Dagenham | 153,449 |
| Barnet | 303,125 |
| Bexley | 181,941 |
| Brent | 291,023 |
| Bromley | 264,585 |
| Camden | 264,700 |
| Chingford, Wanstead and Woodford | 109,461 |
| City and Hackney | 266,159 |
| Croydon | 295,063 |
| Ealing | 321,825 |
| Enfield | 242,179 |
| Greenwich | 238,961 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 192,779 |
| Haringey | 244,127 |
| Harrow | 178,844 |
| Havering | 213,977 |
| Hillingdon | 219,844 |
| Hounslow | 216,776 |
| Islington | 248,319 |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 202,056 |
| Kingston | 142,871 |
| Lambeth | 325,353 |
| Lewisham | 283,282 |
| Newham | 276,635 |
| Redbridge | 160,654 |
| Richmond and Twickenham | 161,752 |
| Southwark | 282,305 |
| Sutton and Merton | 324,770 |
| Tower Hamlets | 237,707 |
| Walthamstow, Leyton and Leytonstone | 163,981 |
| Wandsworth | 275,795 |
| Westminster | 263,876 |
| Total | 7,548,174 |

## NHS Trusts

**John Austin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the estimated deficit or underspend for each NHS trust in London is in the current financial year; and what cumulative deficit is being carried forward in each case. [154922]

**Mr. Hutton:** Audited information on the financial position of national health service trusts will be published in their individual annual accounts. This data will be available centrally in the autumn. We have no plans to publish un-audited information.

**John Austin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions he has had with Queen Elizabeth Hospital NHS Trust about ward closures; and if he will make a statement. [154924]

**Mr. Hutton:** I have had no discussions. It is for strategic health authorities (SHAs) to performance manage the national health service. I am assured by South East London SHA that, although Queen Elizabeth Hospital NHS Trust faces a number of financial pressures, it is working with its partners to manage them and to avoid any unnecessary or inappropriate impact on patient care.

**Mr. Hurst:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost was of payments to retiring or resigning NHS trust chief executives in each year since 1990 to 2003. [156012]

**Mr. Hutton:** This information is not identified separately in trust financial returns.

**Mr. Hurst:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the salary was of the chief executive of each NHS trust in 2003. [156013]

**Mr. Hutton:** The Department does not hold this information centrally but has asked national health service trusts to include the information in their annual accounts.

**Mr. Cummings:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the budget for the Centrally Funded Initiative and Services Special Allocation was for 2003–04; whether this budget has been committed; and whether reserves from the budget will be used to meet overspends in existing primary care trust budgets in 2003–04. [155591]

**Mr. Hutton:** The current budget for Centrally Funded Services and Initiatives and Special Allocations in 2003–04 is £13,030 million. This budget is fully committed and contains no reserve element.

## Out-of-hours Service

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the top-up sum available to primary care trusts to pay individual general practitioners for out-of-hours service will reach at least the current investment level. [155682]

**Mr. Hutton:** The investment in out-of-hours services has been doubled to £92 million from 2004–05. This is in addition to the average of £6,000 primary care trusts (PCTs) will receive for every general practitioner opting out of the responsibility to provide out of hours services. A further £28 million will be made. available to PCTs facing the biggest challenges in developing their out-of-hours services.

## Overseas Doctors

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many overseas doctors passed their Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board examination in 2002. [156293]

**Mr. Hutton:** The Professional and Linguistic Assessment Board examination is administered by the General Medical Council. 2,955 overseas doctors passed Part II of the examination in 2002.

## Paediatric Training

**Tony Baldry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many national training numbers have been issued in paediatrics in the last 12 months; and how many he expects to issue in the next 12 months; [156456]

(2) what estimate he has made of the number of national training numbers needed in paediatrics to comply with the EU Working Time Directive; what advice he has received from the Royal College of Paediatrics on this; and if he will make a statement. [156457]

**Mr. Hutton:** In 2003–04, 100 locally funded national training numbers (NTNs) were allocated to paediatrics. In 2004–05, a further 15 locally funded NTNs will be allocated. In addition, an extra 155 NTNs have been proposed for paediatrics through other initiatives.

To support the implementation of the Working Time Directive (WTD), strategic health authorities have agreed further additional training places with trusts, for which we will issue NTNs. The number of these is not yet available.

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health has carried out a survey looking into WTD compliance within hospitals providing acute services for children. The Department is considering the results of the survey.

### Primary Care Trusts

**Mr. Neil Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health which constituencies in England are covered *(a)* in whole and *(b)* in part by each of the primary care trusts in England. [154139]

**Mr. Hutton** *[holding answer 9 February 2004]:* The information requested has been placed in the Library.

**Mr Watts:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how long he expects it to take fully to implement the new funding system for primary care trusts. [158183]

**Mr. Hutton:** A wide ranging review of the funding formula, used to inform the allocation of resources to primary care trusts (PCTs), has recently taken place.

The new formula was used to set PCT target allocations for the latest round of national health service revenue allocations, covering the period 2000–06.

The Department is committed to bringing PCTs to their target allocation as soon as is practicable.

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer to question reference 154873, how many patients attending from each primary care trust outside Sussex sending more than 10 patients received *(a)* financial assistance with travel costs, *(b)* financial assistance with carers' travel costs and *(c)* financial assistance with carers' accommodation costs. [157611]

**Ms Rosie Winterton** *[holding answer 2 March 2004]:* The Department does not collect this information centrally.

### Public Bodies

**Sandra Gidley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate has been made of the costs of the Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection in its first five years of operation. [154467]

**Mr. Hutton:** A preliminary estimate of the cost of the Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection's (CHAI) operation for its first year of operation was £60 million. No estimates have been made for subsequent years.

CHAI, as an independent body, will refine the estimates of its costs for its first three years. These will be contained in its first corporate plan, a copy of which will be placed in the Library when it is published.

### Hospital Staff (Attacks)

**Paul Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many attacks against hospital staff were recorded in *(a)* all hospitals in England and *(b)* hospitals in England with the Red Card Scheme in each of the last three years. [153293]

**Mr. Hutton:** The information requested is not available centrally.

The following statistics on violence within the National Health Service are available for 2002–03.

*Estimated violent or abusive incidents in the NHS 2002–03*

| *Organisation Type* | *Estimated total number of incidents* | *Estimated number of incidents per 1,000 staff per month* |
|---|---|---|
| Acute Trusts | 38,000 | 6 |
| Primary Care Trusts | 21,000 | 12 |
| Ambulance Trusts | 5,000 | 16 |
| Mental Health and Community Trusts | 51,000 | 34 |
| All Organisations | 116,000 | 11 |

No comparable statistics are available for earlier years.

### Speech Therapy

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment he has made of the effects of Agenda for Change on speech therapists; [154620]

(2) what research his Department has commissioned into the effects on recruitment and retention of speech therapists of the implications of Agenda for Change for pay levels of speech therapists. [154621]

**Mr. Hutton:** On average national health service staff will receive a 5.9 per cent., increase in basic pay over time as a result of Agenda for Change (in addition to annual pay uplifts) though this will vary for different staff groups and individuals.

The impact of Agenda for Change for all staff groups, including speech and language therapists, is currently being tested in a range of early implementer sites. The evidence and learning from these sites will be reviewed by the UK Health Departments, NHS trades unions and NHS employer representatives before the planned national roll out in October 2004.

### Stroke

**Dr. Cable:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many stroke consultants there are *(a)* in the NHS and *(b)* with specialist qualifications in strokes. [154949]

**Mr. Hutton:** The Department does not collect numbers of stroke consultants.

Stroke treatment is normally undertaken by consultants specialising in geriatric medicine, neurology and rehabilitation medicine, but it is not possible to say how many of the consultants within these specialties have specialist qualifications in strokes.

### Temporary Vacancies

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 11 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1546–47W, on NHS Professionals, what proportion of temporary vacancies in NHS trusts he estimates are filled from NHS Professionals' own bank; what proportion are filled via NHS Professionals passing on the details to approved private agencies; and if he will make a statement. [156354]

**Mr. Hutton:** In January 2004, NHS Professionals filled 65 per cent. of the vacancies notified to it from its own bank. Private recruitment agencies had access to the remaining 35 per cent., of which they filled 25 per cent. 10 per cent. remained unfilled.

### Working Time Directive

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 11 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1548W, on the Working Time Directive, whether his Department expects the NHS to be compliant with the Directive for doctors in training from 1 August; and if he will make a statement. [156353]

**Mr. Hutton:** The Working Time Directive will be a legal requirement for doctors in training from 1 August 2004 and we expect national health service employers to comply with the legislation. Strategic health authorities are currently working with their respective trusts locally on plans to achieve compliance.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Asylum Seekers

**Mr. Malins:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Afghanistan citizens have *(a)* applied for asylum, *(b)* been granted asylum, *(c)* been granted (i) exceptional leave to remain and (ii) indefinite leave to remain, *(d)* been refused leave and *(e)* have been removed in each of the last four years for which figures are available. [142579]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer 8 December 2003]*: The table provides the available information, showing the number of asylum applications, initial decisions and removals of Afghans for the last four years. Initial decisions do not necessarily relate to applications made in the same year. Nor do removals necessarily relate to initial decisions or appeal outcomes in the same year.

The United Kingdom Government opened negotiations with the Afghan Transitional Administration on return issues following the change of regime in Afghanistan. These negotiations resulted in the signing of a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding by the UK Government, the Afghan Transitional Administration and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) in October 2002. The MoU establishes a framework for returns from the UK to Afghanistan. Since then, voluntary returns have commenced under the terms of that Memorandum, and from April 2003 regular enforced returns have been successfully implemented. We will continue to work with the Afghan Transitional Administration to ensure that returns to Afghanistan are sustainable.

Information on asylum applications, initial decisions and removals is published quarterly. The next publication will be available at the end of February 2004 on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate web site at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

*Asylum applications[1] received in the United Kingdom, excluding dependants, initial decision[2] 2000—2003, nationals of Afghanistan*

| | *Applications* | *Initial Decisions* | *Grants of Asylum* | *Grants of ELR* | *Grants of Humanitarian Protection* | *Grants of Discretionary Leave* | *Total refusals[3]* | *Grants of ELR under backlog criteria[4]* | *Non compliance* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2000 | 5,555 | 2,590 | 375 | 695 | n/a | n/a | 1,515 | 10 | - |
| 2001(r) | 8,920 | 12,365 | 2,320 | 7,500 | n/a | n/a | 2,545 | n/a | n/a |
| 2002(P) | 7,205 | 8,175 | 115 | 4,765 | n/a | n/a | 3,300 | n/a | n/a |
| 2003(P) | 2,290 | 3,920 | 40 | 204 | * | 350 | 3,320 | n/a | N/a |

[1] figures rounded to nearest 5, with '*' = 1 or 2.
[2] Information is of initial determination decisions, excluding the outcome of appeals or other subsequent decisions.
[3] May include some refusals under non compliance grounds.
[4] Includes persons departing 'voluntarily' after enforcement action had been initiated against them, persons leaving under Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes run by the International Organisation for Migration, and removals on safe third country grounds
(r) Revised figures
(P) Provisional figures
N/A Not applicable

*Removals and voluntary departures[1] of Afghan asylum applicants, excluding dependants, 2000 to September 2003*[2,3,4(E)]

| | *2000* | *2001* | *2002(P)* | *Jan-Sept 2003(P)[5]* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Afghanistan | .. | 125 | 395 | 460 |

[1] Includes persons departing 'voluntarily' after enforcement action had been initiated against them, persons leaving under Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes run by the International Organisation for Migration, and removals on safe third country grounds.
[2] Figures rounded to the nearest five, with * = 1 or 2.
[3] Figures may include a small number of dependants leaving under Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes.
[4] Figures exclude dependants of asylum seekers removed. Data on dependants removed have only been collected since April 2001.
[5] Data on the nationality of asylum seekers removed in the final quarter of 2003 will be published in May 2004.
(E) Data have been estimated due to data quality issues.
(P) Provisional figures.
(..) Not available.

### Brain Injuries (Police Training)

**Bob Russell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether *(a)* police training for recruits and *(b)* in-service training for police officers includes awareness of how to respond to members of the public with acquired brain injuries. [157560]

**Ms Blears:** The 15 week Probationer Training Programme delivered by Centrex to all new police recruits, incorporates a First Aid course consisting of five modules to the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) approved Common Minimum Standards.

The course includes management of a casualty with head and associated injuries, convulsion and stroke. It teaches how to recognise signs and symptoms, examine and treat injury, obtain medical help, adopt the correct position, provide reassurance and monitoring. Training also includes life saving, illness in public places, and dealing with sudden death if required. In addition to testing the knowledge, understanding and skills on all these issues, probationers would also be assessed on attitudes and behaviour.

In police forces, specialist courses are delivered to officers as needed. Members of the public who enter custody at police stations are assessed and medical advice sought where appropriate.

### Cockling

**Geraldine Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what Immigration Service operations had been carried out regarding cockle picking in *(a)* Morecambe Bay and *(b)* elsewhere prior to the operation on Pilling Sands on 19 June 2003. [156857]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]:* The Immigration Service has assisted the police with various incidents involving cockle pickers prior to 19 June 2003. These include:

the arrest of 12 Chinese nationals in Mostyn on 31 October 2002

the arrest of 20 Chinese nationals on the Wirral on 31 October 2002

the apprehension of five Chinese nationals in Bagillt on 13 November 2002.

**Geraldine Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were arrested picking cockles in Morecambe Bay on 5 August 2003. [156371]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer 26 February 2004]:* The police arrested 37 Chinese cockle pickers in Morecambe Town on 4 August 2003.

**Geraldine Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how long immigration officials took to reach Morecambe when police arrested 37 people on Chatsworth Road, Morecambe on 4 August 2003; and whether the police were called as a result of complaints from members of the public. [156372]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer 26 February 2004]:* I understand the police received telephone calls during early August 2003 concerning groups of apparently illegal Chinese immigrants and related either to the occupation of local premises or cockling on local public fisheries. On 4 August the police attended a local address following further complaints of suspicious activity. Police records show that they started to arrest Chinese cockle pickers at 4.35 p.m on 4 August 2003.

Police records indicate that they first contacted the Immigration Service about this activity during the evening of 4 August.

The Police made a significant number of arrests and made arrangements for the safe accommodation overnight of the detainees at police custody suites in the area.

During the morning of 5 August Immigration Service's Liverpool office drew together a team and the equipment necessary to interview, fingerprint, photograph and serve illegal entry papers on the Chinese nationals, as appropriate. Having completed checks during the morning against the relevant databases and obtained an interpreter, an Immigration Officer from Liverpool arrived at Lancaster Police Station at 1.24 p.m to assist the police with identifying the immigration status of those who did not appear on Home Office records.

Two Immigration Officers continue to provide their full time support to the police in the area.

**Geraldine Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement correcting the information the hon. Member for Morecambe and Lunesdale received from the right hon. Member for Stretford and Urmston (Beverley Hughes) regarding immigration enforcement action on 6 August 2003, in Morecambe Bay; and if he will initiate an urgent inquiry into the reasons for which this inaccurate information was provided by his Department. [156373]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer 26 February 2004]:* I wrote to my hon. Friend on 19 February to explain that I had been given the incorrect location for the operation on 6 August by officials, and I expressed regret about this error. This operation had in fact taken place on cockle beds on the Wirral.

Following my hon. Friend's letter of 19 February which highlighted various discrepancies to me in the information I had provided, I initiated an internal enquiry that evening to establish the facts. This has been conducted by a Director in the Immigration Service and the initial results were reported to me this week. There are further investigations still to be completed.

**Geraldine Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will make a statement on the Police and UK Immigration Service operation in Morecambe Bay at the sandbank close to Morecambe Town on 5 August 2003 as described in a letter to the hon. Member for Morecambe and Lunesdale from the right hon. Member for Stretford and Urmston (Beverley Hughes) dated 12 February; [156374]

(2) if he will name the sandbank close to Morecambe Town where a police and UK immigration operation took place on 5 August 2003 as described in a letter to the right hon. Member for Morecambe and Lunesdale from the hon. Member for Stretford and Urmston (Beverley Hughes) of 12 February; and if he will estimate the distance from the sandbank to Morecambe Town; [156370]

(3) what *(a)* police and *(b)* immigration service operations have been carried out at the sandbanks close to Morecambe town. [156970]

**Beverley Hughes:** The matter has now been fully investigated and it is clear that some details of the information given to me by officials and reproduced in my letter of 12 February about the Immigration Service's role in the events on the 4 and 5 August were not wholly accurate and I regret that as a result my hon. Friend was not given the full picture. However, the broad outline of that picture was correct—that on those days there was police-led activity in the Morecambe Bay area involving Chinese cockle pickers which the Immigration Service supported.

## Crime

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many crimes have been *(a)* reported and *(b)* recorded as being solved in the Romford area of the London borough of Havering during (i) 1995, (ii) 1997, (iii) 1999, (iv) 2001 and (v) 2003; [157012]

(2) how many *(a)* burglaries, *(b)* car thefts, *(c)* acts of vandalism, *(d)* muggings, *(e)* rapes, *(f)* sexual assaults, *(g)* indecent assaults and *(h)* violent attacks were reported in the Romford area of the London borough of Havering during (i) 1995, (ii) 1997, (iii) 1999, (iv) 2001 and (v) 2003. [157013]

**Ms Blears:** For details of recorded crime figures for Havering, I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 14 October 2003, *Official Report*, column 18W. Details for detections in Havering are given in the table.

*Havering: Recorded crime for six key offences*

| | *Offences recorded* | *Detections* |
|---|---|---|
| *Violence against the Person* | | |
| 1999–2000 | 2,661 | 975 |
| 2000–01 | 2,787 | 945 |
| 2001–02 | 3,225 | 1,144 |
| 2002–03 | 3,901 | 1,268 |
| *Sexual Offences* | | |
| 1999–2000 | 145 | 64 |
| 2000–01 | 158 | 55 |
| 2001–02 | 173 | — |
| 2002–03 | 178 | — |
| *Robbery* | | |
| 1999–2000 | 240 | 60 |
| 2000–01 | 392 | 59 |
| 2001–02 | 549 | 63 |
| 2002–03 | 479 | 57 |
| *Burglary Dwelling* | | |
| 1999–2000 | 837 | 119 |
| 2000–01 | 897 | 40 |
| 2001–02 | 1,109 | 63 |
| 2002–03 | 1,058 | 140 |
| *Theft of a motor Vehicle* | | |
| 1999–2000 | 1,749 | 154 |
| 2000–01 | 1,842 | 107 |
| 2001–02 | 1,883 | 134 |
| 2002–03 | 1,654 | 111 |
| *Theft from a Vehicle* | | |
| 1999–2000 | 2,120 | 49 |
| 2000–01 | 2,143 | 26 |
| 2001–02 | 2,374 | 42 |
| 2002–03 | 2,230 | 37 |

**Mr. Brady:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer to question reference 154635 on 24 February, what guidance on crime pattern analysis his Department issued to police forces prior to 2003. [157696]

**Ms Blears:** No formal guidance has been issued although research studies have been published relevant to this area. Those studies published prior to 2003 are:

Read, T. and Oldfield, D. (1995) Local Crime Analysis. Crime Detection and Prevention Series Paper 65, London: Home Office.

Clarke, R.V. and Eck, J. (2003) Become a Problem-Solving Crime Analyst. Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science.

## Drug Treatment and Testing Orders

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many drugs testing and treatment orders have been issued in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley since 2000. [157680]

**Caroline Flint:** The information requested, for the years 2000 to 2002 is contained in the table.

*Persons sentenced to drug treatment and testing orders in Lancashire and the Petty Sessional Area (PSA) of Chorley, 2000–02*

| | *In Lancashire* | *Of which, in Chorley PSA* |
|---|---|---|
| 2000[1] | — | — |
| 2001 | 126 | 6 |
| 2002 | 165 | 10 |

[1] From October.

Statistics for 2003 will be published in the autumn of this year.

## Engagements

**Mr. Nigel Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the meeting on 16 September 2003 between the Minister of State for Crime Reduction, Policing and Community Safety and representatives of Naturewatch; and when he expects to hold a follow-up meeting with the Chief Constable of North Wales. [157436]

**Ms Blears:** I very much welcomed the opportunity to meet representatives of Naturewatch to hear their concerns about the law and other issues in relation to badger-baiting. I made clear once again the Government's utter abhorrence of such practices. Primary responsibility for legislation on the protection of badgers rests with colleagues in Defra. I noted the concern of Naturewatch that there should be clear statistics as to the scale of abuse. Convictions of the main offences under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, which are imprisonable, are recordable on the Police National Computer. This allows information about

offences and offenders to be shared among police forces. However, since the offences in the Act are among the great number which are triable only summarily, the proposition that they should be made notifiable for the purpose of crime statistics (which focus on offences triable on indictment) presents great problems. I made it clear that I would wish to take the views of the Chief Constable of North Wales, who leads on wildlife crime matters within the Association of Chief Police Officers, on other possible options. My officials have been in touch with him, and I am anxious that this work should be taken forward as quickly as possible.

### Fixed Penalty Fines

**Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the costs and benefits of equipping *(a)* Home Office constabularies and *(b)* Highways Agency traffic management staff with hand-held GPS card readers for on-the-spot payment of fixed penalty fines. [156723]

**Caroline Flint** *[holding answer 3 March 2004]:* No such assessment has been made. There is no requirement to pay fixed penalty fines on the spot.

The provisions of the fixed penalty system for road traffic offences are set out in Part III of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988, as amended by the Road Traffic Act 1991. The recipient of a fixed penalty notice has the option of paying the penalty within 28 days or requesting a court hearing if the issue of the notice is disputed.

Provision for Highways Agency traffic officers is included in the Traffic Management Bill, currently before Parliament. The Bill does not seek to give the traffic officers a power to issue fixed penalty notices.

### Identity Cards

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will commission an independent analysis to evaluate the various hypotheses about the effects of introducing identity cards. [157033]

**Beverley Hughes:** The Government does not propose to commission such an analysis. It has conducted a lengthy consultation exercise on different options for implementing an identity cards scheme, my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary set out the benefits of an identity cards scheme in his statement to the House on 11 November 2003 and his publication 'Identity Cards: The Next Steps' (CMD 6020) and we have announced that there will be a further opportunity for consultation when the draft Bill is published.

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the option of introducing an identity card system with no central register. [157035]

**Beverley Hughes:** An identity card scheme without a central register would have less protection against people establishing multiple identities than one where there was a single, highly verified record of identity.

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures will be in place under the current identity card proposals to ensure the trustworthiness of the staff operating *(a)* the identity database system and *(b)* other databases that include the ID number. [157037]

**Beverley Hughes:** The Government will build on the arrangements which are already in place for administering personal databases such as those adopted by the UK Passport Service.

### Illegal Immigrants

**Mr. Paice:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many of the illegal Chinese immigrants arrested in King's Lynn have been deported;. [155545]

(2) how many of the illegal Chinese immigrants arrested in the Wirral in November 2002 have been deported; [155546]

(3) how many of the illegal Chinese immigrants arrested at Morecambe in August 2003 have been deported; [155547]

(4) what prosecutions have taken place in connection with *(a)* the arrest of Chinese immigrants in King's Lynn, *(b)* the arrest of Chinese immigrants in the Wirral in November 2002 and *(c)* the arrest of Chinese immigrants at Morecambe Bay in August 2003. [155548]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* The Chinese Government has very strict conditions for re-documenting their citizens and will only accept their return once they have verified their exact identity. This causes problems for many countries that wish to repatriate Chinese illegal immigrants and failed asylum seekers, as those who do not wish to return are careful to conceal their true identity. Chinese officials seconded to the Immigration Service have recently provided assistance in identifying Chinese nationals to enable their return. We are now working on an arrangement to make this assistance permanent.

We have made it clear to the Chinese that we urgently need to find a solution to the problem of re-documenting those who continue to conceal their identity in order to frustrate return, and are working together to find a way forward to enable us to significantly increase returns to China.

My understanding is that activity by the Immigration Service on the Wirral in October 2002, in King's Lynn in the summer of 2003, and in the Morecambe Bay area in August 2003 has not led to any prosecutions against any individuals under immigration law. Although 120 Chinese nationals were interviewed by the Immigration Service on those occasions, they were not willing to provide evidence which could be used to support a prosecution against those who may have facilitated their entry into the United Kingdom or employed them illegally.

To date one of these Chinese nationals who had committed an immigration offence has been removed from the United Kingdom and two are in detention awaiting issue of travel documents and removal.

The Immigration Service is actively considering the status of the Chinese nationals apprehended on these three occasions who have not been removed to date and who are not legally in the United Kingdom.

### Lancashire Police

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many arrests were made in the Chorley constituency in each year since 1997. [157677]

**Ms Blears:** Information on arrests collected centrally is based on persons arrested for 'notifiable' offences at police force area level only, in England and Wales. The information does not identify individual local authority or constituency areas.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers Lancashire Police Force had in each year since 2000; and how many *(a)* were on the front line and *(b)* had desk jobs in each year. [157679]

**Ms Blears:** Police strength information is set out in the table.

| *Year as at 31 March* | *Lancashire police strength* |
|---|---|
| 2000 | 3,179 |
| 2001 | 3,255 |
| 2002 | 3,304 |
| 2003 | 3,339 |
| December 2003 | [1]3,549 |

[1] Record level

Further information on the deployment of officers on particular duties is not available. Police officers perform a variety of roles and not all officers occupy posts devoted solely to front line or administrative duties. The Home Office will be making available later in the year an assessment of the proportion of time spent by police officers on front line activities in each force in England and Wales in 2003–04.

### People Trafficking

**Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps his Department has taken to combat trafficking of people into Britain from *(a)* China and *(b)* the Far East. [158327]

**Beverley Hughes:** The Government is committed to tackling the crime of human trafficking in all its guises, and operates an intelligence led approach to the policing of human trafficking. Reflex, a UK wide multi-agency taskforce to combat organised immigration crime, which includes people trafficking and smuggling, was established in 2000. At present, Reflex has a number of operations focused on disrupting organised Chinese, Far Eastern and other criminal gangs some of which involves close liaison with our European partners and source countries.

### Police Incident (Manchester)

**Mr. Blizzard:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the incident of alleged police brutality in Greater Manchester shown on television news in the week beginning on 16 February. [157303]

**Ms Blears:** The incident is being investigated by West Yorkshire Police, under the supervision of the Police Complaints Authority.

It would not be appropriate to comment on this case while the investigation is on-going.

### Police Support Staff

**John Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the duties performed by police support staff; and if he will make a statement on their effectiveness in supporting the work of the Metropolitan Police. [157331]

**Ms Blears:** Police staff perform a valuable role in the policing of London. The Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis informs me that as of the end of December 2003, there were 543 Traffic wardens, 1,157 community support officers and 11,772 other police staff working for the Metropolitan Police Service. They have a wide range of duties, with many of them in direct support of operational policing.

### Registered Doorkeepers

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the areas in which the security industry regulations will be rolled out, broken down by date; how many persons are employed as doorkeepers in each area; how many places on courses designed to provide qualifications for registration there are; how many of these currently employed have already qualified for registration; and what contingency arrangements are in place to meet shortfalls in supply of registered doorkeepers. [157835]

**Ms Blears** *[holding answer 1 March 2004]:* The table details the rollout schedule for door supervisor licensing by the Security Industry Authority (SIA), along with estimated numbers of persons working as door supervisors.

| *Region* | *Application Start Date* | *SIA licence required from* | *Estimated number of door supervisors* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hampshire and Isle of Wight | 1 March 2004 | 4 June 2004 | 2,883 |
| South West | 1 June 2004 | 23 August 2004 | 7,742 |
| Wales | 14 June 2004 | 6 September 2004 | 4,380 |
| Midlands | 5 July 2004 | 18 October 2004 | 12,410 |
| North West | 9 August 2004 | 15 November 2004 | 10,589 |
| North East | 6 September 2004 | 13 December 2004 | 11,732 |
| East | 4 October 2004 | 3 January 2005 | 7,511 |
| South East | 25 October 2004 | 28 February 2005 | 19,366 |
| London | 3 January 2005 | 11 April 2005 | 11,272 |

Information about the number of training places is not held centrally, however, the SIA has received assurances from the awarding bodies that there will be sufficient capacity to meet demand in any given region prior to the onset of licensing in that region.

As at 13 February 2004, 137 individuals have successfully completed the SIA approved training course in Hampshire and the Isle of White and it is estimated that a further 300 meet the SIA competency requirements by virtue of their existing recognised training qualifications. These figures are subject to constant change as the rollout progresses.

Responsibility for ensuring that there are sufficient door supervisors to meet demand lies with the leisure industry and door supervisor providers. Under the provisions of the Licensing Act 2003, local authorities will be able to require that a specified number of SIA licensed door supervisors will be on duty at specified times as a condition of a premises licence. The SIA are continuing their communications campaigns to ensure the industry are aware of their responsibilities, and to encourage the highest level of participation in the scheme. With the SIA, we will monitor carefully the impact of licensing on the supply of door supervisors.

## Speed Cameras

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fines were issued for speeding camera convictions in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough in each year since 1997. [158442]

**Caroline Flint:** Available information on the number of fixed penalties and court fines for the offence of 'speeding detected by camera' in the calendar years 1997 to 2001 is shown in the table for Greater London. It is not possible from the data collected centrally to identify each London Borough.

Information for 2002 will be available in the Spring.

*Fines and fixed penalties data for speeding Offences detected by camera[1,2] within Greater London[3], 1997—2001*

| | *Total fined at all courts* | *Fixed Penalty Notices issued* |
|---|---|---|
| 1997 | 2,500 | 15,300 |
| 1998 | 2,900 | 14,200 |
| 1999 | 2,600 | 13,000 |
| 2000 | 2,200 | 44,100 |
| 2001 | 4,500 | 52,100 |

[1] Automatic cameras until 1998, all camera types from 1999
[2] Offences under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and The Motor Vehicles (Speed Limits on Motorways) Regulations 1973.
[3] The Metropolitan and City of London police combined.
[4] Includes cases where fixed penalty notices were originally issued but not paid and subsequently referred to court.

## Telecommunications Masts

**Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received about the advice given in PPG8: Telecommunications, that where proposals to locate telecommunications masts meet with the standards of the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection, it should not be necessary for a local planning authority to consider further health effects of the proposal. [158274]

**Keith Hill:** I have been asked to reply.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister receives many representations on matters relating to the telecommunications industry. The information about representations and responses to such representations is not readily available in the breakdown requested and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

## Traffic Wardens

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many traffic wardens were operating in police authority areas in each of the last 15 years, listed in descending order according to the biggest disparity between the first and last year. [158072]

**Caroline Flint:** The number of traffic wardens employed by each of the police authorities in England and Wales for the last four years is given in the table, which also shows the percentage increase or decrease in numbers between the first and last years. Figures for the years prior to 1999–2000 are not recorded centrally.

Under the provisions of the Road Traffic Act 1991, local authorities can apply for parking restrictions in their areas to be decriminalised and enforced by the authority under civil law. Many have now done so, and this has helped lead to a marked decline in traffic warden numbers.

*Selected Indicators* — *Traffic Wardens*

| *Values* | *1999–2000* | *2000–01* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* | *Percentage Decrease* | *Increase* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Forces* | | | | | | |
| Dorset | 41 | 37 | 12 | 0 | 100 | |
| North Yorkshire | 19 | 12 | 10 | 0 | 100 | |
| Cumbria | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | |
| Kent | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 | |
| Bedfordshire | 9 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 77.7 | |
| Essex | 102 | 82 | 59 | 38 | 62.7 | |
| Staffordshire | 24 | 17 | 12 | 10 | 58.3 | |
| West Midlands | 175 | 128 | 78 | 74 | 57.7 | |
| Northamptonshire | 16 | 11 | 7 | 7 | 56.2 | |
| Wiltshire | 15 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 53.5 | |
| Hampshire | 53 | 53 | 31 | 25 | 52.8 | |

*Selected Indicators* — *Traffic Wardens*

| *Values* | *1999–2000* | *2000–01* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* | *Percentage Decrease* | *Increase* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Merseyside | 106 | 93 | 63 | 52 | 50.9 | |
| Nottinghamshire | 58 | 39 | 30 | 29 | 50 | |
| West Mercia | 30 | 23 | 21 | 15 | 50 | |
| Lancashire | 94 | 87 | 84 | 50 | 46.8 | |
| Cleveland | 13 | 10 | 12 | 7 | 46.1 | |
| Sussex | 110 | 98 | 62 | 61 | 44.5 | |
| North Wales | 12 | 12 | 8 | 7 | 41.7 | |
| Durham | 22 | 19 | 19 | 15 | 31.8 | |
| Thames Valley | 58 | 45 | 51 | 42 | 27.5 | |
| Avon and Somerset | 59 | 48 | 44 | 43 | 27.1 | |
| Cheshire | 25 | 20 | 20 | 19 | 24 | |
| Suffolk | 31 | 29 | 29 | 25 | 19.3 | |
| Metropolitan Police | 817 | 689 | 632 | 687 | 15.9 | |
| Northumbria | 70 | 72 | 71 | 59 | 15.7 | |
| West Yorkshire | 116 | 107 | 99 | 98 | 15.5 | |
| Norfolk | 37 | 33 | 34 | 33 | 12.1 | |
| Gloucestershire | 35 | 30 | 30 | 31 | 11.4 | |
| Gwent | 30 | 28 | 28 | 27 | 10 | |
| South Yorkshire | 62 | 71 | 77 | 68 | 9.6 | |
| Humberside | 53 | 51 | 51 | 48 | 9.4 | |
| Leicestershire | 67 | 65 | 72 | 61 | 8.9 | |
| Greater Manchester | 96 | 88 | 87 | 88 | 8.3 | |
| Hertfordshire | 38 | 45 | 42 | 35 | 7.8 | |
| Dyfed-Powys | 14 | 15 | 12 | 13 | 7.1 | |
| Surrey | 16 | 25 | 20 | 17 | 6.3 | |
| Devon and Cornwall | 119 | 110 | 101 | 103 | 5.1 | |
| Derbyshire | 50 | 44 | 50 | 48 | 4 | |
| South Wales | 100 | 104 | 100 | 99 | 1 | |
| City of London | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | — |
| Cambridgeshire | 35 | 38 | 36 | 35 | 0 | — |
| Lincolnshire | 20 | 21 | 21 | 21 | — | 5 |
| Warwickshire | 8 | 9 | 9 | 9 | — | 12.5 |

## TRANSPORT

### Aircraft Security

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he *(a)* has taken and *(b)* plans to take to protect British civil aircraft from man-portable projectile attack. [157058]

**Mr. McNulty:** Terrorist threats, including from man-portable air defence systems (MANPADs), are assessed on a continual basis and appropriate counter-measures are developed and reviewed accordingly. For the MANPAD threat this includes work on both ground-based and on-board security measures. It would not be appropriate on security grounds to disclose details about this work.

### Chorley Transport Interchange

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much Government funding was provided for the building of the Chorley transport interchange. [157715]

**Mr. McNulty:** The total Government borrowing approval provided to build the Chorley transport interchange was £3,731,000.

This includes the two separate contracts for the new Chorley bus interchange (£3.267million) and the refurbishment of Chorley railway station (£464,000).

### Cycling

**Mr. Nigel Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how much the Department spent on the promotion of cycle helmets in each of the last five years; and what assessment has been made of the cost-benefit achieved in terms of injuries prevented from *(a)* helmets and *(b)* other methods of reducing risk to cyclists; [158024]

(2) what monitoring methods are used to assess the effectiveness of cycle helmets in reducing the *(a)* number and *(b)* severity of head injuries; and whether these methods would detect changes in the number and severity of head injuries arising from increased use of cycle helmets. [158025]

**Mr. Jamieson:** Since the creation of the Department for Transport in May 2002, the following has been spent on cycle safety campaigns, which include the promotion of cycle helmet wearing.

*2002–03*

'Cyclesmart' campaign, targeting 7–11 year olds

£19,630

'Cyclesense' campaign, targeting teenage boys

£25,480

*2003–04*

'Cyclesmart' campaign

£26,450

'Cyclesense' campaign

£136,550

My Department commissioned research on the effectiveness of cycle helmets, including the relative risk of injury to cyclists with and without helmets, by way of a literature review, and this was published in November 2002 (Road Safety Research Report No.30), a copy of which was placed in the Library. The conclusion from the review was that helmets have been found to be effective at reducing the incidence and severity of head, brain and upper facial injury, particularly for children. A fully quantified cost benefit review comparing the effectiveness of helmets and other methods of reducing risk to cyclists is not possible since many measures, such as education, training and publicity, are not fully quantifiable. The Department therefore pursues a comprehensive package of measures. This is proving effective, and deaths and serious injuries to cyclists in 2002 were 34 per cent. down compared with the 1994–98 baseline for our Road Safety Strategy.

Our casualty data does not allow us to monitor the number and severity of head injuries due to increased use of helmets because it does not identify injury by specific parts of the body. However, in addition to the periodic monitoring we carry out of the wearing rates for cycling helmets, we plan to initiate further research to explore the possible relationship between cycling casualties and cycling levels to throw further light on this subject.

**Mr. Keetch:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to encourage cycling in the City of Hereford; and if he will make a statement. [158645]

**Mr. McNulty:** We have allocated Herefordshire Council just over £11 million to spend on local transport schemes throughout the district in 2004–05 under the Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) which includes measures to increase cycle usage. The Council's last annual progress report on its LTP showed a 4.8 per cent. increase in cycling in 2002–03. Hereford is also one of the seven shortlisted towns looking for support from the Department for a sustainable travel town initiative. Two towns will soon be selected to apply a package of measures to promote not only cycling, but also walking and public transport. We have budgeted £7.5 million for this initiative, which will run for five years.

### Dibden Bay Container Port

**Dr. Julian Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 26 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 529W, on the Dibden Bay container port proposal and the New Forest National Park proposal, for what reason he declined to state whether or not he would make it his policy not to announce his decision on the port before the result of the public inquiry into the National Park is known; and if he will make a statement. [158828]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The answer I gave on 26 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 529W, stated that the publication of the report of the public inquiry into the proposal for the creation of a New Forest National Park was a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

A decision on the proposal for a new container port at Dibden Bay must be taken under a different statutory process and the timing of an announcement should therefore be separate from that for an announcement on a national park. It would not be appropriate to make it a policy not to announce a decision on the port before publication of the New Forest inquiry report. Issues relating to the proposals for the creation of a New Forest National Park were addressed at the public inquiry into proposals for a container port at Dibden Bay.

### Integrated Kent Franchise

**Hugh Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish the passenger usage data for *(a)* Faversham, *(b)* Selling, *(c)* Lenham, *(d)* Harrietsham and *(e)* Hollingbourne that the Strategic Rail Authority used in the consultation document on the Integrated Kent franchise for Faversham. [158827]

**Mr. McNulty:** The figures in the table are expressed as passenger journeys per day, using data for the year ending March 2003, and are based on ticket sales for journeys which either start, finish or interchange at the stations concerned.

*Passenger data for year ending March 2003*

| | *Ticket sales* |
|---|---|
| Faversham | 5,205 |
| Selling | 173 |
| Lenham | 459 |
| Harrietsham | 180 |
| Hollingbourne | 105 |

*Source:*
South Eastern Trains

### Local Authority Grants (Lancashire)

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what grants were awarded by his Department to local authorities in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley in each of the last three financial years that fall outside the revenue support grant. [157266]

**Mr. McNulty:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Minister for Local Government and the Regions on 1 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 749W.

### Port Security

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he *(a)* has taken and *(b)* plans to take to (i) screen incoming cargo containers for chemical and biological agents and (ii) make available radiation detectors at ports. [157057]

**John Healey:** I have been asked to reply.

My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary is responsible for protective security. I am the Minister responsible for HM Customs and Excise who are primarily responsible for screening cargo entering the United Kingdom. Customs work closely with the Home Office and the Police on security at ports.

Incoming cargo is screened for a variety of illicit materials. The Government does not give detailed information about these procedures as this information may be useful to terrorists. In this connection Exemptions 1, 4 and 7 of the Code of Practice on Access

to Government Information apply. Following the announcement of new funds for counter-terrorism measures which the Chancellor made in last year's Budget (HC 500), Customs and the Home Office will be wording together to deploy screening equipment at UK points of entry to detect the illicit importation of radioactive materials.

### Railways

**Richard Ottaway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps are being taken to relieve overcrowding on services operated by *(a)* South Central and *(b)* Thameslink. [157863]

**Mr. McNulty:** Under the Strategic Rail Authority's new franchise agreement with Go Via, capacity will be increased when a new fleet of trains is provided on South Central services from 2005. The two-year extension of the Thameslink franchise, effective from 1 April 2004, incorporates an option to provide additional capacity and services primarily on the Wimbledon loop where the route is most constrained. This proposal is subject to securing additional rolling stock and meeting value for money and affordability considerations.

**Mr. Godsiff:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how his Department defines overcrowding in respect of rail travel. [158062]

**Mr. McNulty:** There is no definition for crowding on the railways. However, all rail operators are required to provide a frequency of service and adequate capacity to prevent excessive crowding and to have in place strategies for dealing with regular systematic crowding when it occurs.

**Mr. Truswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many railway carriages which could be returned to passenger use are in storage; where they are being stored; and what instructions he has given to the Strategic Railway Authority regarding the disposal of railway carriages which have the potential for re-use. [156171]

**Mr. McNulty:** Carriages capable of reuse are principally those being replaced by new trains on cross country and the west coast main line. Primary responsibility for deciding their future use, if any, lies with their owners and operators. However, the Strategic Rail Authority's Rolling Stock Strategy encourages the cascading of surplus carriages to other uses and there have already been cases where this has happened. The number in storage at any one time fluctuates as vehicles are progressively withdrawn from service and others are redeployed or scrapped.

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to make a statement on proposals for a crossing of the railway line at Beddingham on the A27. [158882]

**Mr. McNulty:** I announced the decision on the final proposals for the Southerham to Beddington stretch of the A27 yesterday. The hon. Gentleman and other interested parties were informed in the usual manner.

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will allow regional passenger transport authorities to bid to run franchises. [158763]

**Mr. McNulty:** Passenger Transport Authorities as local authorities are precluded from being franchisees by Section 25 of the Railways Act 1993. Only where a rail network has been designated as exempt from franchising, as with the Merseyrail network, can a Passenger Transport Authority be considered to run services on that network. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said in his statement to the House on 19 January that the current rail review would consider the scope for devolving more decision-making to the Passenger Transport Executives.

### Road Haulage Forum

**Mr. Damian Green:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the future of the road haulage forum. [158222]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The road haulage forum will continue to meet as long as all sides think it worthwhile. I expect the next meeting to be in April.

### Road Scheme Funding

**Mr. Damian Green:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what monitoring systems exist to ensure that funds allocated to local authorities for road improvement and maintenance schemes are not used for other purposes. [158233]

**Mr. McNulty:** Integrated Transport block and maintenance allocations are issued as part of the Single Capital Pot and are unringfenced to give authorities greater flexibility over how they spend their funds. Local authorities may spend the funding as they wish on the services they provide in line with local priorities and in order to deliver the targets in their local transport plans (LTPs). When we are considering future capital allocations for local authorities, one of the factors taken into account is how local authorities have spent their LTP allocations and their performance in delivering their targets.

The Chief Finance Officer of each local authority is required to complete an audit form each year to confirm what LTP resources have been used in the previous financial year. These returns are audited by the Audit Commission.

### Road Transport Directive

**Mr. Damian Green:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what procedures he plans to introduce to facilitate enforcement of the Road Transport Directive in respect of drivers of foreign registered vehicles operating in the United Kingdom. [158226]

**Mr. Jamieson:** Our approach to enforcing the Road Transport Directive is outlined in our consultation document, which was published on 21 October 2003 and entitled "Consultation on the UK's proposal for implementing the Working Time Directive for mobile workers in the Road Transport Sector". A copy is available in the House Libraries, or can be downloaded from the DfT website at www.dft.gov.uk/freight/rtd.

My officials are presently analysing replies from the consultation exercise and we should be able to announce the results and our approach to enforcement very shortly.

### Transport Action Clean-up Programme

**Mr. Kidney:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what funding has been *(a)* budgeted for and *(b)* spent on the Transport Action Clean-Up programme in each financial year since 2001–02; and what the budget is for 2004–05. [157916]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The CleanUp programme is one of the Transport Energy programmes administered by the Energy Saving Trust (others include Powershift and the New Vehicle Technology Fund). As such, funding for CleanUp must be balanced against requirements for all the Transport Energy programmes. In total, the DfT allocated £26 million to these three programmes in 2003–4 and has committed the same amount for 2004–5. Grant and budget funding allocated to the CleanUp programme since 2001–2 is shown in the table.

*£ million*

| | *Clear up grants budget* | *Clear up grants actual* |
|---|---|---|
| 2001–2 | 8.0 | 7.4 |
| 2002–3 | 10.0 | 8.4 |
| 2003–4 | 9.0 | 13.0 |
| 2004–5 | 7.0 | n/a |

To meet the increase in demand in 2003–4, the Trust has redirected funding from marketing and promotional activities to help meet the additional spend on grants.

### Speed Cameras

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what guidelines he issues regarding the positioning of speed cameras, with particular reference to mobile speed cameras. [156502]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The 'Handbook of rules and guidance for the operation of the national road safety camera programme for England and Wales', deals with the positioning of fixed and mobile speed cameras. Copies were placed in the Libraries of the House on 5 December 2003.

### Websites

**Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the cost in *(a)* financial and *(b)* other terms was in (i) each financial year since 1997 and (ii) 2003–04 until the latest date for which figures are available of (A) developing and (B) maintaining (1) his Department's website and (2) each website for which his Department is responsible; and how many (C) unique hosts and (D) hits there were in each month for each website in (iii) each financial year since 1997 and (iv) 2003–04 until the latest date for which numbers are available. [155852]

**Mr. McNulty:** The information requested has been placed in the Libraries of both Houses. The details in this response refer to the Department for Transport web site and associated web sites since late May 2002 when the Department came into existence. Similar details for previous years could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Development costs are provided for all sites. Costs in 'other terms' by which we understand you to mean staff overheads cannot be provided without incurring disproportionate cost.

In respect of (C) Unique hosts—we understand you to mean the number of 'hosting services' (virtual and dedicated) that we are contracted to use. The DfT is contracted to use one dedicated hosting service for all web sites referenced in this response.

# Written Answers to Questions

*Friday 5 March 2004*

## CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

### Katharine Gun

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what discussions he has had in the last 12 months with the Secretary of State for Defence on the Katharine Gun case. [158781]

**Mr. Leslie:** None.

## TRANSPORT

### Classic Cars (Vehicle Excise Duty)

**Mrs. May:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what extra revenue has accrued for each year since 1997; and what he estimates the projected extra revenue will be for the next 10 years, as a result of freezing the threshold of vehicle excise duty exemption for classic cars at the year 1973, compared with the rolling 25-year exemption previously in operation. [158218]

**Mr. Darling:** Since 1997 the Government have sought to restructure Vehicle Excise Duty so that it reflects the environmental impacts of vehicles. This is in keeping with the Government's aim to ensure that the UK meets its legally binding Kyoto targets for the reduction of carbon emissions. The rolling 25-year exemption was abolished in 1998 because it was inconsistent with this environmental focus.

Currently the VED exemption in respect of all vehicles registered before 1 January 1973 costs the Exchequer over £40 million per annum. If the rolling 25-year VED exemption for cars had continued to the present day, the additional costs to the Exchequer in terms of revenue foregone would have been close to £9 million in 2003–04 alone. The total additional cost since 1997 would have been a little over £20 million. Precise figures would require detailed analysis of vehicle stock data, including engine sizes of all extant 25 to 30-year-old vehicles. Future revenue implications will depend on vehicle ownership and use patterns, and in particular on how quickly older vehicles are scrapped.

### Cycling

**Mr. Paul Marsden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many miles of cycle paths there were in each year since 1997. [159316]

**Mr. McNulty:** The Department does not hold this information for the 1997–98 financial year. The following table lists cycle tracks and cycle lanes in kilometres constructed by local authorities for subsequent years.

*Number of cycle tracks and lanes from 1997–98 to 2002–03 (kilometres)*

| | *Cycle track* | *Cycle lane* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1998–99 | 210 | 145 | 355 |
| 1999–2000 | 221 | 178 | 399 |
| 2000–01 | 810 | 399 | 1,209 |
| 2001–02 | 804 | 405 | 1,209 |
| 2002–03 | 1,348 | 2,118 | 3,466 |

### Railways

**Linda Perham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent assessment he has made of the need for high-speed rail services. [156083]

**Mr. McNulty:** The Strategic Rail Authority discussed the feasibility of a north-south high-speed line in its Strategic Plan 2003 as part of its long-term planning. But the priority is for the railway to concentrate on improving its current performance on the existing network.

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the most recent figures are for *(a)* reliability, *(b)* punctuality, *(c)* public performance measures and *(d)* complaints for each train operator operating services in Greater London in each of the last five years. [158659]

**Mr. McNulty:** The Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) measures train performance by the Public Performance Measure (PPM) which combines reliability and punctuality. It is published by train operator in the SRA's quarterly National Rail Trends (NRT). The latest publication covers performance to the year ending 30 September 2003 and is placed in the Library of the House. The next edition, Quarter 3 2003–04, covering performance to 31 December 2003 will be published on 11 March.

Until March 2003, complaints data by train operator were published in the SRA's six monthly *On Track* publication. Copies of *On Track* are placed in the Library of the House. In future, complaints data by train operator will appear annually in Quarter 4 of NRT which will also act as an annual compendium of statistics. This will be published in the summer.

**Mr. Cummings:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the re-opening of railway stations at *(a)* Easington, *(b)* Colliery and *(c)* Horden. [159317]

**Mr. McNulty:** There are no current plans to re-open these stations.

**Mr. Webb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether Network Rail has exemption from the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 in respect of track maintenance work. [158909]

**Dr. Howells:** NR is bound by the provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). There is no specific exemption for Network Rail, but exceptions are provided which may sometimes be utilised by NR to maintain the safety and reliability of the railway.

### Road Improvements

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will estimate real terms cost inflation for road improvement projects in Greater London for each year since 1997. [158661]

**Mr. McNulty:** Information on real-terms cost inflation is not recorded on an annual basis for road projects. Since July 2000, Transport for London, under the Mayor, have been responsible for road improvement projects in London, excluding motorways, which remain the responsibility of the Highways Agency.

### Spitting

**Mr. Paul Marsden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what police procedures oversee the use of DNA kits issued by Metroline bus company used to identify spitting offenders. [159046]

**Mr. McNulty:** The London Borough of Brent's Operational Command Unit in partnership with Metroline will soon be piloting the use of DNA kits on buses to aid the identification of spitting offenders. Protocols as to the use of DNA kits are currently being established. This pilot scheme is expected to commence in April and is expected to run for six months.

### Transport Projects (London)

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the dates of the formal meetings he has had with the Mayor of London about transport projects in London. [158765]

**Mr. McNulty** *[holding answer 4 March 2004]:* The Secretary of State and other Ministers have regular meetings with the Mayor of London on a range of topics.

## CABINET OFFICE

### Cabinet (Disclosures)

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what *(a)* advice and *(b)* guidance is given to former members of the Cabinet concerning disclosures of (i) Cabinet deliberations and (ii) classified documents. [159407]

**Mr. Alexander:** The obligations on former Ministers are set out in paragraph 18 of the ministerial code. On leaving office, Ministers are reminded of these obligations.

### Correspondence

**Mr. Kaufman:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office when the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster will reply to the letter to him dated 8 January from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Ms V. Bromage. [157906]

**Mr. Alexander:** This correspondence was received for the first time in the Cabinet Office on 1 March. The issues raised are matters for the Department of Constitutional Affairs and your letter has therefore been passed to the noble Lord, the Lord Filkin who I understand will reply shortly.

### Ministerial Visits

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will place in the Library a list of the overseas visits undertaken by ministers in his Department since 1999 indicating in each case by *(a)* destination, *(b)* purpose of visit, *(c)* size of party, *(d)* composition of party, *(e)* cost to public funds of each party and *(f)* the capacity in which the Minister was sent. [159346]

**Mr. Alexander:** The Government have published the overall costs of all ministerial overseas travel and a list of all visits by Cabinet Ministers costing in excess of £500 on an annual basis since 1997. The last list for the period 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003 was published by the Prime Minister on 16 July 2003, *Official Report*, column 482W. The next list for the period 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004 will be published as soon as possible after the end of the financial year.

Copies of previous lists are available in the Library of the House.

### Online Services

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what recent representations he has received on the effectiveness of the Government's targets for the online delivery of services. [158045]

**Mr. Alexander:** The Government continue to receive representations from stakeholders on the 2005 e-delivery target.

In September 2002 this target was extended to focus on delivering benefits to customers by achieving high levels of use for key services.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### Abattoirs

**Mr. O'Hara:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many prosecutions were brought by her Department against abattoirs for breaches of *(a)* fresh meat hygiene regulations and *(b)* animal welfare regulations in each of the calendar years 2002 and 2003; how many separate charges were contained within these prosecutions; on how many of the charges convictions were secured; how many charges were withdrawn by her Department before they were determined by the courts; and what the total sum of legal costs incurred by her Department in the pursuit of these charges was. [158071]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Not all of the detailed information requested is recorded centrally, in particular how many charges were withdrawn, but a summary is provided in the following table. The information covers both this Department and the Food Standards Agency, which is responsible for meat hygiene prosecutions, as well as being involved with animal welfare cases.

| *Meat hygiene prosecutions* | *2002* | *2003* |
|---|---|---|
| Number of prosecutions | 6 | 10 |
| Charges on which convictions secured | 29 | 26 |
| Legal costs incurred in pursuit of the charges | 16,724 | 36,648 |

| *Meat hygiene prosecutions* | *2002* | *2003* |
|---|---|---|
| *Animal welfare prosecutions* | | |
| Number of prosecutions | 4 | 7 |
| Charges on which convictions secured | 7 | 42 |
| FSA legal costs incurred in pursuit of the charges | 14,187 | 19,907 |
| Defra legal costs incurred in pursuit of the charges | 3,392 | 4,999 |

### Animal Welfare

**Mr. David:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to improve the welfare of animals in slaughterhouses. [158641]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** There are extensive provisions in the Welfare of Animals (Slaughter or Killing) Regulations 1995 designed to protect the welfare of animals both immediately before, and during, the slaughter process. In addition the Farm Animal Welfare Council published a report in 2003 on the welfare of red meat animals at slaughter. The report included 94 recommendations for improving animal welfare. The Government will be issuing shortly for public consultation their draft response to these recommendations.

**Mr. David:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans the Government have to make compulsory the stunning of animals before religious slaughter. [158640]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** The Government's draft response to the recommendations in the Farm Animal Welfare Council's report on the welfare of red meat animals at slaughter, including the recommendation that all animals should be stunned prior to slaughter, will be issued for public consultation shortly.

### Bovine TB

**Mr. Paterson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 11 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1441W, on bovine TB, what criteria were used to assess the humaneness of the pesticide fumigants approved for the destruction of rabbits and moles. [158427]

**Alun Michael:** The Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986 (COPR) requires pesticides to be humane and this issue in relation to approved vertebrate control agents was considered by the Advisory Committee on Pesticides in 1996.

Quantification of "humaneness" was attempted using the assumptions

*(a)* that the extent to which a fumigant is humane is universally related to the degree of distress,

*(b)* that increased severity of symptoms indicates the degree of distress caused, and

*(c)* that increased duration of symptoms increased distress. Since effects resulting in the death of an intoxicated animal will probably involve severe symptoms at least in extremis, the duration of severe symptomatology is used as a major determinant in assessment of humaneness. For judging the severity of symptoms reported among the following data listed, the criteria described in "Pain and Distress in Laboratory Rodents and Lagomorphs: Report of the Federation of Laboratory Animal Science Associations Working Group on Pain and Distress" have been used as a guide.

The Working Group on Methods for Assessing the Humaneness of Vertebrate Pesticides concluded that pain, distress and suffering could not be measured objectively but that a subjective assessment of humaneness was possible, based on physiological and behavioural data, knowledge of mode of action and post-mortem reports.

The Littlewood report (1965) recommended that procedures (or in this case conditions) which are known to cause pain in humans should be assumed to do so in other vertebrates unless convincing evidence is available to the contrary.

### Cats

**Mr. Paterson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many incidents of disease in humans have been attributed to TB infection in cats. [158006]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** I have been asked to reply.

There have been no reported cases of tuberculosis infection in humans attributed to infection in cats.

### Cetaceans

**Andrew Mackinlay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the number of *(a)* dolphins and *(b)* porpoises killed each year (i) by British fishing vessels, (ii) in British waters, (iii) by vessels of other European Union countries and (iv) in European Union waters; and if she will make a statement. [156216]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** On the basis of research conducted on behalf of Defra by the Sea Mammal Research Unit, estimates have been made of bycatch in UK fisheries. In the offshore bass fishery total bycatches are of the order of 90 dolphins per year, which represents less than 0.1 per cent. of the most recent estimate of common dolphin abundance in the south-west. Annual porpoise bycatch totals for gill net and tangle net fisheries in the south west cannot be determined at present, but bycatch rates estimates are likely to be in the region of 500 porpoises per year. Porpoise bycatch estimates for the North Sea and the west of Scotland are around 490 animals per year.

However, bycatch information from other member states whose vessels operate in these fisheries and elsewhere around the UK is not available so it is not possible to produce reliable estimates of dolphin and porpoise bycatch deaths within the UK 200-mile limit. In particular, it should be noted that UK vessels in the offshore bass fishery in the south west represent only a small proportion of the total effort in the fishery.

### Cockle Beds

**Geraldine Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs under what powers, and for what reasons, the North-West and North Wales Sea Fisheries Committee may close cockle beds. [156858]

**Mr Bradshaw** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]*: The North-West and North Wales Sea Fisheries Committee may close cockle beds in their district for the purposes of fishery management or for controlling the rate of exploitation of the cockle stocks therein. The closure must be for a specified period and undertaken only after consultation with scientists and local cockle fishermen. Sea Fisheries Committees' byelaws are made under the Sea Fisheries Regulation Act 1966 (as amended).

### Department Branding

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much her Department and its predecessors spent on branding the Department between 1997–98 and 2003–04, broken down by *(a)* consultancy fees, *(b)* design and orders for new stationery, *(c)* website design and *(d)* other material featuring new logos. [154068]

**Alun Michael:** Defra spent the following sums on establishing a new identity since the Department was created in June 2001. Details of expenditure on branding within the predecessor departments could be obtained only at a disproportionate cost.

*Breakdown of branding costs*

| | £ |
|---|---|
| Scoping/consultancy | 122,620 |
| Identity design and Brand architecture | 48,000 |
| Web design | 18,460 |
| Other brand activity | 139,977 |
| 2002–03 total | 329,057 |
| | |
| Estimated cost of replacing signage | 100,000 |
| 2003–04 total | 100,000 |

### Horses

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many horses were *(a)* slaughtered for meat and *(b)* exported for slaughter in the last year for which figures are available. [157264]

**Alun Michael:** In 2003, 6,727 horses were slaughtered in licensed red meat slaughterhouses in England. I am advised that no live horses were exported for slaughter in 2003.

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs who will administer the National Equine Database. [156653]

**Alun Michael:** The National Equine Database will be jointly administered by industry and Defra though the precise mechanism has yet to be decided.

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what plans she has to revoke the minimum values legislation; [156664]

(2) if she will amend the minimum values legislation to prevent the export of live horses for slaughter. [156665]

**Alun Michael:** I wrote to the hon. Member on 14 November 2003 explaining our intention to review the minimum values legislation in the light of proposed changes to the European directive on the welfare of animals during transport. There appears to be some misapprehensions about the existing legislation which has been in place for many years. The minimum values legislation applies to certain types of working horse (but only if they are exported for work) and to ponies. It does not apply to other horses. We have considered carefully whether we could ban the export of horses for slaughter but this would be inconsistent with the approach taken consistently by successive Governments and we believe that we cannot restrict the free movement of horses which is why our focus has been on achieving improved regulation in the UK and across Europe to reduce cruelty and improve the welfare of animals during transport.

### Local Government Finance (Dorset)

**Jim Knight:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what grants were awarded to local authorities in Dorset by her Department in financial year 2003–04 that fall outside the revenue support grant. [156208]

**Alun Michael:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by the Minister of State at the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Raynsford) on 1 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 750W.

### Milk

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will set up a meeting with milk producers, representatives of supermarkets, dairy farmers and members of her Department to discuss farmgate prices of milk. [156507]

**Alun Michael:** Price negotiation between producers and processors, or processors and supermarkets, are a private commercial matter in which the Government cannot and should not get involved, as competition rules have to be respected. It would be inappropriate for me to discuss private price negotiations and I have no plans to do so. However, Ministers frequently meet representatives from all parts of the dairy supply chain and are therefore aware of the issues. The Dairy Supply Chain Forum, chaired by my noble Friend Lord Whitty, has been looking at collaborative solutions to improve supply chain efficiency, and address some of the other underlying causes of low farmgate prices.

### Persistent and Bioaccumulative Chemicals

**Mr. Lazarowicz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the controls contained in the proposed EU chemicals regulation on the use of persistent and bioaccumulative chemicals. [158953]

**Alun Michael:** The European Commission proposes that substances of very high concern shall not be used unless an authorisation for that use has been granted to the user or supplier. Substances of very high concern are defined as carcinogens, mutagens and substances toxic to the reproductive system (CMRs) categories 1 or 2; substances which are persistent, bioaccumulative and

toxic (PBT); very persistent and very bioaccumulative (vPvB); or substances, such as those having endocrine disrupting properties or those having PBT and vPvB properties which do not meet the above criteria and which are identified as causing serious and irreversible effects to humans or the environment on a case by case basis.

The Government support the aims of the authorisation process to ensure that the risks from substances of high concern are properly controlled and that these substances may be eventually replaced by suitable substances or technologies with the aim of reducing risks to human health and the environment. The Government welcome the inclusion of substances meeting the PBT criteria as being subject to the authorisation procedure.

### Pesticides

**Mr. Paterson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the mode of action of *(a)* aluminium phosphide and *(b)* hydrogen cyanide is in terms of its effects on small mammals when used as a pesticide. [157930]

**Alun Michael:** The following modes of action apply to all mammals, not just small ones.

*(a) Phosphine:*

The primary mode of toxic action of phosphine is considered to be inhibition of cytochrome oxidase in the respiratory metabolism pathway, with additional direct cytotoxicity. Exposure to high concentrations of phosphine leads in vertebrates to a profound fall in blood pressure, followed by death. Lower concentrations cause pulmonary oedema and respiratory failure which may be fatal.

*(b) Hydrogen Cyanide:*

Cyanide combines with the ferric iron atom in haem proteins (eg cytochromes) in vertebrate tissues, impairing their capacity to undergo oxidation and reduction in the normal electron transport process. It can cause death extremely rapidly, primarily by inactivating cytochrome oxidase in tissues.

### Poultry

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in what circumstances the Little Red Tractor mark could be awarded to chicken produced in Thailand. [156651]

**Alun Michael:** The Red Tractor is a privately-owned logo which is administered by an independent company, Assured Food Standards. The logo can be used only under licence from that company and only on food that is produced in accordance with standards laid down in an assurance scheme approved by the company, by a member of such a scheme. We understand that no chicken produced in Thailand meets these eligibility requirements.

### Seriously Disadvantaged Areas

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which constituencies are in severely disadvantaged areas. [156112]

**Alun Michael:** The severely disadvantaged areas are those areas of land within less favourable areas of the UK, which are handicapped, principally by reason of high altitude, harsh climate, short growing season, low fertility, difficult topography or remoteness. They are defined in statutory maps and in England lie within the following constituencies:

Barnsley West and Penistone County Constituency
Barrow and Furness County Constituency
Berwick-Upon-Tweed County Constituency
Bishop Auckland County Constituency
Blackburn Borough Constituency
Bolton North East Borough Constituency
Bolton West County Constituency
Bradford South Borough Constituency
Bradford West Borough Constituency
Bridgwater County Constituency
Burnley Borough Constituency
Burton County Constituency
Bury North Borough Constituency
Calder Valley County Constituency
Chorley County Constituency
City of Durham County Constituency
Colne Valley County Constituency
Copeland County Constituency
Halifax Borough Constituency
Hazel Grove County Constituency
Hereford County Constituency
Hexham County Constituency
Heywood and Middleton County Constituency
High Peak County Constituency
Huddersfield Borough Constituency
Hyndburn Borough Constituency
Keighley County Constituency
Lancaster and Wyre County Constituency
Leominster County Constituency
Ludlow County Constituency
Macclesfield County Constituency
Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland County Constituency
Morecambe and Lunesdale County Constituency
North Cornwall County Constituency
North Devon County Constituency
North East Derbyshire County Constituency
North Shropshire County Constituency
North West Durham County Constituency
Oldham East and Saddleworth County Constituency
Pendle Borough Constituency
Penrith and The Border County Constituency
Pudsey Borough Constituency
Ribble Valley County Constituency
Richmond (Yorks) County Constituency
Rochdale County Constituency
Rossendale and Darwen Borough Constituency
Ryedale County Constituency
Scarborough and Whitby County Constituency
Sheffield, Hallam County Constituency
Sheffield, Hillsborough County Constituency
Shipley County Constituency
Shrewsbury and Atcham County Constituency

Skipton and Ripon County Constituency
South East Cornwall County Constituency
South West Devon County Constituency
St. Ives County Constituency
Staffordshire Moorlands County Constituency
Stalybridge and Hyde County Constituency
Stone County Constituency
Taunton County Constituency
Teignbridge County Constituency
Tiverton and Honiton County Constituency
Torridge and West Devon County Constituency
Totnes County Constituency
Truro and St. Austell County Constituency
Vale of York County Constituency
Wakefield County Constituency
West Derbyshire County Constituency
Westmorland and Lonsdale County Constituency
Workington County Constituency

### Sheep Quota

**Mr. Roger Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many units of United Kingdom sheep quota were leased-out but remained unused by the recipient farmers in *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04. [158431]

**Alun Michael:** The number of sheep quota units leased out in England is set out in the following table. These figures relate to the 2003 and 2004 sheep quota trading periods respectively. The figure for 2004 is an interim figure because the trading period closed on 4 February 2004 and a proportion of notifications remain to be processed.

| *Year* | *Units leased* |
|---|---|
| 2002–03 | 822.057 |
| 2003–04 | 428,424 |

It is not possible to confirm the number of leased quota units that recipient farmers did not use to support sheep premium payments. This is not monitored as there is no requirement in European legislation for farmers to use quota they have leased in.

The information for other countries within the UK is a matter for their respective Devolved Assemblies.

### Single Farm Payments

**Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what assessment she has made of the impact of her proposed arrangement for single farm payments upon land values *(a)* before and *(b)* after 2012; [157102]

(2) what assessment she has made of the impact of her proposed arrangement for single farm payments upon *(a)* intensive dairy, *(b)* extensive dairy, *(c)* intensive beef, *(d)* extensive beef, *(e)* intensive suckler cow, *(f)* extensive suckler cow, *(g)* intensive sheep and *(h)* extensive sheep farming systems (i) before and (ii) after the end of the transitional period in 2012; [157127]

(3) what assessment she has made of the impact of her proposed arrangement for single farm payments upon *(a)* intensive mixed and *(b)* extensive mixed holdings (i) before and (ii) after 2012; [157129]

(4) what assessment she has made of the anticipated per hectare payments to farmers in England under her proposals for single farm payments after 2012 for farms *(a)* within and *(b)* outside severely disadvantaged areas; [157103]

(5) if she will publish each of the assessments her Department made of the anticipated impact of her preferred option for the further payment of single farm payments *(a)* during and *(b)* after the transitional period; [157104]

(6) what assessment she has made of the impact of her proposed arrangement for single farm payments upon farms of *(a)* supported crops and arable and *(b)* unsupported crops and arable (i) before and (ii) after 2012; [157130]

(7) what assessment she has made of the impact of her proposed arrangement for single farm payments upon farm gate prices across each sector *(a)* before and *(b)* after 2012; [157131]

(8) what assessment she has made of the impact of her proposed arrangement for single farm payments upon *(a)* the future structure of farming, *(b)* farm and farmland ownership, *(c)* agricultural productivity, *(d)* agricultural profitability, *(e)* farm gate prices across all main sectors, *(f)* the viability of the present farm structure, *(g)* the future number of farms and *(h)* the future number of agriculture and agriculture-related jobs; [157123]

(9) what assessment she has made of the impact of her proposed arrangement for single farm payments upon *(a)* farm tenancies and *(b)* farm rents (i) before and (ii) after 2012; [157124]

(10) what assessment she has made of the impact of her proposed arrangement for single farm payments upon *(a)* traditional, *(b)* small, *(c)* part-time and *(d)* family farms in England (i) before and (ii) after 2012; [157132]

(11) what assessment she has made of the impact of her proposed arrangement for single farm payments upon *(a)* new entrants and *(b)* farmers seeking to retire during the period (i) up to and (ii) beyond 2012; [157133]

(12) what assessment she has made of the impact of her proposed arrangement for single farm payments upon the preponderance of tenanted *(a)* farms and *(b)* farmland (i) before and (ii) after 2012; [157125]

(13) what assessment she has made of the impact of her proposed arrangement for single farm payments upon the *(a)* viability and *(b)* number of farms in (i) upland and (ii) severely disadvantaged areas. [157126]

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the impact of single farm payments on *(a)* farms that are rented, *(b)* owner farms, *(c)* upland farms, *(d)* middlehill farms, *(e)* lowland farms, *(f)* dairy farms, *(g)* beef farms, *(h)* sheep farms, *(i)* arable farms and *(j)* mixed farms, in Chorley. [157704]

**Alun Michael:** Defra will publish shortly an analysis of the economic impact on the English farming industry of the decoupling of CAP direct payment and the decision to allocate entitlement on the basis set out in the Secretary of State's Statement to the House on 12 February.

## DEFENCE

### Afghanistan

**Tom Brake:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on UK troop levels in Afghanistan. [156737]

**Mr. Hoon:** We currently have around 490 members of the armed forces deployed in Afghanistan, mostly serving with either the International Security Assistance Force in Kabul, or with our Provincial Reconstruction Team in Mazar-e Sharif.

### A400M

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the A400M will be delivered; and how many aircraft have been procured. [157564]

**Mr. Ingram:** The in-service date of the A400M (defined as acceptance into service of the seventh aircraft) is 2011. We expect delivery of the final (twenty-fifth) aircraft to be in 2015.

### Aircraft Carriers

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to reduce the size of the proposed new aircraft carriers. [154627]

**Mr. Ingram:** The Future Carrier programme is currently in its Assessment Phase. The Department has not sought to fix the dimensions of the aircraft carriers during this stage. Instead, parameters such as the ships' size will reflect the design required to meet our capability requirements. It is to be expected that the design of the ships will evolve as the Department seeks to balance, in conjunction with industry, overall performance, time and cost as part of normal Assessment Phase activity.

### Defence Logistics Organisation

**Mr. Djanogly:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects the assessment of the feasibility of co-locating additional parts of the Defence Logistics Organisation alongside or close to the existing Ministry of Defence site at Abbey Wood in Bristol to be completed. [157312]

**Mr. Ingram:** I expect to make an announcement on this issue before the summer. This will need to be followed by more detailed work on the development of options for possible collocation.

### Eurofighter Typhoon

**Norman Lamb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when Initial Operating Capability on the Eurofighter Typhoon is intended to be achieved; what the Beneficial Use Date for the Typhoon is; and if he will make a statement. [156955]

**Mr. Ingram:** Typhoon will provide a meaningful "initial operating capability" when squadron pilots can begin training. At this point it is considered that they will begin to contribute to defence outputs, and this therefore signifies the Beneficial Use Date for accounting purposes. This is currently planned to be achieved during 2005.

**Norman Lamb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he is seeking liquidated damages for the delays to the entry into service of the Eurofighter Typhoon; and if he will make a statement. [156956]

**Mr. Ingram:** Liquidated damages for the delays to the entry into service of Typhoon will be recovered in accordance with our entitlements under the contracts.

### Irish Guards (Kenya Exercise)

**Hugh Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on 1 Battalion, the Irish Guards exercise in Kenya planned for autumn 2004. [159265]

**Mr. Ingram:** It is currently planned that 1st Battalion, the Irish Guards will conduct training at Archer's Post, in Kenya, on Exercise GRAND PRIX over the period 16 September—27 October 2004.

Exercise GRAND PRIX is a battalion group infantry exercise, and provides an opportunity for the Battalion to develop further its collective training skills, while suitably balancing its other activities in 2004, which are focussed on Public and State Ceremonial Duties in London.

### MOD Fire Service

**Dr. Julian Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to make *(a)* a decision and *(b)* an announcement on whether the Ministry of Defence Fire Service will be retained or privatised. [158692]

**Mr. Ingram** *[holding answer 4 March 2004]:* This issue is being considered as part of the Airfield Support Services Project, which is seeking to establish the most cost-effective method of maintaining a full airfield support service including management and administration, without compromising operational capability and/or safety. No decision has yet been made about the outcome of this project and we will only do so following full and careful considerations of all the options. Although we are moving towards this point, I am not yet in a position to say exactly when this will be.

**Dr. Julian Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate he has made of the comparative cost per firefighter per hour during the firefighters' strike of emergency cover by an armed forces' firefighter and a firefighter employed by a private firm under contract to his Department. [158693]

**Mr. Ingram** *[holding answer 4 March 2004]:* The full cost of using armed forces fire fighters during the fire fighters strike was approximately £17 per hour. No fire fighters employed by private contractors under contract to this Department were deployed on such duties.

**Dr. Julian Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what surveys his Department have undertaken to assess the willingness of firefighters employed by private contractors to serve in war zones during hostilities. [158694]

**Mr. Ingram** *[holding answer 4 March 2004]:* As part of Fire Study 2000, a comprehensive investigation into the organisation of the Department's fire services, a survey was carried out to assess whether fire fighters engaged directly by the Department, and those employed by private contractors, would be willing to serve as Sponsored Reserves, which could involve serving overseas in hostile environments.

No other specific surveys of fire fighters have been carried out by the Department.

**Dr. Julian Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what insurance cover is given to *(a)* his Department's fire service personnel and *(b)* privately contracted firefighters when attending (i) road traffic accidents and (ii) other civil emergencies. [158695]

**Mr. Ingram** *[holding answer 4 March 2004]:* The Ministry of Defence does not purchase insurance policies but pays claims for compensation directly from its current expenditure. Claims are paid in accordance with the Department's legal liability to make payment.

MOD Fire Fighters are covered for compensation if they should suffer injury or death as a result of negligence on the part of MOD while attending road traffic accidents or other civil emergencies to the same extent as when they are carrying out other official duties. Similarly, if MOD Fire Fighters were to cause injury or death to another individual, or damage to property belonging to another person, while attending road traffic accidents then MOD, not the fire fighter involved, would be liable to pay compensation to that person.

If MOD Fire Fighters should suffer injury or death as a result of negligence on the part of another person or organisation then MOD would not be legally liable to pay them compensation. Instead they, or their estate, would have to claim from the person concerned. However MOD does have a scheme called ToPaS, under which legal advice and assistance can be obtained, without cost, to enable a claim to be brought.

Under the rules governing Military Aid to the Civil Community, MOD requires local authorities to indemnify the Department against any costs, such as paying compensation, which may be incurred in providing Aid, such as attending road

traffic accidents.

Where the fire service is provided to the Department by a private contractor then it is the contractor who is responsible for making all the necessary insurance arrangements for their employees.

### Officers (Leave)

**Mr. Keetch:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* majors and *(b)* brigadiers are between postings; how long each has been on leave; and if he will make a statement. [156073]

**Mr. Ingram:** Less than five Regular Army officers in these ranks are between postings on compassionate leave, unpaid leave or awaiting placement. None of the periods between postings have lasted longer than eight months to date.

Due to the low numbers involved this information cannot be broken down by Rank or duration because this could identify individuals and breach disclosure and confidentiality policy.

**Mr. Keetch:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many senior officers are between postings in the *(a)* RAF and *(b)* Royal Navy, broken down by (i) rank and (ii) length of time on leave; and if he will make a statement. [156074]

**Mr. Ingram:** As at 1 March 2004, there are currently no senior officers in the RAF between postings and on leave.

In the Navy, as at 1 February 2004 there was one Commander between postings who had been waiting for a new post for seven days.

### Procurement Programmes

**Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on progress with introducing *(a)* the Viking all-terrain protected vehicle for the Royal Marines, *(b)* the Army's Boxer Multi-role Armoured Vehicle and *(c)* the Defence Information Infrastructure Programme. [157285]

**Mr. Ingram:** Deliveries of the Viking all-terrain protected vehicle continue according to programme, with 27 vehicles delivered to date. The In Service Date remains on track for April 2004 when 30 vehicles are due to have been delivered. A pilot Operator/Maintainer course has begun at the Armoured Training Centre, Bovington, to support the introduction of this equipment.

On the Multi-role Armoured Vehicle, I refer my hon. Friend to the statement I made on 17 July 2003, *Official Report*, column 71WS, about the UK's decision to withdraw from this tri-national programme.

The Defence Information Infrastructure Programme (DIIP) is progressing well. The procurement of the Future Defence Information Infrastructure is also progressing well. The Future DII team are currently in negotiations with three short-listed bidders and are on target for announcement of the preferred bidder in early 2005. Commencement of delivery is due to follow during 2005, with Full Operating Capability expected in 2008.

### Service Postal Deliveries (Iraq)

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what factors underlay the decision to cancel the facility for service people in Iraq to receive parcels from home free of charge. [158777]

**Mr. Ingram:** The postal packet service, whereby named service personnel on Operation Telic were able to receive packets weighing up to 2 kg from friends and relatives free of charge, was introduced at a time when a combination of the austere conditions and the operational situation meant that service personnel did not have access to the toiletries and consumables normally available through the Expeditionary Forces Institute (the deployable arm of NAAFI). By April 2004 the rollout of Expeditionary Forces Institute facilities will be complete allowing service personnel full access to toiletries and small consumables. In addition the Operational Welfare Package is now fully deployed; this includes: a free 20 minute phone call to anywhere in the world once a week, free access to the internet, a period of rest and recuperation of two weeks in a six month deployment, a generous allocation of TVs and radios to enable access to the British Forces Broadcasting Service, videos and DVDs, free books and access to leisure facilities that include gymnasia. Personnel still receive free aerogramme letters (blueys) and e-letters (e-blueys). While the concession for free packets has been withdrawn, packets weighing up to 2 kg can still be sent at a concessionary rate of £7.23, equivalent to the Royal Mail first class inland rate. Continued provision of the free postal packet service cannot be justified under these circumstances and when other operations in other parts of the world are not in receipt of this service.

### Typhoon

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what funding was given to fund the original design work for Typhoon to operate off aircraft carriers. [158504]

**Mr. Ingram:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 2 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 795W.

## HEALTH

### Alcohol Abuse

**Sandra Gidley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what his Department's policy is on seeking to prevent alcohol-related harm among older people; [157366]

(2) what assessment he has made of the extent of alcohol abuse among older people. [157367]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** 21 per cent. of men and 12 per cent. of women aged over 65 drink on a daily basis, although the vast majority of do not misuse alcohol.

The Government's Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for England due to be published shortly will set the future direction for the development of alcohol prevention and treatment for all groups in the population, including older people.

The Government also recently launched "Choosing Health?", a consultation on improving people's health. The consultation will seek views on the role that Government, the national health service, the media, other organisations and people themselves can play in making the nation healthier. The consultation will offer the opportunity to have a wide ranging national debate about improving the health of all, including older people.

### Bed Rails

**Sandra Gidley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency will ensure that bed rails with more than 120mm between the rails will no longer be used in the NHS and in care homes; and if he will make a statement. [158056]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)'s role is to provide guidance to the National Health Service and care providers regarding safety and best practice of medical devices and healthcare products. NHS trusts and care homes have a responsibility to act upon MHRA advice and ensure that with reference to the MHRA Medical Device Alert MDA 2004/007, they do not have beds with twin bar rails as described either in use or in storage. Within the social and independent care sectors, the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) is currently responsible to ensure that operators act upon MHRA's advice, where relevant, during their routine inspections of these establishments. This role will be taken over by the Commission for Social Care Inspection in April 2004.

### Body Mass Index

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he list the average body mass index in *(a)* England, *(b)* each region and *(c)* each strategic health authority in 2002. [156285]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Figures for average body mass index for adults and children in England and by region for 2002 are available from the Health Survey for England and are shown in the table. Figures by strategic health authority are not available.

*Mean body mass index (BMI) by Government Office Region and Sex*

*All with a valid height and weight measurement 2002* *Percentage*

| | *Government Office Regions* | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *BMI (kg/m2)* | *North East* | *North West* | *Yorks and The Humber* | *West Midlands* | *East Midlands* | *East of England* | *London* | *South East* | *South West* | *England* |
| Men aged 16+ | 27.7 | 26.9 | 27.3 | 27.4 | 27.3 | 27.2 | 25.9 | 26.8 | 26.6 | 26.9 |
| Women aged 16+ | 26.8 | 26.8 | 26.7 | 27.4 | 27.3 | 27.3 | 26.6 | 26.2 | 26,0 | 26.7 |
| Boys aged 0–15[1] | 18.8 | 18.0 | 17.6 | 18.3 | 18.2 | 17.9 | 18.2 | 18.0 | 18.0 | 18.1 |
| Girls aged 0–15[1] | 19.0 | 18.8 | 18.3 | 18.6 | 18.6 | 18.1 | 18.7 | 18.3 | 18.0 | 18.5 |

*Mean body mass index (BMI) by Government Office Region and Sex*

*All with a valid height and weight measurement 2002* *Percentage*

| | Government Office Regions | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *BMI (kg/m2)* | *North East* | *North West* | *Yorks and The Humber* | *West Midlands* | *East Midlands* | *East of England* | *London* | *South East* | *South West* | *England* |
| *Bases* | | | | | | | | | | |
| Men | 170 | 462 | 331 | 263 | 291 | 343 | 337 | 466 | 306 | 2,969 |
| Women | 222 | 505 | 387 | 355 | 344 | 330 | 411 | 564 | 337 | 3,509 |
| Boys | 225 | 568 | 437 | 353 | 372 | 415 | 475 | 638 | 355 | 3,868 |
| Girls | 223 | 536 | 390 | 398 | 316 | 428 | 487 | 619 | 378 | 3,776 |

[1] Age rounded to the nearest integer.

*Source:*

Health Survey for England, Department of Health.

## Breast Feeding

**Sandra Osborne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures are being taken to promote guidance on, and the benefits of breast feeding to new mothers in the hospital setting. [157998]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The NHS Priorities and Planning Framework target to increase breastfeeding initiation rates by two percentage points a year between 2003 and 2006, focussing on disadvantaged groups, supported by the Commission for Health Improvement's Infant Health Indicator, will encourage primary care trusts and their maternity services to promote breastfeeding in the hospital setting.

The Department provides advice and guidance on breastfeeding and related issues to mothers and health professionals through a variety of publications. In addition, the Department will be providing advice and guidance, drawing from existing best practice, to health professionals as part of this year's National Breastfeeding Awareness Week between 9 and 15 May.

## Cancer Treatment

**Mrs. Calton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what plans he has to publish information on waiting times for treatment of cancers not covered by NHS Cancer Plan targets before 2005; [157771]

(2) what progress has been made towards meeting the targets for cancer treatment in the NHS Cancer Plan. [157773]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The primary purpose of the NHS Cancer Plan is to save more lives. Reducing waiting times is key to achieving this. The ultimate goal in the NHS Cancer Plan is to offer patients a maximum one month wait from an urgent referral for suspected cancer to the beginning of treatment. Where patients wait longer, this should be because of the needs of the diagnostic process or their personal choice, not because of in-built delays in the system of care. We hope to achieve this goal by 2008.

Current waiting times targets are milestones towards this. Data on achievement of current targets from urgent general practitioner referral to treatment for acute leukaemia, children's and testicular cancers and breast cancer and from diagnosis to treatment for breast cancer, are published quarterly on the Department's website for strategic health authorities and trusts, at: http://www.performance.doh.gov.uk/cancerwaits. Data on achievement of future cancer plan waiting times targets of one month from diagnosis to treatment and two months from urgent general practitioner referral to treatment for all cancers will be published once these targets have been implemented in 2005.

**Mrs. Calton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment his Department has made of the incidence of melanoma by *(a)* age group and *(b)* strategic health authority. [157800]

**Ruth Kelly:** I have been asked to reply.

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from John Pullinger to Mrs. Calton, dated 5 March 2004:*

The latest year for which figures are available is 2000. The numbers and rates of newly diagnosed cases of melanoma of the skin by age group are published in 'Cancer statistics: registrations, England 2000. Series MB1 no.31. London: The Stationery Office, 2003' on the National Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=8843&Pos=4&ColRank=1&Rank=240 This publication shows that 17 per cent. of melanoma cases occurred in young adults (15–39 years) compared with 4 per cent. of all cancers.

Directly age standardised registration rates of newly diagnosed cases of-malignant melanoma of the skin[2] in England by strategic health authority for 2000 are given in the table.

*Directly age standardised[1] rates per 100,000 population of newly diagnosed cases of malignant melanoma of the skin[2] in England, by strategic health authority, 2000*

| *Strategic health authority* | *Males* | *Females* |
|---|---|---|
| England | 9.7 | 11.2 |
| Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire | 10.8 | 11.4 |
| Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire | 9.3 | 10.0 |
| Essex | 9.6 | 13.5 |
| North West London | 6.6 | 5.5 |
| North Central London | 15.1 | 15.1 |
| North East London | 7.2 | 4.4 |
| South East London | 8.3 | 8.8 |
| South West London | 10.0 | 12.7 |
| Northumberland, Tyne and Wear | 6.4 | 8.9 |
| County Durham and Tees Valley | 9.3 | 10.9 |
| North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire | 4.3 | 7.2 |
| West Yorkshire | 7.8 | 9.5 |
| Cumbria and Lancashire | 11.3 | 11.2 |
| Greater Manchester | 8.1 | 11.0 |
| Cheshire and Merseyside | 7.5 | 13.9 |
| Thames Valley | 14.8 | 17.1 |
| Hampshire and Isle of Wight | 12.2 | 15.7 |
| Kent and Medway | 8.4 | 7.8 |
| Surrey and Sussex | 10.0 | 13.8 |
| Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire | 11.7 | 13.1 |
| South West Peninsula | 17.7 | 15.8 |
| Dorset and Somerset | 15.2 | 17.2 |
| South Yorkshire | 6.9 | 8.3 |
| Trent | 8.6 | 9.5 |
| Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland | 9.9 | 11.3 |

*Directly age standardised[1] rates per 100,000 population of newly diagnosed cases of malignant melanoma of the skin[2] in England, by strategic health authority, 2000*

| Strategic health authority | Males | Females |
|---|---|---|
| Shropshire and Staffordshire | 7.0 | 9.3 |
| Birmingham and the Black Country | 7.5 | 8.7 |
| Coventry, Warwickshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire | 11.1 | 10.3 |

[1] Using the European standard population
[2] International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) code C43.
*Source:*
Office for National Statistics

## Capital Projects

**Mr. Luff:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) for what reasons he imposed a retrospective cut-off date for approvals for local capital projects proposed by primary care trusts; [157962]

(2) how many primary care trusts have informed his Department of the possible cancellation of local capital projects as a result of *(a)* the decision to change the method of funding allocations and *(b)* the imposition of a retrospective cut-off date. [157964]

**Mr. Hutton:** Significant new revenue funding will be made available to support public and private capital investment in the primary care estate, based on local prioritisation of development proposals. Baseline allocations for 2004–05 have been notified to all primary care trusts, and these take account of new developments contractually agreed by 30 September 2003. This date was set to allow sufficient time for robust baselines to be established and notified to PCTs. An additional element of growth funding to support prioritised developments contractually agreed after that date will be allocated to lead-PCTs.

We are not aware that any schemes have been cancelled at this time.

## Chiropody Statistics

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out for *(a)* England and *(b)* each strategic health authority the KT23 statistics for each year since 1996. [144757]

**Dr. Ladyman:** The available information is published in NHS Chiropody Services, Summary Information for 2002–03, England and is available in the Library and at http://www.doh.gov.uk/public/kt230203. The tables show England figures for 1996–97 to 2002–03 and strategic health authority (SHA) figures for 2002–03; SHAs came into existence in April 2002 and comparable data for earlier years are not readily available due to service reconfigurations.

*Chiropody contacts, England, 1996–97 to 2002–03*

*England* *Thousand*

| | Initial contacts (new episodes of care) | First contacts (different persons receiving care) | Total face-to-face contacts[1] |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1996–97 | 966 | 2,447 | 8,352 |
| 1997–98 | 927 | 2,419 | 8,305 |
| 1998–99 | 878 | 2,362 | 8,054 |
| 1999–2000 | 853 | 2,317 | 7,895 |
| 2000–01 | 837 | 2,264 | |
| 2001–02 | 837 | 2,216 | |
| 2002–03 | 826 | 2,161 | |

[1] The collection of data about total face-to-face contacts was discontinued from 1 April 2000
*Source:*
Form KT23

*Chiropody contacts by strategic health authority, 2002–03*

*Thousand*

| Strategic health authority | Initial contacts (new episodes of care) | First contacts (different persons receiving care) |
|---|---|---|
| County Durham and Tees Valley | 15.8 | 51.7 |
| Northumberland, Tyne and Wear | 22.7 | 79.7 |
| Cheshire and Merseyside | 51.6 | 117.9 |
| Cumbria and Lancashire | 35.7 | 110.5 |
| Greater Manchester | 59.1 | 172.8 |
| North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire | 23.4 | 83.1 |
| South Yorkshire | 24.6 | 77.2 |
| West Yorkshire | 33.8 | 126.9 |
| Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland | 33.8 | 53.1 |
| Trent | 43.9 | 112.8 |
| Birmingham and the Black Country | 62.2 | 125.3 |
| Coventry, Warwickshire, Hereford and Worcesters | 21.1 | 72.5 |
| Shropshire and Staffordshire | 22.7 | 82.4 |
| Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire | 15.3 | 49.1 |
| Essex | 14.4 | 42.3 |
| Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire | 27.4 | 81.4 |
| North Central London | 17.2 | 43.1 |
| North East London | 27.4 | 46.9 |
| North West London | 22.4 | 64.7 |
| South East London | 34.9 | 61.1 |
| South West London | 17.1 | 50.4 |
| Hampshire and Isle of Wight | 22.1 | 48.4 |
| Kent and Medway | 23.3 | 58.7 |
| Surrey and Sussex | 30.8 | 84.0 |
| Thames Valley | 23.9 | 56.2 |
| Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire | 41.7 | 89.0 |
| Dorset and Somerset | 23.6 | 38.8 |
| South West Peninsula | 34.1 | 81.5 |

*Source:*
Form KT23

## Cholesterol

**Mr. Paul Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the prevalence of raised blood cholesterol in *(a)* men and *(b)* women in each region; and if he will make a statement. [154583]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Figures available from the Health Survey for England 1998 are shown in the table. In this survey, cholesterol was considered to be raised at a level of 6.5 mmol/l or over.

*Prevalence of raised cholesterol by Government Office Region and sex—Adults 16+ with a valid sample*

*Raised cholesterol (percentage >=6.5 mmol/l)* *1998*

| Government Office Regions | Men (percentage) | Women (percentage) | Men (bases) | Women (bases) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| North East | 27.1 | 28.5 | 288 | 337 |
| North West | 16.9 | 20.7 | 669 | 720 |
| Yorkshire and the Humber | 17.9 | 22.5 | 531 | 591 |

*Prevalence of raised cholesterol by Government Office Region and sex—Adults 16+ with a valid sample*

*Raised cholesterol (percentage >=6.5 mmol/l) 1998*

| Government Office Regions | Men (percentage) | Women (percentage) | Men (bases) | Women (bases) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| West Midlands | 20.3 | 23.8 | 492 | 589 |
| East Midlands | 14.8 | 21.7 | 453 | 483 |
| East England | 16.2 | 21.8 | 537 | 577 |
| London | 16.7 | 17.4 | 527 | 614 |
| South East | 19.6 | 24.2 | 810 | 945 |
| South West | 16.5 | 22.4 | 539 | 572 |

*Source:*
Health Survey for England , Department of Health

The quality indicators for the new general medical services contract include cholesterol management for patients with coronary heart disease. This will reinforce general practitioners' current work to deliver the quality standards set out in the national service framework for coronary heart disease, which are driving the present trend in increasing statin prescriptions.

### Continuing Care Criteria

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to evaluate the continuing care criteria sent to his Department by strategic health authorities. [158639]

**Dr. Ladyman:** There are no plans to hold a centrally conducted evaluation of the fully funded National Health Service continuing care eligibility criteria of each strategic health authority (SHA). It is the responsibility of each SHA to be satisfied that its criteria meet the legal requirements.

### Detoxification Beds

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many detoxification beds for treatment as an inpatient are available in England and Wales. [150760]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The Department does not have data on the number of detoxification beds that are available for treatment as an in-patient in England.

However, it is estimated that there are 157 in-patient services in England with detoxification beds.

The number in Wales is a matter for the National Assembly for Wales.

### Fall-Related Injuries

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* attendances at accident and emergency and *(b)* admissions to hospital for fall-related injuries in people aged 60 years and over there have been in each year since 1997. [156645]

**Dr. Ladyman:** Centrally-held data on attendances at accident and emergency departments do not contain sufficient details to identify those who attended because of a fall. The number of people aged 60 and over who were admitted to national health service hospitals in England as a result of a fall is recorded in the Hospital Episode Statistics count of Finished Admission Episodes. The figures are shown in the table.

| | *Finished Admission Episodes (falls over 60)* |
|---|---|
| 1997–98 | 127,665 |
| 1998–99 | 127,817 |
| 1999–2000 | 118,567 |
| 2001–02 | 115,373 |
| 2002–03 | 120,356 |

*Note:*
A finished admission episode is the period of impatient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Total episodes are only an approximation of the total number of in-patients, as a patient may have more than one admission in a year. Figures are adjusted to compensate for both coverage and missing or invalid clinical data, except for 2001–02 and 2002–03, which are not yet adjusted in this way.

### Fossetts Farm Treatment Centre

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether planning permission has been granted for the proposed treatment centre at Fossetts Farm, Southend-on-Sea. [157528]

**Mr. Hutton:** A planning application was logged with the landowners of the proposed site for the treatment centre at Fossetts Farm on 12 December 2003. This application will be reviewed by the local authority's planning committee.

### General Practitioners

**Mr. George Osborne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patient visits to general practitioners he estimates there were in the last 12 months for which figures are available. [158213]

**Mr. Hutton:** The most recent data show that there were an estimated 217 million consultations with general practitioners in England between April 2000 and March 2001, the most recent year for which figures are available.

### HIV/AIDS

**Mr. Nigel Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of drugs used for treating patients who are HIV positive; and if he will make a statement. [157483]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Combination anti-retroviral drug therapies have proved very effective for the majority of people with HIV, in reducing the severity of symptoms and prolonging quality of life.

The British HIV Association (BHIVA), the members of which include the majority of leading HIV/AIDS clinicians, has developed a detailed set of guidelines for the use and monitoring of combination anti-retroviral drugs, and the regimens recommended by BHIVA are widely, accepted by the national health service. The guidelines, and their use by the NHS, are audited annually.

**Mr. Nigel Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost was of *(a)* testing for HIV/AIDS and *(b)* treating HIV/AIDS patients in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available. [157484]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Information on the cost to the National Health Service of HIV and AIDS testing and treatment is not held centrally.

The sums allocated by the Department to the NHS for HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment and care in England since 1 993–94 are shown in the table. From April 2002, the special allocations for HIV prevention, treatment and care were added to NHS baseline funding according to the target distribution of HIV across England, and are no longer separately identified.

*£ million*

| *Year* | *NHS allocation* |
|---|---|
| 1 993–94 | 214.4 |
| 1 994–95 | 214.0 |
| 1995–96 | 244.7 |
| 1996–97 | 237.7 |
| 1997–98 | 251.9 |
| 1 998–99 | 281.4 |
| 1999–2000 | 286.4 |
| 2000–01 | 289.4 |
| 2001–02 | 331.0 |

### Hospices

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the savings to the NHS from *(a)* adults and *(b)* children using hospice services instead of hospital services. [157910]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** No such estimates have been made.

### Hospital Waiting Lists

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health which hospitals have closed lists for treatment. [155154]

**Mr. Hutton:** The Department does not collect this information from national health service trusts.

Primary care trusts (PCTs) are responsible for commissioning sufficient activity from NHS trusts and other providers to meet the needs of their local population. The levels of activity required from NHS trusts should be specified in service agreements (SAs) and will represent a ceiling to the trusts' contractual obligations.

Where there are no SAs in place or the activity level specified in a SA have already been met by the trust, the PCT are responsible for commissioning additional activity to meet the needs of their patients.

HSC 2002/007 (Securing Service Delivery: Commissioning Freedoms of Primary Care Trusts) and HSC 1998/198 (Commissioning in the new NHS), copies of which are in the Library, provide further information.

### Hospital-acquired Infection

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent assessment he has made of the incidence of hospital-acquired infection among women using maternity services; and if he will make a statement. [156284]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** National information on the incidence of hospital-acquired infections amongst women using maternity services is not available. Options for collecting surveillance data are being kept under review and implementation of the Chief Medical Officer's report, "Winning Ways Working together to reduce Healthcare Associated Infection in England", will help reduce infection rates.

### Mental Health

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people suffer dementia in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley; and how many are (i) under and (ii) over 65 years of age. [157090]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** There is no routine collection of information at national or local level about the number of people living with dementia. The research quoted by the older people's national service framework in 2001 estimated that approximately 600,000 people in the United Kingdom have dementia of whom there are about 17,000 people under the age of 65.

### Mumps Vaccine

**Mr. Jenkin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what restrictions are in place on the import of mumps vaccine; and what volumes of vaccine have been imported in each month since January 2003. [155128]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Single mumps vaccines are unlicensed imported medicines. The importers of which are required to be licensed by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). Every importer must notify the MHRA on each occasion they intend importing an unlicensed medicine and there is a legal restriction on the maximum quantity they may import per notification (a maximum of 25 single administrations). This applies to all imported unlicensed medicines. Each notification is an intention to import and does not necessarily reflect the number of doses actually imported or used. The information on the actual number of doses imported is not held by the MHRA.

### National School Fruit Scheme

**Mr. Kaufman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health which schools in the Manchester, Gorton constituency will benefit from the free fruit scheme. [156310]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The following 24 schools in Gorton are receiving fruit under the National School Fruit Scheme:

Abbey Hey Infant School
Acacias Primary School
All Saints Primary School
Alma Park Primary School
Aspinal Primary School
Birchfields Primary School
Chapel Street Primary School
Crowcroft Park Primary School
Gorton Brook School
Gorton Mount Primary School
Old Hall Drive Primary School
Richmond Park School
Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Infant School Manchester
St Andrew's CofE Primary School
St Francis RC Primary School
St James' CofE Primary School

St John's CofE Primary School
St Joseph's RC Primary School Manchester
St Kentigern's Catholic Primary School
St Luke's CofE Primary School
St Mary's RC Primary School Manchester
St Richard's RC Primary School
Stanley Grove Community Primary School
Wilbraham Primary School

**Mrs. Brooke:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the timetable is for extending the National School Fruit Scheme to all regions in England; [157603]

(2) when he will extend the National School Fruit Scheme to the South West Region. [157604]

**Miss Melanie Johnson** *[holding answer 1 March 2004]*: The National School Fruit Scheme will entitle children aged four to six in local education authority maintained infant, primary and special schools to a free piece of fruit every school day. The scheme is already in operation in the West and East Midlands, London and the North West. Most eligible schools in the North East will join the scheme in March 2004 and the remainder in April. Schools in the remaining four regions will join the scheme during the autumn term 2004.

## New Hospitals

**Mr. Jon Owen Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* value and *(b)* number of all new hospitals built in each of the regions of England is in the last five years for which records are available. [156962]

**Mr. Hutton:** The following table lists the new hospital schemes (all private finance initiative and public capital funded schemes over £10 million) which have opened within the last five years (since March 1999) and the strategic health authority (SHA) within which they are sited. 28 SHAs replaced the eight national health service executive regional offices in 2002).

| *Strategic health authority* | *Scheme (NHS hospital/Trust)* | *Value (£ million)* |
|---|---|---|
| Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire | Royal United Hospital Bath redevelopment | 35 |
| Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire | United Bristol Hospital for Sick Children | 19 |
| Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire | Swindon and Marlborough NHS Trust | 100 |
| Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire | Luton and Dunstable Hospital NHS Trust | 15 |
| Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire | Royston, Buntingford and Bishop Stortford PCT | 15 |
| Birmingham and the Black Country | Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health | 18 |
| Birmingham and the Black Country | Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals NHS Trust | 13 |
| County Durham and Tees Valley | County Durham and Darlington Acute Hospitals NHS Trust—North Durham | 61 |
| County Durham and Tees Valley | County Durham and Darlington Acute Hospitals NHS Trust—Bishop Auckland | 48 |
| County Durham and Tees Valley | South Tees Acute Hospitals NHS Trust | 122 |
| County Durham and Tees Valley | County Durham and Darlington Acute Hospitals—Chester-le-Street | 10 |
| Coventry, Warwickshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire | Hereford Hospitals NHS Trust | 64 |
| Coventry, Warwickshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire | Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust | 87 |
| Cumbria and Lancashire | Blackpool Victoria Hospital—Phase 5 | 27 |
| Cumbria and Lancashire | North Cumbria Acute Hospitals (Cumberland Infirmary) | 67 |
| Essex | Basildon and Thurrock | 21 |
| Greater Manchester | South Manchester University Hospitals NHS Trust | 67 |
| Greater Manchester | Rochdale Healthcare NHS Trust | 24 |
| Greater Manchester | Fairfield General—Bury | 20 |
| Hampshire and Isle of Wight | Southampton General Hospital—Cancer Care Unit | 17 |
| Kent and Medway | Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust | 94 |
| Kent and Medway | Swale PCT | 14 |
| Kent and Medway | Medway DGH Development | 51 |
| Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire | Norfolk and Norwich NHS Trust | 158 |
| North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire | Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust | 22 |
| North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire | Harrogate Healthcare NHS Trust | 27 |
| North Central London | Camden and Islington Mental Health and Social Care Trust (MH unit) | 21 |
| North Central London | Barnet and Chase Farm Hospitals NHS Trust | 54 |
| North East London | North East London Mental Health NHS Trust | 11 |
| North East London | East London and The City Mental Health NHS Trust (Newham) | 15 |
| North East London | Homerton Hospital Acute Services | 16 |
| North West London | West London Mental Health NHS Trust | 12 |
| North West London | Bromley Healthcare NHS Trust | 118 |
| North West London | West Middlesex University Hospitals NHS Trust | 60 |
| Northumberland, Tyne and Wear | Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust (Wansbeck) | 18 |
| Northumberland, Tyne and Wear | Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust (Hexham) | 29 |
| Northumberland, Tyne and Wear | City Hospitals Sunderland | 15 |
| Shropshire and Staffordshire | North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust | 28 |
| South East London | Queen Elizabeth Hospital NHS Trust (Greenwich) | 96 |
| South East London | King's Healthcare NHS Trust | 76 |
| South East London | Queen Mary's Hospital Sidcup | 15 |
| South East London | Oxleas | 11 |
| South West London | St. George's Healthcare NHS Trust | 46 |
| South West Peninsula | Cornwall Partnership NHS Trust (Bodmin) | 10 |
| South Yorkshire | Central Sheffield University Hospitals Stonegrove) | 24 |

| Strategic health authority | Scheme (NHS hospital/Trust) | Value (£ million) |
|---|---|---|
| South Yorkshire | Central Sheffield University Hospitals (Cardiothoracic Unit) | 15 |
| Surrey and Sussex | West Sussex Health and Social Care | 22 |
| Surrey and Sussex | Guildford and Waverley PCT (Farnham) | 29 |
| Surrey and Sussex | Royal Sussex County Hospital | 40 |
| Thames Valley | Buckinghamshire Hospitals NHS Trust | 45 |
| Thames Valley | Berkshire Healthcare NHS Trust | 30 |
| Thames Valley | Royal Berkshire and Battle Hospital NHS Trust | 84 |
| Trent | Queens Medical Centre—Nottingham University Hospital NHS Trust | 17 |
| West Yorkshire | Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Trust | 65 |
| West Yorkshire | Leeds Community and Mental Health Services Teaching NHS Trust | 47 |

## NHS Dentists

**Geraldine Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made with recruitment of NHS dentists in Morecambe and Lunesdale. [156853]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** From April 2005, primary care trusts will have a duty to secure the provision of primary dental services. With these new responsibilities will go the £1.3 billion financial resources currently held centrally. PCTs will in future be able to use these resources to meet local oral health needs.

Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic Health Authority reports that Morecambe Bay PCT is currently recruiting dentists to work in the dental access centres and other national health service premises in Morecambe Bay.

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS dentists there were in each year since 1997 in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Ribble Valley and Fulwood. [157093]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The information in the table shows the number of National Health Service dentists on a head count basis for the four former health authorities in Lancashire and for East Lancashire Health Authority, which covers Ribble Valley and Fulwood. The figures are at September each year from 1997 to 2001 and for Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic Health Authority for September 2002.

Information for September 2003 is not yet available.

*National Health Service—Number of dentists[1] September each year*

| Health Authority | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lancashire[2] | 617 | 649 | 649 | 639 | 671 | - |
| Ribble Valley and Fulwood[3] | 190 | 201 | 195 | 200 | 210 | - |

*Notes:*

[1] NHS dentists include dentists working in the General Dental Service (GDS), Hospital Dental Service (HDS), Community Dental Service (CDS), Personal Dental Service (PDS) and Salaried Dentists in the GDS. Dentist working in more than one dental service are included in each service apart from dentists working in both PDS and GDS who are counted in the GDS only.

[2] The four former health authorities in Lancashire: Morecambe Bay, North West Lancashire, East Lancashire and South Lancashire.

[3] ast Lancashire Health Authority.

## NHS Property

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what tenders are being considered for the disposal of NHS property. [151124]

**Mr. Hutton:** Commercially confidential discussions are still taking place and an announcement will be made shortly.

## Paediatric and Adolescent Obesity

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many finished consultant episodes there were for *(a)* paediatric and *(b)* adolescent obesity treatment in (i) England and (ii) each strategic health authority in each year since 1996. [156282]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The numbers of finished consultant episodes by age group in national healthservice hospitals in England, where the primary diagnosis is obesity, are shown in the table.

| | Paediatrics (1–12 years) | Adolescents (13–19 years) | Other (neonates, 20+ years) | Grand total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1996–97 | 105 | 49 | 692 | 846 |
| 1997–98 | 118 | 55 | 654 | 827 |
| 1998–99 | 159 | 66 | 863 | 1,088 |
| 1999–2000 | 153 | 80 | 866 | 1,099 |
| 2000–01 | 173 | 77 | 962 | 1,212 |
| 2001–02 | 181 | 89 | 878 | 1,148 |
| 2002–03 | 239 | 202 | 1,001 | 1,442 |

*Source:*

Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Department of Health.

## Physical Fitness

**Dr. Murrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures have been taken to promote *(a)* physical fitness and *(b)* healthy eating among the elderly. [153814]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Older people are at increased risk of a range of lifestyle-related diseases and conditions. Increased levels of physical activity and healthy eating are particularly valuable in maintaining independent living.

Accordingly, the national service framework for older people requires joint action between the National Health Service and councils to ensure that older people have fair access to advice about lifestyle including nutrition and physical activity.

The Department, in partnership with the Countryside Agency and Sport England, is launching 10 local exercise action pilots, that will test the effectiveness of different community approaches to increasing levels of physical activity. Five pilots have a community-wide approach and the remainder target specific populations, including younger and older people.

The Department is leading the development of a comprehensive food and health action plan, working across Government and with the food industry to establish a coherent and effective programme of activities on nutrition in order to achieve a healthier diet for people in England. The plan will address healthy eating at all stages of life, including older people. Meanwhile, the Food Standards Agency promotes healthy eating for older people with its Eating in Later Life leaflet and relevant content on its website.

### Primary Care Trusts

**Mr. Neil Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the ratio is of general practitioners per 1,000 population in each English primary care trust. [154140]

**Mr. Hutton:** The latest figures available for unrestricted principals and equivalents per 1,000 population in England on a primary care trust (PCT) level is for September 2002. This information has been placed in the Library.

### Pulmonary Disease

**Mr. Burns:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment he has made of the National Institute for Clinical Excellence guidelines on the management of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in primary and secondary care; and if he will make a statement; [155109]

(2) what steps he will take following the recommendations by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence to ensure that all patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease have access to a multidisciplinary healthcare team; [155110]

(3) whether, following the recommendations by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence, he will make it a priority for all hospitals and general practitioner surgeries to have access to non-invasive ventilation for the treatment of people with severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease; [155111]

(4) whether, following the recommendations by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence, he will make it a priority for all hospitals and general practitioner surgeries to have access to *(a)* a spirometer and *(b)* adequate training in the use of spirometry; [155112]

(5) if, following the recommendations by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence, he will provide funding for pulmonary rehabilitation courses to run in every hospital for all patients who consider themselves functionally disabled by chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. [155113]

**Dr. Ladyman** *[holding answers 1 March 2004]*: The National Institute for Clinical Excellence's guidance on chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) in primary and secondary care has not yet been published. It would be inappropriate to make a statement until the publication of the NICE'S formal guidance on COPD.

Primary care trusts, in partnership with local stakeholders, have the responsibility for deciding what services to provide for their populations, including those with respiratory disease. They are best placed to understand local health needs and commission services to meet them.

### Sexual Health and HIV

**Jim Dobbin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what criteria were used in appointing members of the Independent Advisory Group on sexual health and HIV. [156477]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The chair and members of the Independent Advisory Group on Sexual Health and HIV were appointed following an open competition and interview process in accordance with the Guidance on Appointments to Public Bodies, issued by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The committee has specific posts to ensure a wide range of expertise is represented across sexual health. The qualities, experience and skills criteria were made available for the specific and generic requirements for these posts. All applicants were assessed against these criteria. Members have been appointed for a period of four years and are required to subscribe to the code of best practice for board members of public bodies.

**Jim Dobbin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the recommendation of the Independent Advisory Group on sexual health and HIV that the right of parents to opt their child out of sex and relationship education and personal, social and health education on any grounds including those of faith or religion should be explicitly ended. [156478]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Formal sex and relationship education is taught through compulsory science lessons and during personal/social and health education (PSHE). Parents and carers have the right to withdraw their child from some, or all, PSHE lessons, but not statutory science lessons. If a parent decides to exercise this right, then the school should provide information about the lessons being missed and ideas for other sources of support for them to fulfil the task of educating their child. We have no plans to remove this right.

### Smoking Clinics

**Mr. Tony Clarke:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many smoking clinics are run by the NHS in England, broken down by health authority; and how many have been guaranteed funding for the next three years. [157440]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** We do not collect this information centrally. All primary care trusts have received funding for the three years 2003–04 to 2005–06 to commission stop smoking services to meet the needs of their populations. The services may be in the form of a clinic or on a one-to-one basis, depending on local circumstances.

### Tuberculosis

**Dr. Murrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he has taken to improve levels of immunity to tuberculosis in London. [153362]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** A London-wide tuberculosis group has been established to take forward specific areas of work such as refocusing the way in which TB services are organised.

## CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### Departmental Communications

**Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many staff are employed in the Department to work in the communications field, broken down by *(a)* Government Information and Communication Service staff and *(b)* other staff, broken down by (i) press officers, (ii) special advisers and (iii) others. [158161]

**Mr. Caborn:** 18 members of DCMS staff work in the communications field, of which 14 are Government Information and Communication Service staff. Of these 18 members of staff, 10 are press officers; none are special advisers; and eight others work on publicity, internal communications and administration.

### Digital Television

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when Freeview digital television services will be available throughout the *(a)* Benfleet, *(b)* Hadleigh and *(c)* Canvey Island areas. [158125]

**Estelle Morris:** Ofcom inform us that most postcodes in Benfleet, Hadleigh and Canvey Island can currently receive Freeview digital television services from the Bluebell Hill transmitter. However many households in these areas will not be tuned into this transmitter as it is located in a different ITV region.

Other transmitters in the area do not emit sufficient power to offer a full range of services and in order to protect existing analogue services against interference, the signal strength cannot be increased until digital switchover.

The Government are committed to ensuring that all households who can currently receive analogue signals will be able to receive digital television when switchover takes place.

Viewers in Essex wishing to view all of the Freeview digital services are advised to check their postcode on the Digital Television Group's website: www.dtg.org.uk http://www.dtg.org.uk and if necessary, contact a reputable aerial installer about carrying out an aerial check. We suggest they contact the Confederation of Aerial Industries Ltd. (CAI) at Fulton House Business Centre, Fulton Road, Wembley Park, Middlesex HA9 0TF, telephone: 020 8902 8998.

### Environmentally Sustainable Procurement

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport in what ways environmentally sustainable procurement strategies within the Department have driven innovation in the design and supply of products. [159099]

**Estelle Morris:** Copies of the Department's recently published sustainable development strategy are available in the Libraries of both Houses. Objective 2 of the strategy (sustainable estate management) highlights the fact that DCMS is the first Government Department to commission and purchase significant quantities of wood furniture from fully certified and accredited sources. We intend to encourage suppliers and contractors to develop environmentally preferable goods and services at competitive prices. Furthermore, the Department has supported innovation in this area via the National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts, (NESTA), a Non Departmental Public Body. Last year NESTA made an award of £90,500 to a firm in Surrey which has developed a technology which produces a high quality paper pulp from straw. The technique uses only half the energy and fewer chemicals than traditional systems, with no harmful environmental effects.

### Local Government Finance (Dorset)

**Jim Knight:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what grants were awarded to local authorities in Dorset by her Department in financial year 2003–04 that fall outside the revenue support grant. [156211]

**Mr. Caborn:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to him by my right hon. Friend the Minister for Local and Regional Government on 1 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 750W.

### National Lottery

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what percentage of the National Lottery budget assigned for good causes was awarded to organisations in *(a)* England, *(b)* Scotland, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* Northern Ireland in each year since its introduction. [158874]

**Estelle Morris:** The table shows what percentage of funding each area received. This is derived from the Department's database of lottery awards, which is based on information supplied by the distributing bodies.

*Percentage*

| *Area* | *1994* | *1995* | *1996* | *1997* | *1998* | *1999* | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* | *2003* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| England | 54.84 | 73.27 | 57.39 | 76 | 77.45 | 75.89 | 72.35 | 71.78 | 65.88 | 60.08 |
| Scotland | 38.23 | 9.69 | 9.33 | 10.05 | 8.76 | 7.62 | 7.29 | 9.67 | 9.73 | 11.95 |
| Wales | 6.93 | 8.9 | 2.54 | 5.83 | 5.31 | 5.18 | 4.58 | 4.19 | 5.34 | 5.25 |
| N. Ireland | 0 | 1.91 | 2.14 | 5.03 | 4.2 | 3.38 | 2.92 | 2.46 | 2.63 | 4.24 |

Percentage

| Area | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| E&W Wide | 0 | 2.19 | 0 | 0.07 | 0 | 0.07 | 0.01 | 0.2 | 0.24 | 0 |
| GB Wide | 0 | 0 | 0.26 | 0.15 | 0 | 0.12 | 1.24 | 1.52 | 1.04 | 0.05 |
| UK Wide | 0 | 4.03 | 28.34 | 1.43 | 2.27 | 5.69 | 9.76 | 8.88 | 15.13 | 16.53 |
| Overseas | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1.42 | 2 | 2.05 | 1.84 | 1.32 | 0.03 | 1.89 |

*Note:*
Due to the numbers being rounded up or down, the figures do not all total 100 per cent.

There are geographical areas that can benefit from a Lottery grant other than the four home countries. This can be because grants have varying catchment areas, or because the grant is a sum of money to be split up and spread out among different areas. For this reason, the figures also included the percentage of funding that has gone to projects that benefit England and Wales, Great Britain, the UK and overseas awards.

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much funding *(a)* each London borough and *(b)* Greater London has received from National Lottery grants in each of the last five years. [158434]

**Estelle Morris:** Total Lottery funding in each London borough in each of the last five financial years is shown in this table. This is derived from the Department's database of Lottery awards, which is based on information supplied by the distributing bodies.

£

| Local authority | 1998–99 | 1999–2000 | 2000–01 | 2001–02 | 2002–03 | 2003–04 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Barking and Dagenham | 469,308 | 1,485,035 | 2,529,678 | 6,121,716 | 5,184,729 | 1,334,461 |
| Barnet | 1,175,475 | 2,975,110 | 8,475,858 | 2,906,594 | 3,882,671 | 1,925,773 |
| Bexley | 1,931,626 | 1,778,793 | 1,728,772 | 665,194 | 4,253,173 | 946,967 |
| Brent | 121,200,888 | 2,853,951 | 4,024,574 | 5,395,151 | 3,645,109 | 3,842,136 |
| Bromley | 844,326 | 2,379,723 | 2,300,517 | 2,605,428 | 2,724,595 | 1,513,238 |
| Camden | 19,537,974 | 37,709,775 | 23,681,353 | 51,529,112 | 21,422,579 | 21,034,560 |
| City of London | 4,935,078 | 2,914,705 | 5,761,512 | 3,374,719 | 1,651,161 | 1,430,515 |
| Croydon | 1,964,838 | 3,319,896 | 5,014,219 | 6,549,306 | 3,142,804 | 3,221,223 |
| Ealing | 1,577,973 | 5,360,681 | 5,598,913 | 3,546,604 | 7,007,714 | 3,682,288 |
| Enfield | 3,762,435 | 3,785,182 | 1,831,134 | 10,460,552 | 3,255,488 | 2,625,047 |
| Greenwich | 2,434,543 | 4,969,604 | 16,302,809 | 12,246,442 | 3,909,044 | 2,405,364 |
| Hackney | 6,912,320 | 7,302,480 | 22,025,317 | 11,478,916 | 17,447,403 | 10,415,418 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 3,330,738 | 10,625,730 | 15,687,352 | 7,572,235 | 5,890,930 | 3,362,466 |
| Haringey | 2,319,390 | 3,905,161 | 2,822,782 | 10,865,252 | 5,022,267 | 2,026,112 |
| Harrow | 485,563 | 1,357,672 | 1,783,862 | 1,310, 743 | 2,258,267 | 1,434,838 |
| Havering | 803,841 | 5,538,320 | 1,017,088 | 771,173 | 1,680,207 | 916,697 |
| Hillingdon | 594,135 | 1,452,121 | 973,776 | 1,337,821 | 3,165,316 | 1,571,596 |
| Hounslow | 2,286,927 | 4,571,398 | 5,685,459 | 3,193,280 | 3,606,448 | 1,431,315 |
| Islington | 30,873,957 | 23,913,535 | 27,728,485 | 28,824,352 | 18,082,146 | 51,283,882 |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 21,071,813 | 15,689,951 | 7,256,393 | 6,541,805 | 6,578,635 | 3,911,430 |
| Kingston upon Thames | 422,389 | 1,905,549 | 2,083,526 | 1,848,159 | 1,643,908 | 1,377,827 |
| Lambeth | 5,162,825 | 11,691,490 | 13,853,191 | 20,163,002 | 149,383,813 | 6,817,660 |
| Lewisham | 16,220,184 | 15,287,386 | 3,308,141 | 8,997,447 | 7,779,030 | 2,380,863 |
| Merton | 955,981 | 1,632,293 | 1,830,280 | 1,232,715 | 1,747,379 | 1,651,786 |
| Newham | 17,696,774 | 10,011,593 | 5,407,076 | 17,524,922 | 7,933,918 | 3,066,497 |
| Redbridge | 1,257,327 | 2,022,117 | 625,463 | 3,122,521 | 3,171,224 | 767,412 |
| Richmond upon Thames | 5,632,982 | 1,767,485 | 2,600,616 | 4,331,580 | 1,802,190 | 1,186,584 |
| Southwark | 8,981,124 | 16,598,903 | 11,618,644 | 10,770,339 | 10,138,537 | 7,674,110 |
| Sutton | 334,159 | 2,431,828 | 1,089,165 | 6,066,282 | 2,130,331 | 1,307,860 |
| Tower Hamlets | 6,641,593 | 9,865,903 | 16,142,138 | 17,295,279 | 9,711,198 | 7,787,243 |
| Waltham Forest | 5,720,691 | 2,424,769 | 3,109,610 | 4,101,213 | 3,451,887 | 6,450,293 |
| Wandsworth | 1,792,634 | 8,200,561 | 9,720,629 | 4,696,945 | 3,762,431 | 5,817,596 |
| Westminster | 46,070,025 | 37,750,860 | 51,209,137 | 76,283,217 | 54,919,947 | 28,249,215 |
| Greater London: Total of above boroughs: | 342,401,836 | 265,479,560 | 284,827,469 | 353,730,016 | 381,386,479 | 194,850,272 |

## National Television Licensing Authority

**Mr. Kaufman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will instruct the National Television Licensing Authority to *(a)* assess the compatibility with data protection legislation of its statement in the current advertising campaign that its database lists every home without a television licence and *(b)* report that assessment to her. [157457]

**Tessa Jowell:** The BBC is the statutory Licensing Authority and the Government have no power to instruct the Corporation on matters relating to the administration of the television licensing system. However, the BBC has confirmed that, as data controller for the TV licensing database, it requires its agent, TV Licensing, to comply fully with data protection legislation and to undertake regular reviews to ensure continued compliance. The BBC does not believe that the information held by TV Licensing on unlicensed addresses contravenes data protection legislation.

**Mr. Kaufman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will instruct the National Television Licensing Authority *(a)* not to undertake any advertising campaign that could be

construed as containing threats or menaces and *(b)* to abandon forthwith the poster campaign using the statement Get One, or Get Done. [157458]

**Tessa Jowell:** The BBC is the statutory Licensing Authority and the Government have no power to instruct the Corporation on matters relating to the administration of the television licensing system. However, the BBC has indicated that all television licensing campaigns undergo a series of legal compliance checks before they are approved by the Corporation and are placed in the public domain.

### Recruitment (Civil Servants)

**Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the cost of recruitment of civil servants for the Department was in each financial year since 1996–97, broken down by *(a)* delegated or contracted out recruitment procedures and *(b)* recruitment procedures carried out by the Department. [158194]

**Mr. Caborn:** The cost of recruitment of civil servants to the department for Culture, Media and Sport for the financial years 2002–03 and 2003–04 to date are shown in the table. Equivalent information for earlier years is no longer available.

£

| *Recruitment* | *2002–03* | *2003–04* |
|---|---|---|
| Contracted out | 41,700 | 33,153 |
| In-house | 72,331 | 30,616 |
| Total | 114,031 | 63,769 |

### Rugby Super League

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when a Minister in her Department last watched a Rugby Super League match as part of his or her official duties; where it was; and between which teams. [158615]

**Mr. Caborn:** I attended the Warrington Wolves versus Wakefield Trinity Wildcats Rugby Super League Game on Saturday 21 February where I officially opened Warrington's superb new Halliwell Jones Stadium and witnessed a thrilling win for the Wolves.

### Temporary Staff

**Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many staff the Department employs on a temporary basis through employment agencies; what percentage this is of total staff employed; and how much the Department paid employment agencies to supply temporary staff in *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2002–03 and *(c)* 2003–04 to the most recent date for which figures are available. [158251]

**Mr. Caborn:** The Department for Culture Media and Sport currently employs 22 temporary staff through an employment agency. This is 4.5 per cent. of the current total staff currently employed by the department.

The cost of temporary workers for the last three financial years is shown as follows:

2001–02: £290,736.

2002–03: £338,366.

2003–04: £387,740 (estimated for full financial year).

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Information Technology (Misuse)

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Home Office staff have been *(a)* disciplined and *(b)* dismissed for misusing IT hardware or software in the last two years. [158465]

**Fiona Mactaggart:** The figures, so far as information is available in the form requested, are as follows:

| *Department/Staff* | *2002* | *2003* |
|---|---|---|
| *Home Office* | | |
| Disciplined | 80 | 23 |
| Dismissed | 5 | 5 |
| *Prison Service Agency* | | |
| Disciplined | 2 | 6 |
| Dismissed | 1 | 0 |
| *UK Passport Agency* | | |
| Disciplined | [1]— | 15 |
| Dismissed | 0 | 0 |
| *Forensic Science Service* | | |
| Disciplined | 5 | 1 |
| Dismissed | 0 | 0 |

[1] Indicates that no comprehensive figures available.

### Recruitment Advertising

**Pete Wishart:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his Department's expenditure on recruitment advertising was in each of the last three years, broken down by publication; and what proportion of such expenditure was *(a)* to advertise vacant posts and *(b)* in the form of other general recruitment advertising. [155531]

**Fiona Mactaggart:** I refer the hon. Member to my previous answer on 11 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1511W.

The expenditure detailed in my previous answer reflects the costs of advertising vacant or new posts in both the central Home Office and the Immigration and Nationality Directorate. Costs for advertising general recruitment schemes for the Immigration and Nationality Directorate are also included in the total. To provide separate details of the costs of such schemes could be done only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much his Department has spent on recruitment advertising in each year since 1997. [156454]

**Fiona Mactaggart:** I refer the hon. Member to my previous answer on 11 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1511W. Figures for the years 1997–1999 are not available.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Manufacturing Employment

**Mr. Trimble:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were employed in the manufacturing sector in Northern Ireland during the last five years, broken down by parliamentary constituency. [157276]

**Mr. Pearson:** Estimates of the number of employee jobs below Northern Ireland level are available only from the biennial Census of Employment and the most up to date figures relate to September 2001.

Estimates of manufacturing jobs for each parliamentary constituency area from the last three Censuses of Employment can be found in the table.

*Northern Ireland employee jobs in the manufacturing sector by parliamentary constituency area*

| *Parliamentary constituency area* | *September 1997* | *September 1999* | *September 2001* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Belfast East | 9,689 | 9,506 | 9,537 |
| Belfast North | 5,228 | 4,617 | 4,377 |
| Belfast South | 3,279 | 2,767 | 2,819 |
| Belfast West | 2,546 | 2,785 | 2,801 |
| East Antrim | 5,085 | 4,925 | 4,883 |
| East Londonderry | 5,748 | 5,964 | 5,276 |
| Fermanagh and South Tyrone | 7,304 | 7,541 | 7,103 |
| Foyle | 9,015 | 7,987 | 6,640 |
| Lagan Valley | 6,040 | 6,488 | 7,322 |
| Mid-Ulster | 5,682 | 6,052 | 6,418 |
| Newry and Armagh | 4,163 | 4,075 | 3,958 |
| North Antrim | 8,151 | 8,160 | 7,201 |
| North Down | 3,073 | 2,809 | 2,399 |
| South Antrim | 6,706 | 6,591 | 6,505 |
| South Down | 3,496 | 3,551 | 3,268 |
| Strangford | 5,243 | 4,916 | 4,624 |
| Upper Bann | 12,583 | 12,193 | 10,494 |
| West Tyrone | 4,893 | 4,883 | 4,561 |
| Northern Ireland | 107,924 | 105,810 | 100,186 |

*Source:*
NI Census of Employment

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Buildings (Aerodynamically Generated Wind Noise)

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what standards relating to *(a)* noise and *(b)* other factors regulate aerodynamically generated wind noise from (i) very tall and (ii) massive building structures in built-up areas; and what plans she has to re-examine such standards. [157061]

**Keith Hill:** I have been asked to reply.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not set any standards relating to noise or other factors to regulate aerodynamically generated wind noise from very tall or massive building structures in built-up areas.

### Business Link

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the reasons are for *(a)* regional and sub-regional differences in the change of annual expenditure of Business Link operators since 2001–02 and *(b)* the fall in annual expenditure in over half of Business Link operators since 2001–02. [155262]

**Nigel Griffiths:** Business Link Operators (BLOs) draw down funding from a number of different sources and contracts. BLO budgets, and therefore expenditure levels, are often determined by the level of funding available at a particular time in their respective regions and sub-regions. This results in naturally occurring year on year variances.

For instance funding from Regional Development Agencies and local Strategic Partnerships fluctuates year on year depending on regional and sub-regional priorities. 2001–02 also saw many BLOs playing key roles in combating the after effects of foot and mouth disease by administering additional national, regional and sub-regional funding aimed at assisting rural businesses and communities.

Additionally, some of the movement in annual expenditure levels can be attributed to the Small Business Service Core Services budget. The allocation formula in 2001–02 and 2002–03 was the same, however the data making up the component parts of the allocation formula is updated, where possible, each year leading to shifts in funding.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what indicators are in place to measure customer *(a)* perception and *(b)* satisfaction with Government services for small businesses. [157230]

**Nigel Griffiths:** The indicators measuring business perception are: awareness of Business Link and understanding the services offered by Business Link. The indicators measuring customer satisfaction are: overall customer satisfaction and perceived business benefit. These form part of the Performance Management Framework established for the Business Link network which includes eight indicators.

Small businesses' perceptions that their concerns are being taken into account by Government will be measured by the responses to the question 'How much do you feel that Government takes into account the concerns of small businesses?' in the Small Business Survey 2003, which is managed by the Small Business Service.

Indicators to measure customer satisfaction with all Government services for small businesses are being developed in conjunction with other Government Departments.

### Business Regulation

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much money she estimates will be saved by UK businesses as a result of the removal or reform of the 147 regulations announced in the pre-Budget report. [153423]

**Nigel Griffiths:** Regulatory Impact Assessments will be produced by the relevant departments identifying benefits and savings from these measures as appropriate. Copies of these will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

### Export Credits Guarantee Department

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Export Credits Guarantee Department has *(a)* received and *(b)* paid

claims under political risk insurance in connection with the Dabhol-Enron Power Plant in India since 3 June 2003; and if she will make a statement. [156071]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** ECGD is examining claims under the Overseas Investment Insurance Policies issued in connection with the Dabhol project and therefore no claim has been paid. Details of the claim made by the banks on ECGD are commercially confidential under Exemption 13—Third Party's Commercial Confidence of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

### Gas Quality

**Mr. Tynan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 19 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1037W, on gas quality, whether research has been commissioned as part of the consultation process into the number of domestic appliances that would require *(a)* replacement and *(b)* modification. [155556]

**Mr. Timms:** In accordance with my written statement of 8 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 13WS, my Department, working with the Health and Safety Executive and the Office for Gas and Electricity Markets, has now moved into Phase 2 of the gas quality exercise—the identification of policy options, and public consultation. No decisions have yet been taken on commissioning research. This will be appropriately advertised in due course if deemed necessary.

### Internet Access

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department is taking to help small and micro businesses counter their proportionally greater cost of maintaining access to the internet than larger businesses; and what assessment her Department has made of *(a)* the price difference between commercial and household access charges for small and micro businesses and *(b)* the price difference between narrowband dial-up offers and broadband offers. [157207]

**Mr. Timms:** Government action to help small business maintain access to the Internet include the following improvements to the R&D Tax Credit with an extension of the first year ICT capital allowances as a result of the Budget for 2003 to 2004:

A reduction in the minimum tax-deductible allowance for IT equipment from £25,000 to £10,000 has enabled more small and medium sized enterprise to claim the SME Tax Credit;

An extension of 100 per cent. of the first year capital allowances for small businesses investing in information and communications technology for another year.

In January 2004, the Department produced guidelines on Home Computing Initiatives in association with Dfes and the Cabinet Office to help businesses take advantage of the £500 annual tax exemption on loaned computer introduced by the Chancellor in 1999. This exemption enables businesses to loan computers to their employees as a tax-free benefit and helps smaller businesses maximise organisational performance through improved ICT skills.

A mass-market broadband solution defined as broadband priced to target residential and small businesses alike is available to approximately 85 per cent. of the UK population. This definition excludes more expensive high-capacity leased lines frequently used by larger firms.

Oftel's Business Use of the Internet: Small and Medium Business Survey (Q 14, August 2003), revealed that 44 per cent. of UK SMEs included in the survey with broadband internet access having previously used a narrowband connection, decided to upgrade because broadband was a similar price to their previous internet connection.

### National Business Angels Network

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 2 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 647W, on the National Business Angels Network, if she will make a statement on the effectiveness of the National Business Angels Network. [155358]

**Nigel Griffiths:** An external evaluation of the National Business Angels Network took place early in 2003 that examined all aspects of its operation, including its matchmaking activities. The Department no longer funds this element of the National Business Angels Network's operations.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the role of the National Business Angels Network in the Single Pathway to Market initiative; and what *(a)* administrative and *(b)* programme funding it will receive from her Department for each year between 2004 and 2008. [157199]

**Nigel Griffiths:** The National Business Angels Network is a private company and its role in the Single Pathway to Market is entirely a matter for the company and its Board. The Department is not providing any funding for this initiative.

### Nuclear Decommissioning

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the effect of the cost of nuclear decommissioning over the next 10 years on the price of electricity. [158535]

**Mr. Timms:** The Department has not made such an assessment. Electricity prices, including those for electricity generated by BNFL and British Energy (BE), are determined by the market under NETA and reflect the underlying market situation, giving appropriate signals to enable market players to respond.

From April 2005, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) will take responsibility for the decommissioning and clean up of BNFL's nuclear sites and for the Magnox fleet of nuclear power stations, pending their decommissioning and eventual closure. The revenue accrued from Magnox generation will contribute towards the NDA's clean up costs.

Under BE's proposed restructuring plan, the Government will take financial responsibility for the company's historic spent fuel liabilities and will

underwrite BE's new arrangements for funding decommissioning and uncontracted liabilities to the extent that BE's contributions are insufficient.

### Radioactive Waste

**Mr. Watson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations she made to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on the future of Nirex Ltd. *(a)* in advance of and *(b)* following the announcement on 16 July 2003 by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on making Nirex independent of industry. [158644]

**Mr. Timms:** Disclosure of this information—internal advice and discussion—is covered by exemption 2 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information between Government Departments and it has not been the practice of successive Governments to disclose exchanges of this nature.

### Sakhalin II

**Mr. Simon Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what account she will take of the potential impact of building onshore pipelines through salmon spawning streams when assessing the Sakhalin II phase 2 oil and gas project under consideration for support by the Export Credits Guarantee Department. [157905]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** ECGD and the other potential lenders are still discussing the river crossing methods with Sakhalin Energy and want to ensure that the chosen methods are environmentally acceptable.

**Mr. Simon Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Sakhalin II phase 2 oil and gas project under consideration for support by the Export Credit Guarantee Department will involve construction of an undersea pipeline through the feeding ground of the western grey whale. [158074]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** Sakhalin Energy's plan is for an undersea pipeline to cross the southern point of the whales' northern feeding ground. ECGD is awaiting further information on this issue and will want to be sure that the potential impact on the Western Gray Whales is minimised. I am aware of the range of issues to which this project gives rise and I will approve support only if I am satisfied that these have been addressed.

**Mr. Simon Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when a decision on whether to support the Sakhalin II phase 2 will be taken by the Export Credit and Guarantee Department. [158075]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Merionnydd Nant Conwy (Mr. Llwyd) on 26 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 406–07W.

I am aware of the range of issues to which this project gives rise, and I will approve support only if I am satisfied that these have been satisfactorily addressed.

**Mr. Simon Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what account she intends to take of the risk and potential impact of earthquake damage to the on and offshore oil and gas pipelines on Sakhalin Island when she assesses the Sakhalin II phase 2 project for support by the Export Credit Guarantee Department. [158081]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** Sakhalin Island is in an active earthquake zone. During due diligence on the Sakhalin II project, ECGD will want reassurance that effective measures are being taken by Sakhalin Energy Investment Company to minimise any potential damage to the facilities of the project including both on and off-shore oil and gas pipelines, from earthquakes.

Details of action being taken by SEIC to mitigate the risk of damage from earthquakes can be found on their website www.sakhalinienergy.com.

**Mr. Simon Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Sakhalin II phase 2 oil and gas project under consideration for support by the Export Credit Guarantee Department will involve the dumping of waste into the Gulf of Aniva. [158271]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** I am informed that the Sakhalin Energy wants to dispose of dredge sediment at a site in the Gulf of Aniva that has been licensed by the Russian Authorities. ECGD and the other potential lenders want to be sure that any disposal at this site is environmentally acceptable.

**Mr. Simon Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what formal consultation has been undertaken by the Export Credit Guarantee Department on the Sakhalin II phase 2 oil and gas project. [158273]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** ECGD publicly disclosed its consideration of the project and invited comments on 23 May 2003.

ECGD officials have also taken part in meetings and corresponded with relevant stakeholders, including environmental NGOs, from both Sakhalin and the UK.

Sakhalin Energy has undertaken public consultation on Sakhalin and will shortly be publishing an updated Public Consultation and Disclosure Plan.

### Smart Award

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans her Department has to commission a new independent evaluation of the Smart scheme. [157239]

**Nigel Griffiths:** None. The Smart scheme closed in August 2003.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1629W, on Smart awards, what percentage of the total programme costs was devoted to deregulatory initiatives in each year between 2000 and 2003. [157270]

**Nigel Griffiths:** None. The smart programme provided grants to help with the cost of researching and developing new, technology innovative products and processes.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### Better Government for Older People

**Sandra Gidley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many organisations have received a presentation from Better Government for Older People in each year since it was established; [157079]

(2) which *(a)* housing associations, *(b)* fire and police authorities and *(c)* voluntary organisations have subscribed to Better Government for Older People; [157080]

(3) which *(a)* primary care trusts, *(b)* care trusts and *(c)* hospital trusts have subscribed to Better Government for Older People; [157081]

(4) which *(a)* local authorities and *(b)* local strategic partnerships have subscribed to Better Government for Older People. [157082]

**Malcolm Wicks:** The information requested is not held centrally by the Department for Work and Pensions. Such information as is available is held by Better Government for Older People (BGOP) and has been placed in the Library.

### Pension Credit

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what the average Pension Credit payment is in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough; [159255]

(2) how many pensioners are *(a)* eligible for and *(b)* in receipt of Pension Credit in (i) Greater London and (ii) each London borough; [159256]

(3) how many pensioners were in receipt of the Minimum Income Guarantee in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough at the last date on which it was paid. [159257]

**Malcolm Wicks:** Information on the number of pensioners in receipt of the Minimum Income Guarantee in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough as at 3 October 2003 is shown in the table.

Information on the number of people who are eligible for Pension Credit is not available in respect of individual local authority areas. However, we estimate that approximately 450,000 pensioner households (approximately 500,000 individuals) in the London Government Office Region (rounded to the nearest 50,000) are eligible for Pension Credit. Information on numbers of Pension Credit recipients in the London boroughs and average levels of award is given in the table.

| | *Minimum Income Guarantee at 3 October 2003* | | *Pension Credit at 31 January 2004* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Households* | *Individuals* | *Households* | *Individuals* | *Average weekly award per household (£)* |
| London GOR | 214,155 | 252,615 | 238,535 | 282,585 | 60.07 |
| City of London. | 130 | 145 | 135 | 150 | 62.26 |
| Barking and Dagenham | 5,700 | 6,640 | 6,570 | 7,755 | 50.05 |
| Barnet | 8,205 | 9,700 | 9,015 | 10,675 | 62.14 |
| Bexley | 4,425 | 5,120 | 5,600 | 6,615 | 44.51 |
| Brent | 9,150 | 11,040 | 9,740 | 11,780 | 72.19 |
| Bromley | 5,935 | 6,735 | 7,205 | 8,300 | 45.35 |
| Camden | 7,170 | 8,240 | 7,640 | 8,765 | 64.77 |
| Croydon | 7,775 | 9,100 | 9,190 | 10,860 | 54.07 |
| Ealing | 8,680 | 10,420 | 9,460 | 11,385 | 69.60 |
| Enfield | 8,465 | 10,360 | 9,565 | 11,780 | 58.23 |
| Greenwich | 6,790 | 7,950 | 7,705 | 9,085 | 53.57 |
| Hackney | 9,120 | 10,715 | 9,610 | 11,270 | 67.99 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 4,900 | 5,545 | 5,320 | 6,010 | 61.18 |
| Haringey | 7,965 | 9,460 | 8,490 | 10,125 | 66.16 |
| Harrow | 5,840 | 7,195 | 6,415 | 7,915 | 73.07 |
| Havering | 5,655 | 6,530 | 6,960 | 8,210 | 43.41 |
| Hillingdon | 5,320 | 6,270 | 6,130 | 7,290 | 55.39 |
| Hounslow | 5,855 | 7,010 | 6,540 | 7,825 | 62.44 |
| Islington | 7,435 | 8,655 | 7,865 | 9,150 | 64.61 |
| Kensington & Chelsea | 4,365 | 4,905 | 4,730 | 5,305 | 65.79 |
| Kingston upon Thames | 2,595 | 3,015 | 3,170 | 3,720 | 50.39 |
| Lambeth | 8,395 | 9,545 | 9,210 | 10,520 | 61.67 |
| Lewisham | 7,605 | 8,665 | 8,580 | 9,850 | 53.81 |
| Merton | 3,880 | 4,560 | 4,675 | 5,555 | 53.12 |
| Newham | 9,815 | 12,180 | 10,335 | 12,825 | 67.86 |
| Redbridge | 6,720 | 8,165 | 7,430 | 9,060 | 61.49 |
| Richmond upon Thames | 2,870 | 3,210 | 3,520 | 4,010 | 48.56 |
| Southwark | 8,335 | 9,565 | 9,320 | 10,760 | 58.14 |
| Sutton | 3,745 | 4,250 | 4,635 | 5,345 | 45.12 |
| Tower Hamlets | 10,135 | 12,960 | 10,485 | 13,355 | 68.71 |
| Waltham Forest | 7,395 | 8,880 | 8,205 | 9,915 | 57.42 |
| Wandsworth | 7,375 | 8,460 | 8,240 | 9,510 | 57.71 |
| Westminster | 6,425 | 7,415 | 6,850 | 7,905 | 68.47 |

*Notes:*

1. Numbers of recipients are rounded to the nearest five.
2. Average awards are rounded to the nearest penny.
3. Individual recipients include a small number of partners under age 60.
4. Figures exclude a small number of clerical cases. There were 820 Pension Credit clerical cases in London GOR at 31 January 2004.

### Winter Fuel Payments

**Dr. Evan Harris:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many eligible pensioners had applied for and had not received Winter Fuel Payments by *(a)* 1 December 2003, *(b)* 1 January and *(c)* 1 February. [156772]

**Malcolm Wicks:** The number of eligible applicants at each of the specified dates is not available. Such information as is available is set out in the table.

| *Date to:* | *Applications made* | *Payments made* |
|---|---|---|
| 1 December 2003 | 223,644 | 196,716 |
| 1 January 2004 | 239,636 | 218,271 |
| 1 February 2004 | 252,864 | 238,544 |

The balance comprises applications from people who are not entitled to a payment, cases held pending the issue of a payment and applications which have yet to be processed.

Some further payments will be made at the end of March.

## SOLICITOR-GENERAL

### R *v.* Allen

**Mr. Cash:** To ask the Solicitor-General if she will make a statement on the exercise of the Attorney-General's power to enter a nolle prosequi in the light of R *v.* Allen (1862 1B&S)850. [159188]

**The Solicitor-General:** The Attorney-General has power to enter a nolle prosequi which stays criminal proceedings in the Crown court. The case of Allen (1862) 1 B&S sets out that although he should generally hear the parties before entering the nolle he is the judge of whether the nolle should be entered or not and he has no obligation to hear the parties before so doing.

A nolle prosequi acts as a stay upon the proceedings. It puts an end to a prosecution but does not operate as a bar or discharge or acquittal on the merits. Dicta from Crompton J. in the case of Allen suggests that a nolle prosequi puts an end to a prosecution but this issue has never been fully litigated.

Applications to the Attorney-General asking him to direct a nolle prosequi most usually come from the defendant rather than the prosecutor as the prosecutor has a substantial range of powers to end a prosecution.

The most common use of the Attorney-General's power to direct a nolle prosequi is in cases when the defendant cannot attend court for plea or to attend trial because of physical or mental incapacity, which is expected to be permanent.

## DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

### Asylum

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many households, whose former home was provided by the National Asylum Support Service, were accepted as priority homeless in each local housing authority for each year since 2000. [155035]

**Yvette Cooper:** Cases of priority homelessness acceptance where a household lost its last settled home because of a requirement to leave the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) accommodation have been separately distinguished on local authorities' quarterly statistical returns to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister since April 2002. Latest available information, as reported in each quarter, is available in the Libraries of the House.

### Housing

**Ms Oona King:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether it is his policy that the owner of a house in multiple occupation will be required to hold a licence for *(a)* the whole property and *(b)* each room within the property; and if he will make a statement on the level of fees. [158548]

**Keith Hill:** The licence for a House in Multiple Occupation will be held either by the owner of the property or a managing agent, depending on which of those persons is the more suitable to hold the licence. The licence will be in respect of the whole property.

Licence fees will be payable on the application for a licence and will normally be chargeable once every five years. The fee payable will be determined by reference to the number of habitable dwellings in the House in Multiple Occupation, subject to a maximum charge per dwelling. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister are in discussion with the Local Government Association on the level of that maximum charge, but that is likely to be in the region of £110.00 per dwelling for a five-year licence.

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his projections are, for *(a)* the demand level for affordable housing in Greater London, *(b)* the level of public subsidy that will be required to meet these demand levels in Greater London and *(c)* the number of affordable houses which will be provided in Greater London through public subsidy in to each of the next 15 years. [158764]

**Keith Hill:** The London Housing Board's London Housing Strategy 2003 identifies 306,000 additional households, 20,400 per year, over the period to 2016. In addition there is backlog of unmet need of 112,000 households. The London Housing Strategy 2003 has a target of 23,000 new homes per annum by 2005–06, of which 10,000 housing completions should be affordable. The London Housing Board has begun the preparation of the next long-term housing strategy for the capital to cover the period up to 2016, which will take account of the detailed housing requirements study the Greater London Authority is currently carrying out. On 21 October last year my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister announced £2.1 billion for investment in housing in London for the next two years. I expect to

make an announcement in the next few weeks on the Housing Corporation's Annual Development Programme of £1.5 billion for affordable housing in the capital for 2004-05 and 2005-06.

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many properties have been provided in each London borough by the Housing Corporation in its London approved development programme in each of the last five years. [158446]

**Keith Hill:** Information about the number of properties that have been provided through the Housing Corporation's Approved Development Programme in each authority in London in each of the last five years is being collated. I will write to the hon. Member and will make a copy available in the Library of the House.

### Landlords

**Patrick Mercer:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister for what reason rent officers are *(a)* obliged to investigate private landlords and *(b)* not obliged to investigate registered social landlords. [158984]

**Keith Hill:** Where requested to do so by a local authority, the Rent Service is obliged to assess the rental value of a property let to a tenant of a private landlord or a Registered Social landlord in connection with a claim for Housing Benefit.

Housing Benefit regulations set out the circumstances in which cases are referred to the Rent Service. In respect of tenants of private landlords, local authorities must refer claims on which rent allowance may be awarded, or where they have been notified of a change relating to rent allowance, or where a prospective occupier is likely to make a claim for rent allowance. In respect of tenants of Registered Social Landlords, local authorities may refer the case where they consider that the dwelling is too large or the rent is unreasonably high. In such cases the local authority must state the reason for the application, and the rent officer must make a determination in the normal way.

In respect of properties let to tenants of private landlords or Registered Social Landlords, where the tenancy commenced before 15 January 1989, the landlord or tenant may ask the Rent Service to determine a fair rent for a property.

### Planning

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the Department is planning to release Planning Policy Guidance Note 10; and if he will make a statement. [159036]

**Keith Hill:** Planning Policy Guidance Note 10 "Planning and Waste Management" will be replaced by a planning policy statement in line with the update of the PPG series. The aim is to consult on a draft of the new PPS10 in the first half of this year.

**Mr. Chidgey:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to bring forward proposals for legislation to ensure that companies providing water and sewerage services are made statutory consultees to local authorities in the planning process. [159124]

**Keith Hill:** Water and sewerage undertakers will be statutory consultees on local development documents under the new arrangements being introduced under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill.

Local authorities are advised to consult water and sewerage undertakers on planning applications. These non-statutory arrangements appear to be working satisfactorily and will continue.

**Andy King:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what action the Department has taken to ensure there is full consultation with *(a)* schools and residents in close proximity to and *(b)* local authorities responsible for proposed sites of Tetra masts. [159377]

**Keith Hill:** Current planning guidance for all electronic communication developments is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 8 (revised) (PPG8). The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has also issued a Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development.

PPG8 requires that where a base station site is on or near a school the operator consults the relevant body of the school or college prior to submitting an application to the local planning authority. The Code sets out the factors that should be taken into account by network operators and local planning authorities in determining whether a school or college should be consulted.

PPG8 also strongly encourages telecommunications operators and local planning authorities to carry out annual discussions about rollout plans for each authority's area. The Code includes more detailed recommendations for managing the relationship between mobile operators and local planning authorities and the process of public consultation.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Beef

**Annabelle Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what percentage by weight of current beef supply contracts for his Department and its agencies are sourced from *(a)* British and *(b)* Scottish herds. [157861]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** This detailed information could be provided only at disproportionate costs.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office restaurant and catering services are contracted out to a range of suppliers. Of the beef provided by our principal supplier, we are told that the amount currently sourced from British herds is 90 per cent. of which 10 per cent. comes from Scottish Herds.

### Belize/Guatemala

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action his Department is taking to help bring about a long-term solution to the territorial border disputes between Belize and Guatemala. [159269]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** The UK continues to support fully the Organisation of American States (OAS) sponsored process as the best means to secure a negotiated settlement, and is a member of the OAS-facilitated Belize-Guatemala 'Group of Friends'.

When my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. Rammell) visited Belize and Guatemala from 14–17 January, he reaffirmed the UK's continued support for Belize and Guatemala in their pursuit of a definitive settlement to their territorial dispute, within the framework of the OAS-facilitated process.

We are supporting the OAS-sponsored Confidence Building Measures in Belize and Guatemala through the FCO/DFID/MOD Global Conflict Prevention Pool. £1.8 million has been allocated this financial year. Our projects are aimed at reducing tensions, encouraging co-operation between security agencies and addressing the underlying causes of conflict.

## British Prisoners Overseas

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many British citizens are serving custodial sentences in foreign gaols, broken down by country. [159290]

**Mr. Mullin:** The figures for the number of British citizens detained overseas are collated on a quarterly basis. The most recent quarter for which we have figures is the quarter ending 31 December 2003.

The following table lists the countries in which British citizens are imprisoned and gives the numbers detained in each, as of 31 December 2003. The totals do not differentiate between those awaiting trial/sentencing and those serving custodial sentences.

The figures represent those prisoners who either requested Consular assistance or who gave permission to the local authorities to notify the Consul of their arrest.

| *Country* | *Number of prisoners* |
|---|---|
| Albania | 1 |
| Antigua and Barbuda | 10 |
| Argentina | 5 |
| Australia | 201 |
| Austria | 6 |
| Azerbaijan | 1 |
| Bangladesh | 1 |
| Barbados | 24 |
| Belgium | 28 |
| Brazil | 33 |
| Cambodia | 1 |
| Canada | 15 |
| China | 12 |
| Colombia | 6 |
| Costa Rica | 7 |
| Croatia | 1 |
| Cuba | 3 |
| Cyprus | 5 |
| Czech Republic | 1 |
| Denmark | 11 |
| Ecuador | 8 |
| Egypt | 8 |
| Ethiopia | 1 |
| Finland | 2 |
| France | 241 |
| Germany | 105 |
| Greece | 12 |
| Grenada | 9 |
| Guyana | 6 |
| Hungary | 1 |
| Iceland | 1 |
| India | 28 |
| Indonesia | 8 |
| Ireland | 75 |
| Israel | 2 |
| Italy | 21 |
| Jamaica | 125 |
| Japan | 43 |
| Korea (South) | 4 |
| Kuwait | 1 |
| Luxembourg | 3 |
| Madagascar | 2 |
| Malawi | 1 |
| Malaysia | 3 |
| Malta | 5 |
| Mexico | 3 |
| Morocco | 3 |
| Nepal | 1 |
| Netherlands | 47 |
| New Zealand | 19 |
| Nicaragua | 1 |
| Nigeria | 1 |
| Norway | 5 |
| Oman | 3 |
| Pakistan | 12 |
| Panama | 8 |
| Peru | 22 |
| Philippines | 19 |
| Poland | 2 |
| Portugal | 13 |
| Qatar | 1 |
| Romania | 6 |
| Russia | 1 |
| St. Lucia | 8 |
| Saudi Arabia | 4 |
| Singapore | 9 |
| South Africa | 21 |
| Spain | 283 |
| Surinam | 4 |
| Sweden | 15 |
| Switzerland | 8 |
| Syria | 1 |
| Taiwan | 23 |
| Thailand | 34 |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 29 |
| Turkey | 5 |
| United Arab Emirates | 20 |
| United States of America | 690 |
| Venezuela | 24 |
| Vietnam | 1 |
| Yemen | 5 |
| Zimbabwe | 2 |
| Total | 2,440 |

## Correspondence

**Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letters from the hon. Member for Manchester, Central of *(a)* 27 October 2003 regarding Mr. IHT, reference GV100/81730, *(b)* 12 December 2003 regarding Ms AY, *(c)* 13 December 2003 regarding Mrs. EA, *(d)* 7 November 2003 regarding Mr. MOS, reference Yemen 4781/03 and *(e)* 4 December 2003 regarding Mr. SM, reference GV100/83947. [158568]

**Mr. Mullin:** I apologise that my hon. Friend has not received replies to his letters. The letter concerning Mrs. EA was not received at my office and the letter concerning Mr. MOS was addressed to UKvisas but not initially received there. I now have copies of both letters. UKvisas is making the necessary enquiries with our diplomatic posts overseas. The other three letters were not replied to due to an administration error in UKvisas. I will reply to my hon. Friend on all these cases as soon as possible.

### Cyprus

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on progress with the Kofi Annan plan for Cyprus. [157903]

**Mr. MacShane:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Surrey Heath (Mr. Hawkins) on 27 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 580W, and also to the reply my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary gave to the hon. Member for Taunton (Mr. Flook) in the House on 2 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 748. We will keep the House informed as matters progress.

### Gibraltar

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will next visit Gibraltar; and how he will celebrate the 300th anniversary of British rule in Gibraltar. [157986]

**Mr. MacShane:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Poole (Mr. Syms) in the House on 2 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 749. Foreign engagements for my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and other Ministers are kept under constant review. It is not the practice to announce such visits until they are firm. Because of the unpredictable nature of world events, final decisions on overseas visits are often not possible until very shortly before the day of travel and occasionally not until they are under way.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the future of Gibraltar. [159087]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave the hon. Member for East Worthing and Shoreham (Tim Loughton) on 16 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 1417.

### Iran

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what new information has been *(a)* made available by the Iranian authorities and *(b)* discovered by the International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors in respect of Iran's nuclear programme since the trilateral agreement with Iran, France and Germany, concluded in 2003. [158237]

**Mr. MacShane:** Since the signing of the trilateral agreement, Iran has made a declaration to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) covering its nuclear programmes. The IAEA Director-General presented a report of the Agency's findings to the IAEA Board of Governors' meeting in November 2003 and will present a further report at the next meeting, scheduled for the week beginning 8 March. The text of the November report is available on the IAEA's internet website at www.iaea.org.

### Iraq

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the United Kingdom experts working as part of the Iraq Survey Group have full access to the Iraqi declaration to the United Nations Security Council on its weapons of mass destruction programmes dated 8 December 2002. [157155]

**Mr. MacShane:** UK experts on the ground in Iraq do not have direct access to the declaration.

They are, however, supported by analysts in the Ministry of Defence, by whom they were briefed before departing for Iraq and whom they are able to consult at any time about any aspect of Iraq's WMD programmes.

### Legal Aid

**David Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations have been made to partners in the EU concerning provision of legal aid to UK citizens arrested on civil or criminal charges. [156227]

**Mr. Mullin:** There is no EU directive in force concerning the provision of legal aid to EU nationals in other member states who have been arrested on civil or criminal charges. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has made no representations on this issue. The provision of legal aid is subject to each member state's domestic law or bilateral agreements with the UK. If a British national detained in an EU country is denied legal aid when that British national believes they have an entitlement, under local law or bilateral agreement, our consular staff stand ready to raise that individual's concerns with the local authorities. Although not affecting the types of cases raised in this question, a new directive concerning legal aid in cross-border civil or commercial disputes will come into effect in November 2004.

### Turkey

**Dr. Tonge:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Turkish Government regarding *(a)* the imprisonment of Mr. Abdullah Ocalan and *(b)* visits to Mr. Ocalan by the Red Cross. [158301]

**Mr. MacShane:** We have not made representations to the Turkish Government regarding the imprisonment of Mr. Ocalan or on visits to Mr. Ocalan by the Red Cross/Crescent. However, we monitor Mr. Ocalan's imprisonment closely and officials from the British embassy in Turkey have discussed the situation with Mr. Ocalan's lawyers. We continue to make frequent representations on human rights reform, including the rights and conditions for all prisoners, for example, during the ongoing bilateral human rights dialogue, the next round of which will be in late spring 2004.

**Dr. Tonge:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the (*a*) EU and (*b*) Turkish Government on language and broadcasting rights in Turkey. [158302]

**Mr. MacShane:** My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary frequently discusses this issue at the European Councils. the Council Conclusions in December referred to the need for further efforts regarding cultural rights. Our strong support for Turkey's EU candidature means we are always looking for ways to help Turkey meet the Copenhagen political criteria, which include cultural rights. The Foreign Secretary reiterated our position during his visit to Istanbul on 3 March.

During my visit to Turkey in January this year, I raised the need for prompt implementation of all reforms with ambassador Sungar, Head of the European Secretariat General and Foreign Minister Gul. At official level, monthly EU working groups discuss progress on reforms, including those mentioned by the hon. Member. Officials in the British embassy in Turkey follow the situation closely by means of their contacts with all levels of Turkish civil society and Government.

### Zelimkhan Yanderbiyev

**Mr. Blunt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on (*a*) the arrest by Russian authorities of two Qatari sportsmen and (*b*) the arrest of two Russians in Qatar following the assassination of Zelimkhan Yanderbiyev. [158587]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** We understand that three Russian citizens were arrested in Qatar following the murder of Zelimkhan Yanderbiyev. We support the authorities in Qatar in their continuing investigations, and expect Russia to co-operate fully. We also understand that two men with connections to Qatar were detained by the Russian authorities in Moscow on 26 February.

### Zimbabwe

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will take harsher measures against the Zimbabwe Government. [159086]

**Mr. Mullin:** We agree on the need for tough measures against the Mugabe Government. With our strong support, the European Union decided on 19 February to increase the number of senior Zimbabwean figures on its travel ban and assets freeze from 79 to 95 and to extend those measures for a further 12 months. The measures are specifically targeted on the ZANU-PF leadership and others with direct responsibility for human rights abuses, eroding press freedoms, and harassing civil society.

We do not want to impose harsher measures such as trade and economic sanctions which would hurt the Zimbabwean people. They are already suffering enough as a result of ZANU-PF's ruinous policies.

## EDUCATION AND SKILLS

### Estonia

**Lembit Öpik:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what joint projects he has undertaken with the Estonian Government to (*a*) support the education systems in Estonia and (*b*) share best practice from the UK education sector; and if he will make a statement. [157438]

**Alan Johnson:** Our programme of co-operation with the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research includes a School Leadership skills project for young Estonian Headteachers, help with further development of Estonian vocational education and training policies and with strategic planning and quality assurance approaches.

Estonian Headteachers have visited UK schools, LEAs and the National College for School Leadership and British teachers have visited Estonia to look at effective use of ICT in schools. UK and Estonian teachers will be able to share best practice in education through the Global Gateway, a new international website to facilitate school partnerships. There is an ongoing programme of joint seminars, conferences and working groups on topics such as lifelong learning and skills, the role of parents in school governing bodies, ICT in education, education—business links and higher education reform. We are also encouraging and facilitating links between Estonian and UK universities.

### Learning and Skills Council

**Sir Paul Beresford:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total gross expenditure was of the Learning and Skills Council in each year since it was established. [158649]

**Miss Melanie Johnson** *[holding answer 4 March 2004]:* Extracts from the LSC's published accounts for both years are set out in the following table. The Annual Report and Accounts of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for 2002–03 were laid before the House on 12 February 2004. I am pleased that the LSC continued to make good progress in its second full year of operation. It managed a budget of over £7 billion, including successfully taking responsibility for our schools sixth form budget of over £1 billion. It has worked effectively with schools, colleges and training providers to drive forward radical and lasting improvements in the range and quality of post-16 education and training.

*£000*

| | *Year ended 31 March 2003* | *19 months ended 31 March 2002* |
|---|---|---|
| *Programme Expenditure* | | |
| Young People | 4,057,349 | 2,411,493 |
| Adults | 2,427,229 | 2,243,658 |
| Standards and Capital | 737,458 | 463,403 |
| Other | 134,703 | 14,737 |
| Programme total | 7,356,739 | 5,133,291 |
| *Administration Expenditure* | | |
| Staff Costs | 134,195 | 144,625 |
| Other Costs | 89,070 | 94,902 |

£000

| | Year ended March 2003 | 19 months ended 31 March 2002 |
|---|---|---|
| Depreciation | 13,441 | 9,614 |
| Admin total | 236,706 | 249,141 |
| Total | 7,593,445 | 5,382,432 |

Notes:
1. The Report and Accounts for the period to 31 March 2002 cover a 19 month period, and were laid on 8 April 2003.
2. The LSC's budget for 2002-03 was increased in-year, to take forward new work on Employer Training Pilots, Centres of Vocational Excellence, Teachers Pay Initiative and "Success for All".
3. The LSC budget for 2003-04 is £8.4 billion.

### Milk

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley receive free school milk from (i) central and (ii) local sources. [157980]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** The Department for Education and Skills does not collect any data on school milk provision.

### Ministerial Travel

**Bob Russell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when he last used a train in connection with his ministerial duties. [155165]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State last used a train, in connection with his ministerial duties, on 24 February 2004. All ministerial travel on official business is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in "Travel by Ministers".

### National Recognition Information Centres

**Mr. Nigel Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what future roles he expects the UK's National Recognition Information Centres to play in *(a)* labour mobility and *(b)* the recruitment of international students; and what plans he has for the continuation of their work; [157360]

(2) if he will make a statement on the use he makes of the UK National Recognition Information Centres' knowledge and experience of international education and training standards in the policy-making process; and what use was made of it in assessing UK education and training standards by global comparison, with particular reference to *(a)* teaching and *(b)* early years education. [157373]

**Alan Johnson:** The principal value of the UK National Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) and the UK National Reference Point for Vocational Qualifications (NRP) is to the individuals, universities, colleges, employers and wide-range of other organisations that use their advice on the comparability of international and UK qualifications. Through this work, the UK NARIC and the NRP play a key and continuing role in achieving student and labour mobility objectives, and in promoting UK qualifications overseas. The information they provide helps to inform policy-making across the education and training sectors, alongside other international comparators. The UK NARIC supports, in particular, the Prime Minister's Initiative to attract more international students to the UK by maximising the accessibility and transferability of international qualifications, by providing information for students, and by helping UK institutions to make sound admissions decisions.

**Mr. Nigel Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the contribution he expects the UK's National Recognition Information Centres to make in the reform of European higher education through the Bologna process. [157361]

**Alan Johnson:** The UK Government work with the UK National Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) and other stakeholders on the development of the Bologna process of European higher education reform in the UK and to influence the debate on the way forward. Recognition of qualifications is key to achieving many of the goals of the Bologna process. Through its operation and network activities, UK NARIC already plays a vital and continuing role, building bridges between education systems and qualifications and in furthering recognition policies across Europe.

### Overseas Students

**Helen Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps he is taking to secure the repayment of tuition fees from European Union students after they graduate; and if he will make a statement. [158612]

**Alan Johnson:** The Student Loans Company (SLC) are responsible for ensuring repayments are made when they fall due, and have well established procedures for recovering loans from graduates living and working outside the UK. All students taking out a loan are required to sign a declaration agreeing to repay, even if they move abroad, and SLC have a range of sanctions that can be imposed on defaulters. Officials and SLC are exploring ways to ensure the most robust and effective loan recovery mechanisms are in place by the time the first graduate contributions from EU students are due to be collected.

**Helen Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate he has made of the number of overseas students who will enter universities in England in the next five years. [158613]

**Alan Johnson:** The projected number of EU and non-EU overseas students in English Higher Education institutions in 2003/04 and 2004/05 as published in the Department Annual Report 2003 is shown in the table. These projections are based on a number of assumptions and should be treated with caution. The numbers include, on a headcount basis, full and part-time students on undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

*Non-UK, EU and non-EU overseas resident students attending English universities (000)*

| | 2003/04 | 2004/05 |
|---|---|---|
| EU Students | 71 | 74 |
| Non-EU Overseas Students | 136 | 145 |

Detailed projections for later years are currently being prepared, and will be published in the Department Annual Report 2004 this April.

### Parliamentary Questions

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many Parliamentary Questions have been tabled to his Department since 1 January 2003, broken down by *(a)* ordinary written and *(b)* named day; what percentage in respect of *(a)* were answered within 10 working days; and what percentage in respect of *(b)* were answered by the specified date. [157517]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** Ministers take responses to Parliamentary Questions very seriously, and try to answer within the Parliamentary deadline wherever possible. Since 1 January 2003, 3,743 ordinary written questions have been tabled to the Department for Education and Skills, 72 per cent. of which were answered within 10 working days. 797 named day questions were tabled in the same period. We are unable to provide the percentage of those questions answered by the specified date without incurring disproportionate cost.

### Problem Gambling

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if the Government will include problem gambling in the Personal Health and Social Education element of the curriculum; [158315]

(2) what assessment he has made of the impact of problem gambling on educational achievement among 12 to 15 year olds. [158350]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** Through Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) all pupils should learn about responsibility and the consequences of their actions. Personal finance education, delivered through the framework for PSHE, enables pupils to develop financial responsibility and links financial decisions and actions with value judgements. Schools may choose to specifically address problem gambling, but we have no plans to require them to do so.

No assessment has been made by the Department of the impact of problem gambling on education achievement of 12 to 15 year olds.

### Pupil Numbers

**Sandra Gidley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the *(a)* average and *(b)* maximum class size in Hampshire was at Key Stage (i) 1, (ii) 2 and (iii) 3 for each year since 1997. [157286]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** The information requested is shown in the tables.

*Average class size[1]: Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton local education authorities position in January each year*

| | Hampshire[2] | Hampshire[3] | Portsmouth[3] | Southampton[3] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1997 Key Stage 1 | 27.5 | — | — | — |
| Key Stage 2 | 28.2 | — | — | — |
| Pupils aged mainly under 14 in maintained secondary schools | 23.9 | — | — | — |
| 1998 Key Stage 1 | — | 28.0 | 27.8 | 27.0 |
| Key Stage 2 | — | 28.6 | 28.1 | 28.8 |
| Pupils aged mainly under 14 in maintained secondary schools | — | 24.3 | 23.9 | 23.5 |
| 1999 Key Stage 1 | — | 27.8 | 27.5 | 27.0 |
| Key Stage 2 | — | 28.6 | 28.7 | 28.4 |
| Pupils aged mainly under 14 in maintained secondary schools | — | 24.9 | 24.8 | 24.4 |
| 2000 Key Stage 1 | — | 27.3 | 26.1 | 26.8 |
| Key Stage 2 | — | 28.7 | 28.6 | 28.6 |
| Pupils aged mainly under 14 in maintained secondary schools | — | 25.0 | 24.9 | 23.4 |
| 2001 Key Stage 1 | — | 26.3 | 25.3 | 26.2 |
| Key Stage 2 | — | 28.4 | 28.2 | 28.7 |
| Pupils in year groups 7, 8 and 9 in maintained secondary schools | — | 25.0 | 24.1 | 24.4 |
| 2002 Key Stage 1 | — | 26.0 | 24.8 | 26.7 |
| Key Stage 2 | — | 28.0 | 27.6 | 28.1 |
| Pupils in year groups 7, 8 and 9 in maintained secondary schools | — | 25.0 | 24.7 | 23.5 |
| 2003 Key Stage 1[3] | — | 26.2 | 25.1 | 26.2 |
| Key Stage 2 | — | 28.1 | 26.9 | 28.2 |
| Pupils in year groups 7, 8 and 9 in maintained secondary schools | — | 24.9 | 24.0 | 24.5 |

[1] Classes taught by one teacher

[2] Before local government reorganisation

[3] After local government reorganisation

[4] Includes Reception classes to produce a coverage as close as possible to that available in previous years.

*Source:*

Annual Schools' Census

*Maximum Class Size*[1]: *Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton Local Education Authorities Position in January each year*

| | *Hampshire*[2] | *Hampshire*[3] | *Portsmouth*[3] | *Southampton*[3] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1997 Key Stage 1 | 44 | — | — | — |
| Key Stage 2 | 39 | — | — | — |
| Pupils aged mainly under 14 in maintained secondary schools | 37 | — | — | — |
| 1998 Key Stage 1 | — | 45 | 38 | 41 |
| Key Stage 2 | — | 38 | 37 | 37 |
| Pupils aged mainly under 14 in maintained secondary schools | — | 36 | 33 | 34 |
| 1999 Key Stage 1 | — | 47 | 36 | 36 |
| Key Stage 2 | — | 39 | 36 | 35 |
| Pupils aged mainly under 14 in maintained secondary schools | — | 40 | 33 | 33 |
| 2000 Key Stage 1 | — | 41 | 34 | 36 |
| Key Stage 2 | — | 38 | 36 | 37 |
| Pupils aged mainly under 14 in maintained secondary schools | — | 44 | 33 | 35 |
| 2001 Key Stage 1 | — | 33 | 31 | 31 |
| Key Stage 2 | — | 38 | 36 | 35 |
| Pupils in year groups 7, 8 and 9 in maintained secondary Schools | — | 35 | 35 | 35 |
| 2002 Key Stage 1 | — | 32 | 30 | 31 |
| Key Stage 2 | — | 37 | 35 | 36 |
| Pupils in year groups 7, 8 and 9 in maintained secondary schools | — | 39 | 34 | 35 |
| 2003 Key Stage 1 [4] | — | 37 | 30 | 32 |
| Key Stage 2 | — | 37 | 34 | 35 |
| Pupils in year groups 7, 8 and 9 in maintained secondary schools | — | 37 | 34 | 34 |

[1] Classes taught by one teacher
[2] Before local government reorganisation
[3] After local government reorganisation
[4] Includes Reception classes to produce a coverage as close as possible to that available in previous years.
*Source:*
Annual Schools' Census

### School Meals

**Mr. Randall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the Department's policy is on encouraging the provision of hot school meals. [158494]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** In guidance "Healthy School Lunches", produced to assist caterers to implement the requirements of the nutritional standards regulations, the Secretary of State strongly recommends that some hot food should be available. However, he does not have powers to require a school to provide hot food. The guidance can be viewed on our website: www.dfes.gov.uk/schoollunches.

### School Sports Facilities

**James Purnell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to ensure that schools open their sports facilities to the wider community out-of-hours. [157763]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to the hon. Member for Ribble Valley (Mr. Evans) on 2 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 884W.

**James Purnell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools in *(a)* England, *(b)* each region and *(c)* each Parliamentary constituency open their sports facilities for community use out-of-hours. [157766]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** We do not currently hold the data requested and they could be provided only at disproportionate costs.

### Schools Funding

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the administrative cost of the Standards Funds grants is for 2003–04. [159186]

**Mr. Miliband:** This information is not collected centrally.

### Special Educational Needs

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children were first identified as having special educational needs *(a)* before the start of compulsory schooling, *(b)* at primary school and *(c)* at secondary school in the last year for which figures are available. [157153]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** Information is not collected about numbers of children first identified as having special educational needs. However, figures are available for children for whom new statements were issued. The last year for which figures are available is 2002.

During 2002, statements were made for the first time for 7,120 children aged under 5. 15,690 statements were issued for children aged 5–10 and 7,910 for children aged 11–19.

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the distribution of children with special educational needs across maintained schools; and what impact publication of the arrangements made by local education authorities to monitor admissions of children with special educational needs has had on that distribution. [157175]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** The following table shows the distribution of children with special educational needs (SEN)—with and without statements of SEN—across maintained primary and maintained secondary schools in England.

*Number and percentage of schools by percentage of pupils with SEN*

| | Primary schools | | Secondary schools | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Pupils with SEN* | *Number* | *Percentage* | *Number* | *Percentage* |
| Up to 5 per cent. | 682 | 3.8 | 258 | 7.5 |
| 5 per cent. up to 25 per cent. | 13,864 | 77.6 | 2,616 | 76.1 |
| 25 per cent. up to 35 per cent. | 2,459 | 13.8 | 373 | 10.9 |
| 35 per cent. up to 50 per cent. | 761 | 4.3 | 170 | 4.9 |
| 50 per cent. and above | 95 | 0.5 | 19 | 0.6 |
| Total number of schools | 17,861 | | 3,436 | |

*Source:*

Statistics of Education—Special Educational Needs in England: January 2003 Issue Number 09/03, published November 2003

Local Education Authorities' Admission Forums consider how well admission arrangements work locally, including arrangements for the admission of children with special educational needs. As Admissions Forums became mandatory only on 20 January 2003, it is too early to determine the impact they will have had on promoting protocols for the admission of these children.

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress the Department has made in developing descriptions for types of special educational needs for use in the Pupil Level Annual Schools Census. [157177]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** Draft descriptions of types of special educational need were developed in autumn 2002. These were then sent to a sample of schools, local authorities and voluntary organisations for consultation at the end of November 2002. The descriptions were amended in the light of the responses received and the final version sent to local authorities in June 2003 and also placed on the Department's website.

In September 2003, copies of the guidance were sent to all maintained and non-maintained schools to enable them to prepare for the Pupil Level Annual Schools Census in January 2004.

There are eleven categories of need described in the guidance, grouped into the four main areas of difficulty set out in the SEN Code of Practice 2001. From January 2004, data on pupils type of need will be collected for all pupils with a statement of SEN and those at "school action plus".

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools have been awarded the Special Educational Needs Quality Mark; and how many have failed to meet the criteria for its award. [158089]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** The Government do not run a scheme of Special Educational Needs Quality Marks.

### Statemented Children

**Dr. Cable:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills to whom responsibility for the on-costs falls when a child has a statement and the child has quantified support of a given number of hours from a learning support assistant. [157359]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** Local education authorities are under a statutory duty, by virtue of section 324(5)(a) of the Education Act 1996, to arrange the special educational provision specified in statements they maintain for children, unless a child's parent has made suitable arrangements.

## PRIME MINISTER

### Katharine Gun

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Prime Minister what discussions he has had in the last 12 months with the *(a)* Department for Constitutional Affairs and *(b)* Attorney-General on the Katharine Gun case. [158095]

**The Prime Minister:** I had no discussions with the Department for Constitutional Affairs on this matter.

I had no discussions with the Attorney-General. However, I was copied in on the "Shawcross Exercise", the process of which the Solicitor-General has already outlined to the House on 26 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 428.

After the decision to discontinue the case had been made, the Attorney-General confirmed this to me.

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Prime Minister what discussions he has had in the last 12 months with the Secretary of State for Defence on the Katharine Gun case. [158780]

**The Prime Minister:** None.

## TREASURY

### Asthma

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many deaths from asthma there were in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough during the last five years. [158444]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Simon Hughes, dated 5 March 2004:*

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning how many deaths from asthma there were in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough during the last five years. (158444)

The latest year for which the figures requested are available is 2002. Figures for the five-year period 1998 to 2002 are given in the attached table.

*Deaths from asthma[1] in Greater London,[2] and London boroughs,[2,3] 1998 to 2002, aggregated[4]*

| | *Number of deaths* |
|---|---|
| *Greater London* | 850 |
| *London Boroughs* | |
| Barking and Dagenham | 17 |
| Barnet | 31 |
| Bexley | 21 |
| Brent | 38 |
| Bromley | 35 |

*Deaths from asthma[1] in Greater London,[2] and London boroughs,[2,3] 1998 to 2002, aggregated[4]*

| | *Number of deaths* |
|---|---|
| Camden | 17 |
| Croydon | 52 |
| Baling | 40 |
| Enfield | 33 |
| Greenwich | 27 |
| Hackney and City of London [3] | 24 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 10 |
| Haringey | 25 |
| Harrow | 23 |
| Havering | 20 |
| Hillingdon | 32 |
| Hounslow | 32 |
| Islington | 19 |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 14 |
| Kingston upon Thames | 19 |
| Lambeth | 32 |
| Lewisham | 32 |
| Merton | 35 |
| Newham | 34 |
| Redbridge | 26 |
| Richmond upon Thames | 27 |
| Southwark | 20 |
| Sutton | 37 |
| Tower Hamlets | 20 |
| Waltham Forest | 16 |
| Wandsworth | 22 |
| City of Westminster | 20 |

[1] The cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) for 1998–2000, and the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) for 2001–2002. The codes used are listed below:

Asthma-ICD-9 493; ICD-10 J45-J46.

Details of the effect of the change in classification in 2001 are described in a report published in May 2002:

Office for National Statistics. Results of the ICD-10 bridge coding study, England and Wales, 1999. Health Statistics Quarterly 14 (2002), 75–83.

[2] Usual residents of these areas.

[3] City of London is included with the figure for Hackney to avoid disclosure of small numbers.

[4] Deaths occurring in each calendar year.

## Money Laundering

**Mr. Llwyd:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many alternative or parallel remittance brokers have been registered as money service businesses since the introduction of the Money Laundering Regulations 2001. [158899]

**Ruth Kelly:** Customs and Excise are required to keep a register of money service operators, under the 2001 Money Laundering Regulations. The register does not distinguish between conventional and alternative or parallel remittance brokers. To provide a breakdown of the overall number of businesses on the register would entail a disproportionate cost.

## Carers

**Sandra Gidley:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the number of people providing unpaid care to people aged 65 and over. [158054]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from John Pullinger to Sandra Gidley, dated 5 March 2004:*

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the estimate of the number of people providing unpaid care to people aged 65 and over. I am replying in his absence. (158054)

The General Household Survey (GHS), carried out by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) asked a module of questions on care-giving in 2000 (the most recent year available). The GHS 2000 "Carers" report, showed that around 11% of adults in Great Britain (representing 4.7 million people) were caring for someone aged 65 and over. These estimates have been obtained by weighting the survey results to the relevant population estimates. As with any statistical sample survey, estimates from the GHS are subject to sampling variability.

In 2000 as in previous years, 'carers' were defined as people who were looking after, or providing some regular service for, a sick, disabled or elderly person living in their own or another household. Certain types of caring have been excluded: caring for someone in the capacity of volunteer for a charity or other organisation, caring for someone receiving care in an institution, providing financial support only, and caring for someone with a temporary illness or disability (as defined by the respondent). It is not possible to identify from this data source whether carers were paid or unpaid.

The 2001 Census asked a question about whether people provided unpaid care for a family member or friend, and for how many hours. Around 5.2 million people in England and Wales reported that they were providing unpaid care for a family member or friend, including over a million providing more than 50 hours a week. Around 950,000 people aged 65 and over provided care of this sort, including around 340,000 providing more than 50 hours a week. The Census did not collect information on the ages of those to whom care was given.

Further information on carers from the 2001 Census and other sources is available on the National Statistics website at http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nscl.asp?id=8467

## Causes of Death

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the latest figures for the death rate from *(a)* cancer and *(b)* coronary heart disease are in (i) Greater London, (ii) each London borough and (iii) the UK; and what they were in 1997. [158403]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Simon Hughes, dated 5 March 2004:*

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning the latest figures for the death rate from *(a)* cancer and *(b)* coronary heart disease in (i) Greater London, (ii) each London borough and (iii) United Kingdom; and what they were in 1997. (158403)

The latest year for which the figures requested are available is 2002 and these are given, with figures for 1997, in the table.

*Death rates[1] from cancer and coronary heart disease[2] in Greater London,[3] London boroughs[3,4] and the United Kingdom, 1997 and 2002[5]*

*Age-standardised death rates per 100,000 population[1]*

| | *Cancer* | | *Coronary heart disease* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *1997* | *2002* | *1997* | *2002* |
| United Kingdom | 203 | 189 | 163 | 128 |
| Greater London | 201 | 185 | 145 | 119 |
| *London boroughs* | | | | |
| Barking and Dagenham | 216 | 221 | 179 | 141 |
| Barnet | 177 | 156 | 133 | 102 |

*Death rates [1] from cancer and coronary heart disease[2] in Greater London,[3] London boroughs[3,4] and the United Kingdom, 1997 and 2002[5]*

*Age-standardised death rates per 100,000 population[1]*

| | Cancer | | Coronary heart disease | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1997 | 2002 | 1997 | 2002 |
| Bexley | 211 | 179 | 142 | 114 |
| Brent | 179 | 171 | 148 | 118 |
| Bromley | 187 | 171 | 126 | 92 |
| Camden | 188 | 184 | 116 | 125 |
| Croydon | 197 | 176 | 120 | 111 |
| Haling | 176 | 159 | 153 | 121 |
| Enfield | 183 | 171 | 140 | 108 |
| Greenwich | 230 | 206 | 165 | 124 |
| Hackney | 211 | 202 | 174 | 138 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 207 | 203 | 143 | 100 |
| Haringey | 192 | 176 | 144 | 134 |
| Harrow | 193 | 153 | 128 | 105 |
| Havering | 202 | 187 | 152 | 136 |
| Hillingdon | 205 | 195 | 141 | 122 |
| Hounslow | 190 | 194 | 149 | 126 |
| Islington | 219 | 244 | 15 | 138 |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 194 | 152 | 97 | 73 |
| Kingston upon Thames | 189 | 180 | 119 | 99 |
| Lambeth | 223 | 217 | 149 | 126 |
| Lewisham | 237 | 197 | 164 | 130 |
| Merton | 199 | 167 | 131 | 93 |
| Newham | 249 | 196 | 202 | 163 |
| Redbridge | 176 | 185 | 147 | 117 |
| Richmond upon Thames | 189 | 168 | 120 | 90 |
| Southwark | 227 | 222 | 143 | 127 |
| Sutton | 197 | 173 | 137 | 105 |
| Tower Hamlets | 230 | 239 | 186 | 180 |
| Waltham Forest | 185 | 205 | 180 | 165 |
| Wandsworth | 220 | 204 | 160 | 129 |
| City of Westminster | 209 | 181 | 115 | 108 |

[1] Rates per 100,000 population standardised to the European Standard Population.

[2] The cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) for1997, and the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) for 2002. The codes used are listed as follows:

Cancer (malignant neoplasms)—ICD-9 140–208; ICD-10 C00-C97;

Coronary Heart Disease—ICD-9 410–414; ICD-10 I20-I25.

[3] Usual residents of these areas.

[4] Figures for the City of London are not presented in the table because the annual number of deaths is too small to calculate age-standardised mortality rates.

[5] Deaths occurring in each calendar year in England and Wales, and deaths registered in each calendar year in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

## Corporation Tax

**Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the impact upon existing prospective stock transfer associations of the Inland Revenue's decision to disallow certain repairs expenditure being offset for corporation tax purposes when housing stock has been transferred to stock transfer associations. [158039]

**Dawn Primarolo** *[holding answer 4 March 2004]:* The Inland Revenue has given its view of the implications for corporation tax of certain contracts developed by a major accountancy firm.

## Earnings

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of *(a)* male, *(b)* female and *(c)* all full-time workers in (i) Greater London and (ii) each London borough had hourly gross earnings (A) including and (B) excluding overtime of below (1) £7.58, (2) £5.68 and (3) £4.20. [158401]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Colin Mowl to Simon Hughes, dated 5 March 2004:*

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent question on the proportion of *(a)* male, *(b)* female and *(c)* all full-time workers in (i) Greater London and (ii) each London Borough which had hourly gross earnings (A) including and (B) excluding overtime of below (1) £7.58, (2) £5.68 and (3) £4.20. I am replying in his absence. (158401)

I attach two tables showing the average gross hourly pay including and excluding overtime.

Average earnings are estimated from the 2003 New Earnings Survey (NES) and are provided for full-time employees on adult rates of pay whose pay was unaffected by absence during the pay period. The tables show earnings according to employees' place of work, rather than usual residence. This is the standard definition used for NES tables. The NES does not collect data on the self employed and people who do unpaid work.

The NES, carried out in April of each year, is the most comprehensive source of earnings information in Great Britain. It is a one per cent sample of all employees who are members of pay-as-you-earn, (PAYE) schemes, but because of its sampling frame, it has difficulty capturing data on people with very low pay. It is therefore likely to under-represent relatively low paid staff earning below the tax threshold.

The New Earnings Survey publication criteria ensures that all estimates are undisclosive and of reliable quality. A large number of estimates have been removed from the lists due to the suppression criteria. The information is based on the 2003 NES, the latest survey for which data are available. The area of Greater London is defined by grouping together all the boroughs of London.

*Percentage of full time employees whose average gross hourly pay (including overtime) in 2003 fell below three stated thresholds*

| | Male employees' pay thresholds | | | Female employees' pay thresholds | | | All employees' pay thresholds | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Area* | £7.58 | £5.68 | £4.20 | £7.58 | £5.68 | £4.20 | £7.58 | £5.68 | £4.20 |
| *Percentage of employees whose pay (including overtime) falls below threshold* | | | | | | | | | |
| Great Britain | 26.4 | 8.5 | 1.2 | 36.8 | 14.7 | 1.9 | 30.3 | 10.9 | 1.4 |
| Greater London | 14.7 | 5.3 | 0.8 | 18.1 | 7.7 | 1.6 | 16.0 | 6.2 | 1.1 |
| *London Boroughs* | | | | | | | | | |
| City of London | 3.2 | — | — | — | — | — | 3.6 | — | — |
| Barking and Dagenham | 17.6 | — | — | — | — | — | 18.6 | — | — |
| Barnet | 18.9 | — | — | 26.0 | — | — | 22.1 | 8.7 | — |
| Bexley | 28.1 | — | — | 34.1 | — | — | 30.3 | — | — |
| Brent | 19.1 | — | — | 27.4 | — | — | 22.5 | — | — |

*Percentage of full time employees whose average gross hourly pay (including overtime) in 2003 fell below three stated thresholds*

| | Male employees' pay thresholds | | | Female employees' pay thresholds | | | All employees' pay thresholds | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Area* | *£7.58* | *£5.68* | *£4.20* | *£7.58* | *£5.68* | *£4.20* | *£7.58* | *£5.68* | *£4.20* |
| Bromley | 39.3 | 20.3 | — | 45.5 | 25.2 | — | 42.1 | 20.7 | — |
| Camden | 9.0 | — | — | 8.8 | — | — | 8.9 | 2.6 | — |
| Croydon | 13.7 | — | — | 29.3 | 12.7 | — | 20.0 | 8.6 | — |
| Ealing | 22.7 | — | — | 22.4 | — | — | 22.6 | 8.4 | — |
| Enfield | 23.5 | — | — | 27.1 | — | — | 24.8 | 7.6 | — |
| Greenwich | 18.3 | — | — | 33.8 | — | — | 24.0 | — | — |
| Hackney | — | — | — | — | — | — | 14.4 | — | — |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | — | — | — | 10.1 | — | — | 8.1 | — | — |
| Haringey | — | — | — | — | — | — | 17.5 | — | — |
| Harrow | — | — | — | — | — | — | 13.8 | — | — |
| Havering | 44.9 | 18.7 | — | 45.6 | 21.8 | — | 45.2 | 20.1 | — |
| Hillingdon | 13.9 | 12.2 | — | 29.2 | 14.0 | — | 18.8 | 8.5 | — |
| Hounslow | 16.7 | — | — | 19.9 | — | — | 17.9 | 6.0 | — |
| Islington | 7.3 | — | — | 9.7 | — | — | 8.2 | — | — |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 17.3 | — | — | 19.2 | — | — | 18.2 | 7.4 | — |
| Kingston upon Thames | 21.5 | — | — | 20.3 | — | — | 21.0 | — | — |
| Lambeth | 15.7 | — | — | — | — | — | 13.2 | 6.1 | — |
| Lewisham | — | — | — | — | — | — | 18.1 | — | — |
| Merton | 28.5 | — | — | 38.3 | — | — | 31.9 | 12.8 | — |
| Newham | 22.6 | — | — | 30.8 | — | — | 25.4 | — | — |
| Redbridge | 27.1 | — | — | — | — | — | 23.1 | — | — |
| Richmond upon Thames | — | — | — | — | — | — | 18.8 | — | — |
| Southwark | 6.4 | — | — | 8.7 | — | — | 7.1 | 3.3 | — |
| Sutton | — | — | — | — | — | — | 17.2 | — | — |
| Tower Hamlets | 10.2 | — | — | — | — | — | 9.1 | 3.8 | — |
| Waltham Forest | 22.8 | — | — | 29.6 | — | — | 25.6 | — | — |
| Wandsworth | 19.3 | — | — | 17.3 | — | — | 18.5 | — | — |
| City of Westminster | 12.6 | 5.9 | — | 13.6 | 5.2 | 1.9 | 13.0 | 5.0 | 1.1 |

*Percentage of full time employees whose average gross hourly pay (excluding overtime) in 2003 fell below three stated thresholds*

| | Male employees' pay thresholds | | | Female employees' pay thresholds | | | All employees' pay thresholds | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Area* | *£7.58* | *£5.68* | *£4.20* | *£7.58* | *£5.68* | *£4.20* | *£7.58* | *£5.68* | *£4.20* |
| *Percentage of employees whose pay (excluding overtime) falls below threshold* | | | | | | | | | |
| Great Britain | 27.9 | 9.5 | 1.3 | 37.4 | 15.1 | 1.9 | 31.5 | 11.6 | 1.5 |
| Greater London | 15.2 | 5.6 | 0.8 | 18.4 | 7.9 | 1.7 | 16.5 | 6.5 | 1.2 |
| *London Boroughs* | | | | | | | | | |
| City of London | 3.2 | — | — | — | — | — | 3.6 | — | — |
| Barking and Dagenham | 18.3 | — | — | — | — | — | 19.6 | — | — |
| Barnet | 20.1 | — | — | 26.0 | — | — | 22.8 | 9.4 | — |
| Bexley | 29.5 | — | — | 35.4 | — | — | 31.6 | 10.1 | — |
| Brent | 18:6 | — | — | 29.6 | — | — | 23.1 | 8.2 | — |
| Bromley | 39.7 | 16.9 | — | 45.5 | 25.2 | — | 42.3 | 20.7 | — |
| Camden | 9.2 | — | — | 8.8 | — | — | 9.0 | 2.7 | — |
| Croydon | 14.8 | — | — | 29.8 | 13.8 | — | 20.9 | 9.2 | — |
| Ealing | 23.8 | — | — | 22.4 | — | — | 23.3 | 8.4 | — |
| Enfield | 24.9 | — | — | 26.3 | — | — | 25.4 | 7.9 | — |
| Greenwich | 18.3 | — | — | 33.8 | — | — | 24.0 | 13.1 | — |
| Hackney | — | — | — | — | — | — | 14.0 | — | — |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | — | — | — | 10.1 | — | — | 8.5 | — | — |
| Haringey | — | — | — | — | — | — | 18.5 | — | — |
| Harrow | — | — | — | 18.3 | — | — | 17.4 | — | — |
| Havering | 44.9 | 18.4 | — | 45.6 | 22.3 | — | 45.2 | 20.3 | — |
| Hillingdon | 14.4 | 6.0 | — | 29.2 | 14.0 | — | 19.2 | 8.6 | — |
| Hounslow | 18.7 | — | — | 20.9 | — | — | 19.6 | 7.2 | — |
| Islington | 7.7 | — | — | 9.7 | — | — | 8.5 | 3.3 | — |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 18.3 | — | — | 19.2 | — | — | 18.7 | 7.4 | — |
| Kingston upon Thames | 22.1 | — | — | 20.3 | — | — | 21.4 | — | — |
| Lambeth | 16.1 | — | — | — | — | — | 13.6 | 6.4 | — |
| Lewisham | — | — | — | — | — | — | 19.1 | — | — |
| Merton | 29.2 | 12.4 | — | 38.3 | — | — | 32.4 | 13.2 | — |
| Newham | 23.4 | — | — | 32.3 | — | — | 26.5 | — | — |
| Redbridge | 28.0 | — | — | 20.8 | — | — | 24.5 | — | — |
| Richmond upon Thames | — | — | — | — | — | — | 20.4 | — | — |

*Percentage of full time employees whose average gross hourly pay (excluding overtime) in 2003 fell below three stated thresholds*

| | *Male employees' pay thresholds* | | | *Female employees' pay thresholds* | | | *All employees' pay thresholds* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Area* | *£7.58* | *£5.68* | *£4.20* | *£7.58* | *£5.68* | *£4.20* | *£7.58* | *£5.68* | *£4.20* |
| Southwark | 6.7 | — | — | 8.7 | — | — | 7.3 | 3.7 | — |
| Sutton | — | — | — | — | — | — | 16.7 | — | — |
| Tower Hamlets | 10.5 | — | — | — | — | — | 9.5 | 3.8 | — |
| Waltham Forest | 22.8 | — | — | 29.6 | — | — | 25.6 | — | — |
| Wandsworth | 20.2 | — | — | 17.3 | — | — | 19.1 | — | — |
| City of Westminster | 12.8 | 4.9 | — | 13.9 | 5.2 | — | 13.3 | 5.0 | 1.2 |

Great Britain and London

This table provides an estimate of the proportion of *(a)* male, *(b)* female and *(c)* all full-time workers in (i) Greater London and (ii) each London Borough had hourly gross earnings (A) including overtime and (B) excluding overtime of below (1) £7.58, (2) £5.68 and (3) 4.20.

*Notes:*

1. The definition of Greater London is the total of all London Boroughs.
2. Information is provided for average gross hourly earnings including and excluding overtime to and relates full time employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey pay period was unaffected by absence.
3. "—" Data have been suppressed due to confidentiality or quality
4. The New Earnings Survey release criteria currently require that any estimate:

*(a)* of a mean is based on a sample size of at least 30 and that the associated standard error does not exceed 5 per cent.

*(b)* of a quantile such as a percentile, quartile or median, or of a percentage, is based on a sample size of at least 10 and that the sample size is either at least 225 or that the relative standard error is less than 20%.

5. Estimates are produced for those people who work in a borough.

*Source for earnings data:*

New Earnings Survey, April 2003

### Economic Activity

**Mrs. Humble:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the economic activity rate in the Blackpool, North and Fleetwood constituency was in *(a)* 1996–97 and *(b)* 2002–03. [157501]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Mrs. Joan Humble, dated 5 March 2004:*

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question on the economic activity rate in the Blackpool North and Fleetwood constituency. (157501)

The table below shows the working age economic activity rates for the Blackpool North and Fleetwood constituency, covering the twelve-month periods ending February 1997 and February 2002. Information for the twelve month ending February 2003 is not yet available.

*Working age economic activity rates[1] in the Blackpool North and Fleetwood Constituency*

| *12 month period ending February each year* | *per cent* |
|---|---|
| 1996–97 | 71.8 |
| 2001–02 | 75.2 |

[1] Economic activity as a percentage of men aged 16–64 and women aged 16–59.

As with any statistical sample survey, estimates for the LFS are subject to sampling variability.

### EU Regulatory Burden

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from industry regarding the burden of regulation deriving from the EU; and if he will list the regulations in question. [158852]

**Ruth Kelly:** The Chancellor received a number; of representations about the regulatory environment for business, including from business organisations such as the Institute of Directors and the British Chambers of Commerce. None of these representations named specific EU regulations, although a joint letter from the BCC, FSB, IoD, CBI and FPB welcomed the joint EU Presidency Initiative on Regulatory Reform, announced on 26 January.

The Government are considering carefully how best to implement the measures arising from the EU's Financial Services Action Plan (FSAP). Implementation of the FSAP needs to strike the right balance between not placing too great a burden on the financial services industry, whilst ensuring that consumers are adequately protected. The way to achieve this is through good consultation and cost benefit analysis and through adoption of the better regulation agenda generally.

### Family Support

**Mr. Goodman:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will break down the projections for total support to families given in the 2003 pre-budget report for *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05 by (i) child benefit, (ii) child tax credit, broken down by (A) family element, (B) child element and (C) disability, (iii) childcare credit, (iv) statutory maternity pay, (v) maternity allowance, (vi) maternity expenses and (vii) other support. [158059]

**Dawn Primarolo:** The Pre Budget Report provided estimates of financial support for children through tax credits, Child Benefit and other benefits. The figures did not include expenditure on maternity related benefits. Information on expenditure on Child Benefit and other

benefits for children is published in the Benefit Expenditure Tables on the Department of Work and Pensions' website at www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd4/expenditure.asp.

Tax credit awards are based initially on a family's previous year income but the level of entitlement is determined by current year income. Estimates of expenditure on tax credits and on the components of tax credits are therefore subject to revision until awards are finalised after the end of the year. Updated estimates of expenditure on tax credits will be provided in the Budget.

### Financial Services Authority

**Jonathan Shaw:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many complaints the Financial Services Authority has investigated from small businesses regarding banks; and if he will make a statement. [158355]

**Ruth Kelly:** The Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS) is responsible for dealing with complaints from small businesses regarding banks. In the current financial year to date (to end February 2004) the FOS has investigated 205 complaints from small businesses about banking products.

### London Population

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the size of the population in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough was in each of the last five years; and what projections have been made for the next five years. [158447]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from John Pullinger to Simon Hughes, dated 5 March 2004*

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning the size of the population of Greater London and each London borough for the last five years and the projected population for the next five years. I am replying in his absence. (158447)

Attached is a table showing the mid-year population estimates for Greater London and each London borough from 1998 to 2002.

There are currently no official subnational population projections consistent with this series. The last official long-term subnational population projections were 1996-based and did not take into account the 2001 Census and subsequent revisions to the mid year population estimates. The Office for National Statistics is currently working on 2002-based subnational population projections, which will be consistent with these mid year estimates and will be published in August 2004.

*Mid-year estimates of the usually-resident population of London boroughs: 1998–2002*

*Thousands*

| | *1998* | *1999* | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Greater London* | 6,968.8 | 7,041.3 | 7,104.4 | 7,307.9 | 7,355.4 |
| *London Boroughs* | | | | | |
| City of London | 6.1 | 6.5 | 6.9 | 7.4 | 7.8 |
| Barking and Dagenham | 158.9 | 1617 | 162.8 | 165.9 | 167.3 |
| Barnet | 304.6 | 309.2 | 310.9 | 320.1 | 320.4 |
| Bexley | 216.6 | 217.1 | 218.4 | 218.8 | 218.8 |
| Brent | 255.2 | 255.8 | 259.2 | 270.4 | 272.4 |
| Bromley | 290.5 | 293.9 | 294.6 | 296.2 | 296.8 |
| Camden | 182.3 | 185.6 | 191.4 | 203.0 | 207.0 |
| Croydon | 329.9 | 328.6 | 330.3 | 335.7 | 336.6 |
| Ealing | 292.1 | 297.3 | 298.4 | 308.1 | 308.4 |
| Enfield | 267.9 | 270.0 | 272.0 | 277.7 | 281.8 |
| Greenwich | 209.4 | 209.7 | 211.9 | 217.8 | 221.4 |
| Hackney | 190.7 | 195.2 | 199.1 | 207.8 | 210.2 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 153.3 | 157.6 | 160.6 | 169.9 | 173.3 |
| Haringey | 212.1 | 215.1 | 215.5 | 221.9 | 225.1 |
| Harrow | 206.4 | 206.1 | 206.9 | 210.5 | 211.6 |
| Havering | 225.1 | 225.6 | 225.0 | 224.7 | 224.2 |
| Hillingdon | 240.7 | 242.1 | 242.9 | 245.9 | 246.5 |
| Hounslow | 209.8 | 211.5 | 211.4 | 216.4 | 216.6 |
| Islington | 173.5 | 173.2 | 174.7 | 179.8 | 181.0 |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 139.0 | 143.4 | 150.4 | 162.6 | 165.1 |
| Kingston upon Thames | 141.6 | 144.1 | 145.5 | 149.3 | 150.2 |
| Lambeth | 259.2 | 262.5 | 264.2 | 274.2 | 271.9 |
| Lewisham | 245.3 | 247.1 | 247.8 | 254.9 | 253.8 |
| Merton | 180.9 | 183.0 | 185.5 | 191.5 | 192.3 |
| Newham | 231.6 | 236.7 | 240.7 | 250.1 | 254.0 |
| Redbridge | 236.1 | 235.9 | 237.5 | 242.3 | 244.0 |
| Richmond upon Thames | 167.9 | 170.5 | 170.8 | 174.5 | 174.4 |
| Southwark | 236.4 | 239.3 | 242.4 | 251.1 | 251.3 |
| Sutton | 177.2 | 178.4 | 179.3 | 181.6 | 180.9 |

*Mid-year estimates of the usually-resident population of London boroughs: 1998–2002*

*Thousands*

| | *1998* | *1999* | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tower Hamlets | 187.1 | 191.4 | 193.9 | 201.6 | 206.8 |
| Waltham Forest | 219.2 | 219.2 | 218.7 | 222.5 | 223.2 |
| Wandsworth | 254.5 | 256.7 | 258.3 | 267.5 | 269.3 |
| City of Westminster | 167.5 | 171.2 | 176.3 | 186.4 | 190.6 |

*Source:*
Office for National Statistics

### Ministerial Direction

**Dr. Cable:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer on how many occasions since 1 June 2003 he has been informed of a minister issuing a direction to an accounting officer as set out in paragraphs 14 to 17 of the Treasury document, The Responsibilities of an Accounting Officer; on what grounds each note was issued; and if he will make a statement. [158300]

**Ruth Kelly:** The Treasury has not been informed of any directions issued by Ministers to Accounting Officers under this guidance, since the reply I gave the hon. Member on 30 October 2003, *Official Report*, column 311W.

### Recruitment

**Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost of recruitment of civil servants for the Department was in each financial year since 1996–97, broken down by *(a)* delegated or contracted out recruitment procedures and *(b)* recruitment procedures carried out by the Department. [158179]

**Ruth Kelly:** The costs of recruiting staff fall largely to individual teams, and are charged to team budgets. Therefore information on the total cost of recruiting staff is not available centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### Tax Returns

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many individual tax returns have been filed online in each year since the service became available. [158041]

**Dawn Primarolo:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer my hon. friend the Financial Secretary gave him on 5 March 2003 *Official Report*, 1063W–64W, and the answers I gave to him on 9 September 2003, *Official Report*, 276W–77W and 15 January 2004, *Official Report*, 868W.

### Teenage Pregnancies

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many teenage pregnancies there were in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough in each year since 2000. [158404]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from John Pullinger to Simon Hughes, dated 5 March 2004:*

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking how many teenage pregnancies there were in a) Greater London, and b) each London borough, in each year since 2000.1 am replying in his absence. (158404)

The numbers of teenage pregnancies for London and for each London borough, for 2000 to 2002 (the latest year for which figures are available), are shown in the attached table.

*Conceptions to women aged under 18 by London borough: 2000–02*

*Number of conceptions*

| *Area of usual residence* | *2000* | *2001*[1] | *2002*[1] |
|---|---|---|---|
| England and Wales | 41,349 | 40,966 | 41,868 |
| London | 6,041 | 6,201 | 6,504 |
| Barking and Dagenham | 216 | 215 | 238 |
| Barnet | 154 | 143 | 183 |
| Bexley | 139 | 181 | 172 |
| Brent | 259 | 236 | 261 |
| Bromley | 160 | 162 | 177 |
| Camden | 134 | 125 | 138 |
| Croydon | 347 | 336 | 371 |
| Ealing | 203 | 198 | 187 |
| Enfield | 211 | 249 | 296 |
| Greenwich | 222 | 272 | 250 |
| Hackney and City of London[3] | 307 | 305 | 301 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 126 | 135 | 143 |
| Haringey | 273 | 281 | 310 |
| Harrow | 84 | 98 | 115 |
| Havering | 156 | 134 | 145 |
| Hillingdon | 181 | 188 | 206 |
| Hounslow | 160 | 165 | 158 |
| Islington | 172 | 175 | 172 |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 80 | 80 | 80 |
| Kingston upon Thames | 75 | 67 | 70 |
| Lambeth | 358 | 375 | 406 |
| Lewisham | 275 | 272 | 324 |
| Merton | 125 | 126 | 119 |
| Newham | 312 | 334 | 328 |
| Redbridge | 113 | 160 | 151 |
| Richmond upon Thames | 52 | 48 | 61 |
| Southwark | 314 | 335 | 346 |
| Sutton | 109 | 112 | 106 |
| Tower Hamlets | 189 | 218 | 184 |
| Waltham Forest | 214 | 216 | 230 |
| Wandsworth | 202 | 173 | 175 |
| City of Westminster | 119 | 87 | 101 |

[1] Provisional figure.
[2] Provisional estimate.
[3] City of London has been combined with Hackney due to its small numbers of usual residents.

### Trusts (Tax Treatment)

**Mr. Swayne:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to change the tax treatment of the property portion of trusts. [158821]

**Dawn Primarolo:** As stated in the Pre-Budget Report the tax treatment of trusts is under review by the Inland Revenue. They have consulted with interested parties about simplifying and modernising trust taxation and an announcement about this will be made in the Budget.

### Unemployment (London)

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the rate of unemployment in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough was in each year since 1997. [158406]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Simon Hughes, dated 5 March 2004:*

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question on unemployment in London. (158406)

The attached table gives unemployment rates for Greater London and for each London Borough, for each twelve month period ending in February from 1997 to 2002, the latest period for which information is available.

As with any statistical sample survey, estimates from the LFS are subject to sampling variability. This is a particular issue given the small sample sizes at borough level.

*Unemployment rate[1] in Greater London and London boroughs: 12 month period ending February each year*

*Percentage*

| | *1997–98* | *1998–99* | *1999–2000* | *2000–01* | *2001–02* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Greater London | 9.1 | 7.9 | 7.3 | 6.9 | 6.6 |
| Barking and Dagenham | 9.6 | 10.2 | [2]— | 5.9 | 6.4 |
| Barnet | 6.6 | 5.4 | 5.6 | 5.9 | 4.9 |
| Bexley | 5.4 | 7.0 | 7.3 | [2]— | [2]— |
| Brent | 12.6 | 11.2 | 7.5 | 9.2 | 9.4 |
| Bromley | 4.5 | 5.5 | 3.8 | 3.7 | 3.9 |
| Camden | [2]— | 7.9 | 6.5 | 6.4 | 8.2 |
| City of London | [2]— | [2]— | [2]— | [2]— | [2]— |
| Croydon | 6.1 | 5.8 | 6.8 | 5.3 | 5.7 |
| Ealing | 9.5 | 6.4 | 7.7 | 7.3 | 6.3 |
| Enfield | 4.9 | 7.2 | 7.5 | 5.5 | 6.4 |
| Greenwich | 13.4 | 10.6 | 7.4 | 9.8 | 7.4 |
| Hackney | 21.5 | 14.8 | 13.8 | 16.4 | 12.2 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 9.1 | [2]— | 8.5 | [2]— | 6.4 |
| Haringey | 13.6 | 12.2 | 9.8 | 12.7 | 10.4 |
| Harrow | 5.7 | 5.3 | 6.0 | 5.0 | [2]— |
| Havering | 5.2 | [2]— | [2]— | [2]— | [2]— |
| Hillingdon | 5.1 | [2]— | 5.4 | [2]— | 4.1 |
| Hounslow | 6.7 | [2]— | [2]— | [2]— | 5.6 |
| Islington | 14.0 | 12.0 | 11.8 | 9.4 | 9.3 |
| Kensington and Chelsea | [2]— | 10.2 | 10.3 | 7.5 | 6.1 |
| Kingston-upon-Thames | [2]— | [2]— | [2]— | 4.4 | 4.8 |
| Lambeth | 14.8 | 7.6 | 9.1 | 9.6 | 7.0 |
| Lewisham | 11.6 | 8.3 | 10.7 | 6.9 | 10.3 |
| Merton | 6.6 | 7.1 | [2]— | 6.1 | [2]— |
| Newham | 15.3 | 16.7 | 14.3 | 13.5 | 11.7 |
| Redbridge | 10.5 | 8.6 | 5.0 | 7.4 | 6.8 |
| Richmond-upon-Thames | 6.5 | [2]— | [2]— | [2]— | [2]— |
| Southwark | 16.8 | 13.4 | 12.2 | 12.1 | 10.7 |
| Sutton | [2]— | [2]— | [2]— | [2]— | 5.1 |
| Tower Hamlets | 19.7 | 13.8 | 9.4 | 11.8 | 12.3 |
| Waltham Forest | 10.6 | 9.3 | 7.7 | 5.7 | 6.9 |
| Wandsworth | 7.2 | 5.0 | 4.8 | 5.7 | 6.3 |
| Westminster, City of | 9.7 | 10.9 | 7.0 | 8.6 | 6.1 |

[1] The number unemployed as a percentage of the economically active population aged 16 and over.
[2] LFS sample of unemployed people too small for reliable estimate.
*Source:*
ONS Labour Force Survey.

### Working Tax Credit

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer for what reasons delays are occurring in the payment of working tax credit for those who have changed jobs in Northern Ireland; what steps he is taking to eliminate these delays; and if he will make a statement. [158282]

**Dawn Primarolo** *[holding answer 4 March 2004]:* The Inland Revenue is not aware of problems leading to delays in payment when people change jobs in Northern Ireland. The Inland Revenue will be pleased to look into any individual cases where people consider that they have experienced delays.

## INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### North Korea

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of food supplies in North Korea; and what steps his Department is taking to improve them. [157557]

**Hilary Benn** *[pursuant to his reply, 3 March 2004, Official Report, c. 921W]:* The European Commission is funding targeted food aid to North Korea through the World Food Programme and other organisations. In January it agreed to give 5 million euros. The UK contributed around £680,000 to this, not £3,338,000 as stated in the previous answer.

### South Africa

**Mr. Chidgey:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the land expropriation laws which are set to come into effect in South Africa in April. [159039]

**Hilary Benn:** The South African Constitution authorises expropriation of property under certain conditions for a public purpose or in the public interest. The Constitution specifically states that the public interest includes the nation's commitment to land reform.

South Africa's approach to land reform has three main planks: the restitution of land rights to those unfairly dispossessed between 1913 and 1994; a programme of redistribution to transform the racial pattern of agricultural land ownership; and land tenure reform, including particularly reform of communal land tenure arrangements in the former homeland areas.

The South African Government plan to introduce amendments to the Restitution of Land Rights Bill to allow the Minister for Lands to purchase, acquire or expropriate land for the purpose of a restitution award.

Under the restitution process most urban claims have been settled. South Africa is now addressing the more difficult and complex rural cases, involving overlapping and competing claims. The amendments are designed to assist in determining the outcome in the most intractable cases. Any land expropriated under this process will be for the benefit of those who have a legitimate claim on that land.

Expropriation of land will be undertaken within the rule of law and will attract compensation in accordance with the Constitution of South Africa. The Amendments to the Bill require that the constitutional rights of the existing landowner/holder must be complied with and that the amount of compensation paid and the time and manner of payment must be agreed to by all parties, or by the Courts; and must be just and equitable, balancing the public interest and the interest of those affected.

### Temporary Staff

**Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many staff the Department employs on a temporary basis through employment agencies; what percentage this is of total staff employed; and how much the Department or its predecessors paid employment agencies to supply temporary staff in *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2002–03 and *(c)* 2003–04 to the most recent date for which figures are available. [158255]

**Hilary Benn:** DFID has no central record of agency workers employed in either of our two headquarter offices in London and East Kilbride. We have only limited information readily available on the total of agency workers employed, and their respective costs, for the last three financial years. To research and obtain detailed information requested would incur a disproportionate cost to the organisation.

# Written Answers to Questions

*Monday 8 March 2004*

## LEADER OF THE HOUSE

### Welsh Language

**Mr. Llwyd:** To ask the Leader of the House what recent changes there have been in the use of the Welsh language in the conduct of public business by the House; and if he will make a statement. [158026]

**Mr. Hain:** The most recent change in the use of the Welsh language in the formal proceedings of the House followed the First Report of the Procedure Committee in 2000–01 (HC 47). On 5 March 2001, the House endorsed the Committee's recommendation that Welsh could be used by Select Committee witnesses giving evidence in Westminster, as well as in Wales.

### Westminster Hall

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Leader of the House if he will make it his policy to have senior Ministers reply to debates in Westminster Hall. [160094]

**Mr. Hain:** Since its creation in 1999 Westminster Hall has proved itself a popular and valuable debating chamber covering a wide variety of political issues. Government Departments take into consideration the topic of the debate and the division of ministerial responsibilities when deciding which Minister should respond. It is not necessarily the case that the Minister most suited to responding will be the most senior Minister in any given Department. However, all Ministers who respond to debates in Westminster Hall do so with the full authority of the relevant Secretary of State.

## TRANSPORT

### Air Quality

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what action the Government are taking to improve air quality, with particular reference to use of alternative road fuels. [159326]

**Mr. Jamieson:** Alternative fuels receive considerable support from Government, in the form of significant fuel duty incentives, grants for vehicle conversions under the PowerShift Programme, and reduced rates of Vehicle Excise Duty and company car tax for cleaner vehicles. In the December 2003 pre-Budget report, the Chancellor published the Alternative Fuels Framework, which sets out the basis on which support will, in future, be provided for clean, low carbon road transport fuels. In particular, it includes a commitment to provide three-year certainty on duty differentials for all alternative fuels from Budget 2004.

### Air Safety

**Mr. Paul Marsden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list in descending order airlines using British airports by their air safety records. [159313]

**Mr. McNulty:** The safety of UK airlines is overseen by the Civil Aviation Authority to a high standard. Foreign airlines operating to the United Kingdom are required to be operated in accordance with the minimum safety standards established by the International Civil Aviation Organisation. They are regulated by aviation authorities of their home states.

### Alternative Fuels

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the impact of changes in grants for people to convert vehicles to run on liquefied petroleum gas. [159322]

**Mr. Jamieson:** Currently, grants are available for the purchase/conversion of vehicles to run on liquefied petroleum gas under the Powershift and CleanUp programmes administered by the Energy Saving Trust. In 2003–04 these two programmes provided grants for the purchase/conversion of around 3,000 vehicles. In response to this year's increase in demand for these programmes, the Trust have discussed the appropriate level of Powershift and CleanUp grants for next year with stakeholders, and estimate that a similar number of vehicles will be converted/purchased during 2004–05.

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps the Government is taking to meet its targets on use of *(a)* compressed natural gas and *(b)* hydrogen as road fuels. [159323]

**Mr. Jamieson:** Our plans for encouraging the promotion and use of clean, low carbon vehicles and fuels are set out in the Powering Future Vehicles Strategy, published in July 2002. The Government has no formal targets for the use of compressed natural gas (CNG) or hydrogen as road fuels. But it supports the development and use of these and other clean, low carbon fuels in a number of ways, including through fuel duty differentials and other fiscal incentives, and by means of purchase grants to offset the additional cost of vehicles operating on these fuels. The Chancellor of the Exchequer confirmed in the Pre-Budget Report in December 2003, for example, that compressed natural gas (CNG) would continue to benefit from the very low fuel duty levels it currently enjoys for at least another three years. We are also currently supporting the trials of three hydrogen-powered buses in London, and subject to the outcome of these trials the Government intends to exempt hydrogen from fuel duty for a limited period in the future to encourage further development and uptake.

### Bardon Signal Box

**David Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the estimated cost of the planned alteration work to Bardon Signal Box on the Leicester to Burton railway line is. [158609]

**Mr. McNulty:** This is an operational matter for Network Rail. I have passed this question to Network Rail, for them to respond directly to the hon. Member.

## Bus Passes

**Mr. Paul Marsden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list for each local authority the cost of a bus pass for pensioners. [159349]

**Mr. McNulty:** Under the Transport Act 2000, all local authorities are required to issue a bus pass free of charge to older and disabled people entitling the holder to local bus travel within their district for at least half the single journey bus fare. However, local authorities are able to offer more generous schemes or alternative schemes to the statutory minimum if they wish. Many local authorities offer alternative travel schemes, which entitle older people to greater travel benefits and in some cases an annual fee is charged for the pass for these alternative schemes. The cost and extent of the alternative pass varies from one local authority to another. Those that charged for the pass for an alternative scheme, following the introduction of the statutory minimum scheme in June 2001, are listed in the following table, which is reproduced from Transport Statistics Bulletin "Concessionary Bus Fares Schemes England 2001", a copy of which is available in the House of Commons Library. This is currently being updated and the latest information will be published later this year. Other authorities providing an alternative scheme may offer the pass free of charge.

*Table: Local authorities that in 2001 charged a fee for an alternative concessionary travel scheme in addition to the statutory minimum half fares with a free pass*

| *Name of authority* | *Annual fee (2001)* | *Alternative concession* |
|---|---|---|
| Basildon, Essex | £100 | Free travel in district |
| Bracknell Forest UA | £40 | Free travel for those aged 75 or more. |
| Braintree, Essex | £110 | Free travel in district |
| Brentwood, Essex | £54 | Free travel in district |
| Bridgnorth, Shrops | £30 | Free travel in whole county |
| Colchester, Essex | £159.45 | Free travel, plus travel tokens |
| Darlington UA | £52 or £62 | £52 for free travel in urban area, £62 for free travel in all UA |
| Dartford, Kent | £5 | Fee to get flat fare of 20p within borough |
| East Staffordshire | £10 | Free travel |
| Eden, Cumbria | £5 | Free travel in district |
| Harlow, Essex | £33 | Free travel in district |
| Hertsmere, Herts | £36 | Free travel in district |
| Ipswich, Suffolk | £1 | District scheme for 25p flat fare |
| Maldon, Essex | £150 | Free travel |
| Middlesbrough UA | £10 | Fee for fare reductions |
| North Wiltshire | £5 | For reduced rate travel |
| Preston, Lancashire | £10 | For free travel for those aged 70 or over |
| Redcar and Cleveland UA | £12 | Fee for fare reductions |
| Sevenoaks, Kent | £20 | Fee to get flat fare of 20p |
| Shrewsbury and Atcham, Shrops. | £115 | For free travel in the borough, half fare in the county, also produces a £15 permit for reduced rate travel |
| Slough UA | £30 | Fee to get free travel in UA |
| South Buckinghamshire | £20 | Permit gives free travel from age 70 |
| St Albans, Herts | £57 | Free travel in district |
| Stevenage, Herts | £25 | Free travel in district |
| Stockton on Tees UA | £5 | Fee for fare reductions |
| Suffolk Coastal | £13.50 | Fee for fare reductions |
| Telford and The Wrekin UA | £80 | Free travel throughout UA, half fare in Shropshire and to some towns beyond |
| Three Rivers, Herts | £25 | Free travel in district |
| Worcester City | £8 | Allows 25p flat fare or 40p return fare |
| Wyre, Lancs | £5 | Reduced rate travel |

## Computerised MOT Test

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the *(a)* expected in-service delivery date and *(b)* cost of the computerised MOT test were when the contract was let; and what they are expected to be now. [159594]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The information is as follows:

*(a)* in the original contract the expected start of roll-out date for the computerised service was May 2002 at a transaction charge per recorded test of £1.07.

*(b)* the current contract stipulates that roll-out of the service should have started by mid-February 2004 with no increase in transaction charge. The start of the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency's (VOSA) testing has been delayed following slippage in SBS Software and an independent review of progress has recommended changes to plans to reduce risk and allow for additional testing. In the light of the review team's recommendations VOSA are discussing a revised programme with SBS. Discussions are not yet complete—but on current expectations the service is unlikely to be rolled out until late 2004.

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what penalty clauses are available for his Department to invoke should Siemens fail to deliver the computerisation of the MOT test *(a)* on time, *(b)* within cost estimates and *(c)* to the specification. [159595]

**Mr. Jamieson:** This is a PFI contract between my Department's Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) and Siemens Business Services (SBS) and SBS bear the risk of late or unsatisfactory delivery of the service. The contract provides that if MOT Computerisation is not delivered:

*(a)* on time—SBS would not receive payments under the contract until the computerised service is available to MOT stations and delay would reduce the term of the contract. Therefore SBS would be penalised by extra costs as well as reduced income and profit;

*(b)* within cost estimates—under the contract SBS would bear the risk of increased development costs. They could also be subject to claims for liquidated and other damages for extra VOSA costs if they are responsible for delays;

*(c)* to the specification—the system will not be rolled out to MOT stations until it has satisfactorily completed field trials against the specification. SBS would bear the cost of corrective action to meet the specification and of consequent delays and would not receive any payments until the service is operational. Under the contract VOSA can withhold some transaction payments from SBS if the operation of the system does not meet specified minimum service levels.

As with any PFI contract VOSA has termination rights in specified circumstances.

### Cycling

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how the Government are planning to focus resources on the provision of a bicycle-friendly road network within its 10 year Transport Plan. [156866]

**Mr. McNulty:** Local authority investment in cycling has increased by more than a third since 2001–02 and we will continue to encourage such investment. The Department has also obtained reports on highway authority provision for, and promotion of, cycling, with a view to encouraging specific actions to increase cycling levels. The Department's design guidance will also be updated.

### Dibden Bay Container Port

**Dr. Julian Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has received from the promoters of the Dibden Bay container port proposal a legally binding undertaking for an environmental mitigation compensation scheme in the vicinity of Dibden Bay. [159499]

**Mr. Jamieson:** No.

### Disabled Drivers

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans the Government has to address road fuel poverty *(a)* in remote and rural areas and *(b)* for disabled drivers. [159324]

**Mr. McNulty:** Transport and accessibility are vitally important factors in social exclusion in remote and rural areas. The Government's strategy for improving access to jobs and key services for people in remote and deprived areas is set out in the SEU Report "Making the connections" which the DfT is responsible for implementing. The strategy contains 37 key policies, which crucially do not just involve improving transport but changing where and how services are delivered. Sixteen of the policies have already been implemented and a further thirteen policies and initiatives are under way, including a project to improve travel information and journey planning for job seekers.

Fuel duty rates and other forms of motoring taxation are a matter for the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who takes decisions on a Budget by Budget basis taking a range of economic, social and environmental factors into consideration. Some disabled people, for example, are able to claim an exemption from Vehicle Excise Duty, which can mean a saving of up to £165 a year.

### Driving (Mobile Phones)

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the progress of the Government's message of safer driving with particular reference to using mobile telephones while driving. [156865]

**Mr. Jamieson:** Good progress is being made on the government's message of safer driving, which is taken forward under the THINK! road safety publicity campaign. THINK! uses a range of media channels—TV, radio, press, posters etc.—to provide a national platform to complement regional police and local authority activities. In addition it encourages broader support from private sector partners and works to generate media interest in road safety issues. Current awareness of THINK! stands at 71 per cent. among all drivers and 89 per cent. among male drivers under 35-years-old.

The THINK! campaign covers various themes throughout the year. The dangers of driver distraction caused by use of mobiles phones while driving was a key safety message in spring last year. More recently, we ran promotional activity to publicise the new regulations regarding hand held mobile phones introduced in December 2003.

Activity included national radio advertising, national press advertising, e-mail information to the top 1,000 UK companies/central and local government departments, a national press release, plus use of Variable Message Signs on motorways. We also produced new guidance, including leaflets, posters and information on the THINK! and DfT websites, for road safety officers in Local Authorities and others.

Research carried out for the Department by TNS in February 2004 showed that 96 per cent. of drivers were aware of the new mobile phones law. The research also showed that, there was an increase in the number of drivers claiming to keep their mobile phones switched off while driving, from 17 per cent. in November 2003 to 23 per cent. in February 2004.

The Department will continue to re-iterate the dangers of driver distraction surrounding the use of mobile phones, focussing on the simple message "Switch off before you drive off". Radio advertising ran in January 2004 and advertising in cinemas runs from 5 March 2004 for three weeks.

### Driving Tests

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many driving theory tests were booked in each year since 19 December 2001; and what proportion of such tests was booked online. [159329]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The total number of theory tests booked, and the proportion booked online, since 19 December 2001 when the facility to book via the Driving Standards Agency's website became available are:

| | *Total number of theory test bookings* | *Percentage booked online* |
|---|---|---|
| December 2001 | 56,460 | 0.278 |
| 2002 | 1,484,944 | 9.382 |
| 2003 | 1,486,261 | 24.497 |
| 2004 to date | 129,326 | 39.761 |

### Emissions Regulations

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to introduce statutory regulation on emissions from *(a)* motorcycles and *(b)* powered two-wheel vehicles. [159179]

**Mr. Jamieson:** Emissions from new motor cycles and other powered two wheeled machines are already regulated by the Motor Cycles Etc (EC Type Approval) Regulations 1999 (S.I. 1999 No. 2920) as amended by The Motorcycles Etc. (EC Type Approval) (Amendment) Regulations 2003. The former mandates the emissions standards in EU directive 97/24/EC to be met by all new machines entering service from 17 June 2003. The 2003 regulations mandate the more stringent two stage standards in EU directive 2002/51/EC for new motorcycles entering service from 1 July 2004 and from 1 January 2007.

### Flying (Urban Areas)

**Mr. Tyrie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received for changes to be made to the Rules of the Air to limit helicopters and other recreational aircraft from flying over urban areas. [159319]

**Mr. McNulty:** I receive letters from time to time, from individual members of the public, requesting for reasons of safety, privacy and nuisance that helicopters and light aircraft should be restricted from flying over urban areas.

A number of respondents to the consultation in 2000 on "Control of Noise from Civil Aircraft" suggested that the height restrictions specified in Rule 5 (Low Flying) of the Rules of the Air Regulations 1996 should be tightened so as to lessen noise. However, that consultation did not specifically encompass the Rules of the Air regulations, which are primarily safety-related.

**Mr. Tyrie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment has been made of the danger and nuisance of *(a)* helicopters and *(b)* other recreational aircraft from flying over urban areas. [159877]

**Mr. McNulty:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I have given today (ref 159319).

### Greener Vehicles

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how his Department is working with the Treasury to provide greater purchase incentives for smaller, cleaner vehicles. [156867]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The Government provides a number of incentives to encourage the purchase and use of clean, low carbon vehicles. The Vehicle Excise Duty regime, for example, is structured so that those who choose the cleanest, most fuel efficient vehicles can save themselves up to £110 a year (or up to £165 if they choose a fully electric car). The new company car tax system introduced in April 2002 provides very large incentives to encourage the purchase of clean, fuel-efficient cars. Early evidence suggests that it has already had a significant impact in the company car market. And, under the Government's PowerShift programme, which is administered by the Energy Saving Trust, purchase grants are available to incentivise the market for clean, low carbon vehicles and technologies. Officials in my Department work closely with their colleagues in the Treasury and Inland Revenue on these and other transport taxation issues.

### Hybrid Cars

**Mr. Paul Marsden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many hybrid petrol/electric cars were sold in the United Kingdom in each year since 1997. [159314]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The following table, based on vehicle registration data, sets out the number of hybrid electric cars sold since 2001—the earliest year for which this data is available.

| | *Number of cars sold* |
|---|---|
| 2001 | 568 |
| 2002 | 281 |
| 2003 | 373 |

The Government support the take-up of clean, low carbon vehicles, including hybrid electric vehicles, primarily through purchase grants and fiscal incentives, including the $CO_2$-linked graduated Vehicle Excise Duty and Company Car Tax systems. New hybrid electric models have recently been launched, and manufacturers are predicting total sales in excess of 2,000 vehicles for 2004.

### Post Buses

**Mr. Paul Marsden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what Government financial support is available to post buses. [159032]

**Mr. McNulty:** Local authorities are able to use the Department's Rural Bus Subsidy Grant to support post bus services. These services may also be eligible to claim Bus Service Operator's Grant from the Department. Post bus projects have been awarded funding under our Rural Bus Challenge competition. I understand that the Countryside Agency has also provided funding to support post buses. In addition of course local authorities may use resources from the Revenue Support Grant for this purpose.

### Rail Services (Gloucester)

**Mr. Dhanda:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the viability of a new railway station in Gloucester. [159792]

**Mr. McNulty:** The Strategic Rail Authority is looking into the business case for and operational implications of a new parkway station near Gloucester. A report on the work is due to be completed shortly.

### Recovery Vehicles

**Mr. Chope:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what action the Government have taken to give accredited recovery vehicles *(a)* higher priority in congested traffic and *(b)* permission to run on the hard shoulder as set out at paragraph 3.143, of the White Paper, "A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone". [159409]

**Mr. Jamieson** *[holding answer 5 March 2004]:* Following discussion between the emergency services, officials from the Department for Transport and the Highways Agency and representatives of vehicle rescue and recovery operators, in November 2003 the Association of Chief Police Officers produced agreed guidance on use of the hard shoulder. The guidance makes clear that general use of the hard shoulder by recovery vehicles would not be appropriate where traffic is free flowing or where congestion has been caused by an unplanned incident. Where the latter has occurred, priority must be given to the emergency services. However, it identified certain circumstances where recovery services could be permitted to use the hard shoulder, for example where drivers or passengers of broken down vehicles are considered to be at risk and traffic is stationary or very slow moving for an extended period. Authority for such use is granted on a case by case basis by the police.

### Road Accidents

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* deaths and *(b)* serious injuries there have been in road accidents in (i) Greater London and (ii) each London borough in each of the last five years. [158660]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The information requested is shown in the following table.

*Killed and seriously injured road casualties by London borough: 1998–2002*

*Casualties*

| | *1998* | *1999* | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Barking* | | | | | |
| Killed | 3 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 9 |
| Seriously injured | 126 | 99 | 107 | 108 | 92 |
| *Barnet* | | | | | |
| Killed | 10 | 16 | 8 | 13 | 14 |
| Seriously injured | 268 | 247 | 249 | 234 | 249 |
| *Bexley* | | | | | |
| Killed | 7 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 8 |
| Seriously injured | 136 | 145 | 130 | 127 | 114 |
| *Brent* | | | | | |
| Killed | 12 | 11 | 14 | 10 | 5 |
| Seriously injured | 229 | 216 | 200 | 176 | 176 |
| *Bromley* | | | | | |
| Killed | 10 | 14 | 10 | 9 | 9 |
| Seriously injured | 239 | 216 | 178 | 187 | 215 |

*Killed and seriously injured road casualties by London borough: 1998–2002*

*Casualties*

| | *1998* | *1999* | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Camden* | | | | | |
| Killed | 5 | 10 | 8 | 9 | 8 |
| Seriously injured | 230 | 198 | 241 | 216 | 223 |
| *City of London* | | | | | |
| Killed | 5 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| Seriously injured | 63 | 61 | 42 | 53 | 48 |
| *Croydon* | | | | | |
| Killed | 8 | 7 | 15 | 8 | 13 |
| Seriously injured | 254 | 250 | 240 | 256 | 224 |
| *Ealing* | | | | | |
| Killed | 8 | 17 | 8 | 16 | 18 |
| Seriously injured | 235 | 226 | 192 | 201 | 180 |
| *Enfield* | | | | | |
| Killed | 9 | 8 | 15 | 15 | 9 |
| Seriously injured | 261 | 219 | 232 | 222 | 200 |
| *Greenwich* | | | | | |
| Killed | 10 | 4 | 4 | 13 | 11 |
| Seriously injured | 199 | 192 | 182 | 192 | 173 |
| *Hackney* | | | | | |
| Killed | 10 | 4 | 9 | 8 | 10 |
| Seriously injured | 181 | 192 | 179 | 236 | 162 |
| *Hammersmith* | | | | | |
| Killed | 6 | 6 | 4 | 6 | 4 |
| Seriously injured | 156 | 152 | 141 | 141 | 118 |
| *Haringey* | | | | | |
| Killed | 2 | 2 | 7 | 13 | 12 |
| Seriously injured | 178 | 148 | 202 | 181 | 168 |
| *Harrow* | | | | | |
| Killed | 6 | 8 | 10 | 5 | 4 |
| Seriously injured | 106 | 98 | 109 | 100 | 83 |
| *Havering* | | | | | |
| Killed | 4 | 14 | 10 | 13 | 7 |
| Seriously injured | 227 | 144 | 144 | 152 | 168 |
| *Hillingdon* | | | | | |
| Killed | 5 | 15 | 10 | 6 | 7 |
| Seriously injured | 247 | 196 | 187 | 197 | 180 |
| *Hounslow* | | | | | |
| Killed | 9 | 8 | 7 | 12 | 12 |
| Seriously injured | 228 | 174 | 178 | 179 | 191 |
| *Islington* | | | | | |
| Killed | 7 | 9 | 10 | 8 | 8 |
| Seriously injured | 219 | 180 | 207 | 218 | 167 |
| *Kensington and Chelsea* | | | | | |
| Killed | 8 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 7 |
| Seriously injured | 177 | 154 | 181 | 145 | 141 |
| *Kingston-upon-Thames* | | | | | |
| Killed | 6 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Seriously injured | 115 | 79 | 71 | 90 | 88 |
| *Lambeth* | | | | | |
| Killed | 14 | 3 | 11 | 16 | 10 |
| Seriously injured | 295 | 274 | 263 | 245 | 267 |
| *Lewisham* | | | | | |
| Killed | 8 | 6 | 7 | 14 | 9 |
| Seriously injured | 217 | 215 | 209 | 207 | 202 |
| *Merton* | | | | | |
| Killed | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Seriously injured | 126 | 102 | 95 | 104 | 103 |

*Killed and seriously injured road casualties by London borough: 1998–2002*

*Casualties*

| | *1998* | *1999* | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Newham* | | | | | |
| Killed | 2 | 6 | 3 | 8 | 6 |
| Seriously injured | 198 | 137 | 153 | 142 | 123 |
| *Redbridge* | | | | | |
| Killed | 5 | 8 | 14 | 10 | 11 |
| Seriously injured | 193 | 170 | 162 | 172 | 152 |
| *Richmond-upon-Thames* | | | | | |
| Killed | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 7 |
| Seriously injured | 130 | 111 | 102 | 82 | 102 |
| *Southwark* | | | | | |
| Killed | 9 | 7 | 10 | 14 | 8 |
| Seriously injured | 235 | 200 | 237 | 234 | 214 |
| *Sutton* | | | | | |
| Killed | 3 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 6 |
| Seriously injured | 132 | 99 | 120 | 107 | 92 |
| *Tower Hamlets* | | | | | |
| Killed | 6 | 14 | 15 | 5 | 10 |
| Seriously injured | 196 | 126 | 150 | 154 | 141 |
| *Waltham Forest* | | | | | |
| Killed | 7 | 5 | 11 | 12 | 6 |
| Seriously injured | 198 | 152 | 185 | 180 | 144 |
| *Wandsworth* | | | | | |
| Killed | 6 | 9 | 9 | 6 | 6 |
| Seriously injured | 230 | 178 | 178 | 203 | 168 |
| *Westminster* | | | | | |
| Killed | 8 | 12 | 19 | 15 | 15 |
| Seriously injured | 420 | 347 | 374 | 360 | 322 |
| *Greater London* | | | | | |
| Killed | 226 | 264 | 286 | 300 | 281 |
| Seriously injured | 6,644 | 5,697 | 5,820 | 5,801 | 5,390 |

## Road Safety

**Mr. Paul Marsden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many road traffic accidents took place in 2003 where interference by children distracting bus drivers was a contributory factor to the accidents. [159033]

**Mr. Jamieson:** This information is not available.

**Mr. Paul Marsden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which local authorities use pre-wetted salt when road salting, broken down by Highways Agency area. [159345]

**Mr. Jamieson:** This information is not collated centrally. Local authorities decide upon their de-icing techniques and the materials they will use in the light of local climatic conditions and the nature of their highway network.

## Shipping

**Mr. Carmichael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* UK and *(b)* foreign ships failed port side inspections in the UK in each of the last five years; and how many people have been employed to undertake port side inspections in each of the last five years. [158949]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The number of ships which failed port side inspections in each of the last 5 years was as follows.

*(a)* UK inspections of UK and other Red Ensign Group flagged ships:

| | *Number of ships Detained* |
|---|---|
| 1998–99 | 12 |
| 1999–2000 | 13 |
| 2000–01 | 4 |
| 2001–02 | 11 |
| 2002–03 | 4 |

*(b)* Port state control inspections of foreign ships:

| | *Number of ships Detained* |
|---|---|
| 1998–99 | 155 |
| 1999–2000 | 106 |
| 2000–01 | 116 |
| 2001–02 | 118 |
| 2002–03 | 132 |

Specific information about those employed for ship inspection work was collected from 1999. Since then the number of people employed to undertake port side inspections each year was as follows:

| | *Staff compliment* |
|---|---|
| 1999–2000 | 94 |
| 2000–01 | 94 |
| 2001–02 | 101 |
| 2002–03 | 102 |

**Mr. Carmichael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to protect UK merchant ships from piracy and armed attacks. [158950]

**Mr. Jamieson:** My Department has taken the following actions in recent years to counter piracy, and to raise awareness among the international community.

Ensured that the topic is covered in the bi-annual meetings of the UK National Maritime Security Committee. This provides a forum for senior staff in the UK maritime industry and trade associations to consider action to tackle the problem.

Participated in several IMO regional Missions and Seminars, presenting UK government actions and chairing working groups and syndicates. These seminars have played an important role in raising awareness of the incidence and impact of piracy and armed robbery at sea. Often the work is to make the regions where the "pirates" are based accept that there is a problem.

Jointly, with the FCO, provided the UK financial support for the IMO programme of Missions and Seminars, including funding the participation of two Metropolitan police officers with expertise in investigating acts of piracy.

Jointly, with the Metropolitan police, prepared an IMO draft Code of Practice on the investigation of acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea. DfT Chaired the IMO Correspondence and Drafting Groups and the Code has now been issued as an IMO circular (MSC Circular 984) and this was adopted at the MO General Assembly in November 2001.

DfT has also produced an IMO draft paper on the problem of "Phantom" (stolen) ships and this has also been issued as an IMO Circular and adopted at the IMO General Assembly.

Produced and ensured the widespread availability of the Marine Guidance Note (MGN 241) advising UK ship operators and seafarers on steps to protect against attack by pirates/armed robbers at sea. This advice was issued in November 2002.

Taken the lead in promoting the inclusion of piracy in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) annual resolution on the oceans.

Raised the topic in bilateral meetings with officials and ministers from overseas countries.

### Speed Cameras

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of fees from speed cameras in Essex was reinvested in road safety measures in each of the last five years. [158786]

**Mr. Jamieson:** Essex has been participating in the safety camera cost recovery scheme since April 2000. Receipts from safety camera fines resulting in areas participating in the scheme may be applied solely to the installation and operation of approved safety camera installations. I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 53W, to the hon. Member for Billericay (Mr. Baron) for details of the receipts received by the Essex Safety Camera Partnership. Other investment in road safety measures is funded within local authorities1 and national road programmes. Before the setting up of the safety camera cost recovery scheme in April 2000, fine revenue from camera activity in Essex accrued in whole to the Consolidated Fund.

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 24 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 343W, if he will list the partners in each partnership. [159636]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The partners comprise the relevant police authorities, highway authorities and magistrates courts committees, and for some partnerships local health authorities also.

### Temporary Staff

**Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many staff the Department employs on a temporary basis through employment agencies; what percentage this is of total staff employed; and how much the Department paid employment agencies to supply temporary staff in *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2002–03 and *(c)* 2003–04 to the most recent date for which figures are available. [158246]

**Mr. McNulty:** The Department for Transport was formed on 29 May 2002. Due to Machinery of Government changes information on temporary staff working in DfT(C) is only available from December 2002. At any one time the Department employs approximately 47 temps through employment agencies which represents approximately 2 per cent. of the total staff employed. For the period December 2002 to March 2003 the total cost paid to employment agencies was £277,855 and £793,542 for the period April 2003 to January 2004.

### Track Maintenance

**Mr. Webb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will investigate whether Network Rail's planned activities in respect of clearing trackside vegetation in the Westerleigh area are *(a)* consistent with Network Rail's environmental policy and *(b)* no more than is required for safety purposes. [158908]

**Mr. McNulty** *[holding answer 5 March 2004]:* This is an operational matter for Network Rail. I have passed this question to Network Rail, for them to respond directly to the hon. Member.

### Vehicle Excise Duty

**Mr. Paul Marsden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many car owners failed to pay for car tax discs in each year since 1997. [159315]

**Mr. Jamieson:** Vehicle excise duty evasion is measured by roadside surveys. The last two were carried out in 1999 and 2002. The best estimate of total unlicensed stock in GB in 1999 was 1.52 million vehicles and in 2002 1.76 million vehicles.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### Combined Heat and Power

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what the capacity of the combined heat and power unit run by her Department is: [154208]

(2) when she last conducted an environmental audit on the combined heat and power unit run by her Department; [154209]

(3) what assessment she has made of *(a)* the sustainability, *(b)* the effectiveness and *(c)* the efficiency of her Department's combined heat and power unit; [154210];

(4) what the latest figure for cost per unit of operating the Department's combined heat and power plant is; [154211]

(5) what estimate she has made of damage to *(a)* information technology equipment and *(b)* stationery within her Department caused by the Department's combined heat and power unit; [154212]

(6) when she will reply to the questions on her Department's combined heat and power unit of 5 February from the hon. Member for Vale of York, reference 154208, 154209, 154210, 154211 and 154212. [156341]

**Alun Michael:** Defra currently operates one combined heat and power system on its estate. This is at its Weybridge site occupied by the Veterinary Laboratories Agency.

The capacity of the system is 1 megawatt, it was installed in 2000 and to date no environmental audit has been conducted on it. While no assessment has yet been made on its sustainability it is proving effective being very reliable and producing electrical power for the site at a cost per unit of 0.709p per kwh. A study is currently underway to review its efficiency.

Since the plant has been in use no damage has been caused to information technology equipment nor stationery.

### Common Agricultural Policy

**Dr. Cable:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the total

Government expenditure on agriculture was in each of the last five years; and what proportion of each total required payments under the Common Agricultural Policy. [155889]

**Alun Michael:** Total public expenditure on agriculture and EU receipts under the CAP over the past five years are provided in the table. The increase in expenditure in 2001–02 was due to the foot and mouth crisis.

| *Financial year* | *Total public expenditure on agriculture £ million* | *EU receipts under the CAP £ million* | *EU receipts under the CAP as a proportion of total public expenditure on agriculture Percentage* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 April 1998 to-31 March 1999 | 3,482 | 2,941.7 | 84.5 |
| 1 April 1999 to 31 March 2000 | 3,161 | 2,674.4 | 84.6 |
| 1 April 2000 to 31 March 2001 | 3,042 | 2,534.8 | 83.3 |
| 1 April 2001 to 31 March 2002 | 4,663.9 | 2,320.3 | 49.75 |
| 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003 | 3,119.2 | 2,619.2 | 84 |

*Source*:
The total public expenditure figures provided in the table have been taken from the relevant Agriculture in the United Kingdom publications and the EU receipts from the relevant Annual Report and Accounts of the Intervention Board and Rural Payments Agency (founded October 2001).

### Illegal Animal Products

**Mrs. Spelman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the pilot project using detector dogs to find illegal animal products will be concluded. [158831]

**Mr. Bradshaw** *[holding answer 4 March 2004]:* The pilot using detector dogs began in September 2002 and ran for six months to end March 2003.

The dogs were found to be effective and were taken on permanently by HM Customs and Excise when they took over enforcement responsibility of anti-smuggling measures in relation to illegal imports of products of animal origin on 11 April 2003.

### Milk

**Mr. Paterson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the farm-gate value of cows' milk produced by the dairy herd in England was in the last year for which figures are available. [157936]

**Alun Michael:** Defra collects farm-gate price information for England and Wales. As the figures are based on data supplied by the purchasers of raw milk, as opposed to the producers, we are unable to provide a regional breakdown of price or differentiate milk produced on farms located in England and Wales.

We have estimated the farm gate value of cow's milk by the dairy herd in England and Wales for 2003 to be £2,034 million.

### Farming

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the extent to which problems English farmers face affect farmers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland differently. [156111]

**Alun Michael:** The following table illustrates variations in Net Farm Income between the four UK countries. It highlights a welcome overall recent upward trend in Net Farm Incomes in each of the four countries. One of the most important drivers of UK farm incomes has been and will continue to be the exchange rate which has had a positive impact on all countries within the UK in recent years.

*Net farm income by country and type of farm*

*Average net farm income per farm (£000 per farm)*

| | *Accounting years ending on average in February* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *1999–2000* | *2000–01* | *2001–021* | *2002–031* | *2003–042* |
| *At current prices* | | | | | |
| *England* | | | | | |
| Dairy | 9.4 | 14.0 | 30.7 | 18.3 | 20.5 |
| Cattle and sheep (less favoured areas) | 5.3 | 5.8 | 7.9 | 18.0 | 19.0 |
| Cattle and sheep (lowland) | 0.5 | -0.4 | — | 5.8 | 4.5 |
| Cereals | 11.7 | 6.2 | 4.1 | 12.1 | 32.0 |
| General cropping | 8.0 | 18.4 | 17.9 | 14.5 | 43.5 |
| Pigs and poultry | -4.4 | 32.6 | 21.5 | 49.5 | 57.5 |
| Mixed | 5.5 | 7.5 | 5.4 | 13.3 | 19.5 |
| *Wales* | | | | | |
| Dairy | 14.2 | 12.3 | 29.6 | 18.6 | 18.5 |
| Cattle and sheep (less favoured areas) | 3.1 | 3.7 | 1.7 | 12.5 | 17.0 |
| Cattle and sheep (lowland) | 0.6 | 0.7 | 2.2 | 9.1 | 8.5 |
| *Scotland* | | | | | |
| Dairy | 1.9 | 13.6 | 33.1 | 5.1 | 9.0 |
| Cattle and sheep (less favoured areas) | 2.7 | 5.6 | 5.8 | 13.3 | 16.5 |
| Cereals | 10.6 | 0.7 | -0.6 | -1.6 | 17.5 |
| General cropping | 3.6 | 8.4 | 8.0 | -1.9 | 19.0 |
| Mixed | 3.6 | 5.9 | 12.6 | 9.5 | 24.0 |
| *Northern Ireland* | | | | | |
| Dairy | 7.0 | 14.6 | 17.5 | 6.5 | 13.0 |
| Cattle and sheep (less favoured areas) | -1.6 | 0.7 | 4.0 | 4.6 | 6.0 |
| *United Kingdom* | | | | | |
| Dairy | 9.0 | 13.9 | 27.9 | 14.9 | 17.5 |

*Net farm income by country and type of farm*

*Average net farm income per farm (£000 per farm)*

| | *Accounting years ending on average in February* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *1999–2000* | *2000–01* | *2001–021* | *2002–031* | *2003–042* |
| Cattle and sheep (less favoured areas) | 2.2 | 3.9 | 4.5 | 12.0 | 14.5 |
| Cattle and sheep (lowland) | 0.1 | -0.1 | 0.8 | 5.8 | 5.5 |
| Cereals | 11.5 | 5.4 | 3.3 | 10.0 | 30.0 |
| General cropping | 6.7 | 16.3 | 15.7 | 10.9 | 38.0 |
| Pigs and poultry | -3.9 | 29.1 | 19.4 | 44.9 | 52.0 |
| Mixed | 4.4 | 6.8 | 6.3 | 11.7 | 19.0 |
| All Types (excluding horticulture) | 5.7 | 7.8 | 11.0 | 12.2 | 20.5 |
| *In real terms (at 2002–03 prices)* | | | | | |
| *United Kingdom* | | | | | |
| Dairy | 9.7 | 14.4 | 28.4 | 14.9 | 17.0 |
| Cattle and sheep (less favoured areas) | 2.4 | 4.1 | 4.6 | 12.0 | 14.5 |
| Cattle and sheep (lowland) | 0.1 | -0.1 | 0.8 | 5.8 | 5.0 |
| Cereals | 12.3 | 5.6 | 3.4 | 10.0 | 29.0 |
| General cropping | 7.1 | 16.8 | 16.0 | 10.9 | 37.0 |
| Pigs and poultry | -4.1 | 30.1 | 19.7 | 44.9 | 50.5 |
| Mixed | 4.7 | 7.1 | 6.5 | 11.7 | 18.5 |
| All types (excluding horticulture) | 6.1 | 8.0 | 11.2 | 12.2 | 20.0 |

[1] Excluding farms subjected to compulsory foot-and-mouth disease cull.
[2] Provisional.

Further information on the situation of agriculture in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found in the following publications.

Defra, on behalf of the UK Agricultural Departments, publishes the annual report "Agriculture in the United Kingdom" (AUK). This describes agricultural and environmental developments during the previous year, reporting on each of the main agricultural commodities and containing information on agricultural incomes. Details on the circumstances of Agriculture in the four UK countries are given in tables 2.3 and 2.4 of AUK. Copies of AUK are placed in the House Library and more information can be found on the Defra website at: http://statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/publications/auk/default.asp

In addition to this, a more detailed breakdown of information on agriculture in each of the UK countries is provided in the following specialist publications:

England: Farm Accounts in England
http://statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/publications/fab/default.asp

Wales: Aggregate Agricultural Output and Income 2002
http://www.wales.gov.uk/kevpubstatisticsforwalesheadline/content/agriculture/2003/hdw20030227-e.htm

Northern Ireland: Statistical Review of Northern Ireland Agriculture 2002
http://www.dardni.gov.uk/econs/spub0018.htm

Scotland: Scottish Agriculture—Output, Input and Income Statistics
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/agri/oiis02.pdf

### Fisheries

**Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with *(a)* the European Commission and *(b)* other EU member states regarding proposals to reduce cetacean by-catch in the past year. [155945]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** The importance of reducing dolphin and other small cetacean by-catch has been raised by the UK at ministerial level with the Fisheries Commissioner on a number of occasions and bilaterally with France. In particular, the UK has pressed in February 2003 for the introduction of a observer programme across the EU to broaden the information available about which fisheries, and which vessels, are involved in the dolphin by-catch problem.

Following this, the Commission published, on 24 July 2003, a draft Council regulation concerning the incidental by-catch of cetaceans in fisheries. Discussions on this proposal are currently taking place at official level and will come to a future Council of Minister's meeting for adoption.

**Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to place observers on UK fishing vessels to examine the causes of the cetacean by-catch. [155947]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** As part of Defra-funded research, the Sea Mammal Research Unit (SMRU) has in recent years placed observers on UK vessels in a number of fisheries to monitor small cetacean by-catch.

As part of a new five year Defra-funded contract which started in 2003, SMRU has continued to place observers on UK vessels in the offshore bass fishery and plans to monitor other pelagic trawl fisheries and selected gillnet fisheries. This work is intended to provide improved estimates of annual by-catch levels of harbour porpoise and common dolphins, and to improve our understanding of how, where and why such events occur.

### Market and Coastal Towns Initiative

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her latest estimate is of the costs of the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative in each year from 2000–01 to 2005–06 (planned); and if she will make a statement. [156600]

**Alun Michael:** The Rural White Paper stated that £37 million over three years (2001–04) would be made available to fund regeneration in market towns. This funding has been delivered through

(a) the Regional Development Agencies (£32 million) and matched with funding from partners; and

(b) the Countryside Agency (£5 million) for work on Health Checks for individual Towns, the Beacon Towns Network, and the Best Practice Programme.

When the announcement of the funding was made, it was envisaged that 100 towns would benefit from this funding. I am pleased to report that, through the innovative methods used in each of the regions, currently 227 towns are receiving support.

Future funding is being reviewed as part of the Modernising Rural Delivery process. At the same time Defra is working with the Countryside Agency to assess the outcomes from the initiative, with a report due in June, and are in discussion with the Regional Development Agencies on evaluation of the initiative in the regions.

### Rights of Way

**Mr. Goodman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what consultations with groups representing people with disabilities she had before issuing her consultation document, Use of Mechanically Propelled Vehicles on Rights of Way. [159259]

**Alun Michael:** Last December I met a number of groups representing people with disabilities, under the banner Countryside For All, to discuss rights of way issues. We will look carefully at the responses from such groups to our consultation document.

**Mr. Goodman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent responses from groups representing people with disabilities she has had on her consultation document, Use of Mechanically Propelled Vehicles on Rights of Way. [159261]

**Alun Michael:** By 4 March we had had responses from the Kent branch of the National Federation of the Blind; the Access Group for Kent and Canterbury; and County Mobility in Cheshire.

**Mr. Rendel:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has for section 34*(a)* of the Road Traffic Act 1988. [159694]

**Alun Michael:** I made a written Ministerial statement to the House on 9 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 81WS. The Government will not be implementing section 34A of the Road Traffic Act 1988. New proposals have been put forward in the Government consultation paper, "Use of mechanically propelled vehicles on Rights of Way".

**Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she issued the Departmental Circular on Traffic Regulation Orders described in Proposal 1 of her consultation on the use of mechanically propelled vehicles on rights of way. [159273]

**Alun Michael:** We will issue the Departmental Circular shortly. The Circular will explain the range of powers available to regulate the use of mechanically propelled vehicles, including the power to make traffic regulation orders.

### Varroa Mites

**Chris McCafferty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress has been made in developing an effective treatment against highly resistant varroa mites. [157781]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Recent experience both on the European Continent and in North America has shown that there is a spread of resistance to most medicament treatments applied to control the varroa mite. Misuse of proprietary products or use of illegal treatments has been found to be the cause of resistance in most cases.

In the UK, resistance to the two pyrethroid-based varroacides, Apistan and Bayvarol, was first detected in Devon in 2001. Resistance was detected early through the monitoring programme conducted by the Central Science Laboratory's (CSL) National Bee Unit. This enabled action to be taken prior to the widespread colony collapse which has been experienced in other countries. Continued monitoring by beekeepers and CSL demonstrates that resistance is still localised. In many parts of the UK pyrethroids retain their high efficacy.

The introduction to the UK market in 2003 of Apiguard, a non-pyrethroid-based treatment for varroa, now means that beekeepers are able to apply this product to their colonies, ideally as part of an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to combating pyrethroid-resistant mites.

Measures funded by Defra to protect bee health include training and technical advice to beekeepers in order to help them become more self-reliant through improved bee husbandry, in particular dealing with varroa. Defra is also currently funding research investigating the use of entomopathogenic fungi as possible microbial control agents of varroa.

## INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Commission for Africa

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how the members of the Commission for Africa were chosen. [159379]

**Hilary Benn:** The members of the Commission for Africa have been personally invited to participate by the Prime Minister.

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether the Commission for Africa will take evidence in Africa. [159381]

**Hilary Benn:** Yes. The Commission will be seeking evidence from African institutions, civil society and citizens including through seminars, participation in debates and commentary on work in progress. Commissioners such as Prime Minister Meles of Ethiopia, Finance Minister Trevor Manuel of South Africa and K.Y. Amoako (Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission on Africa) will also bring African perspectives to the debate.

## HIV/AIDS

**Tom Brake:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what representations his Department has received from *(a)* the UN, *(b)* the EU and *(c)* NGO sources on channelling more aid money towards fighting malaria in sub-Saharan Africa on the basis that HIV/AIDS rates in sub-Saharan Africa were stabilising; [156423]

(2) what representations his Department has received from *(a)* the UN, *(b)* the EU and *(c)* NGO sources that HIV/AIDS rates are stabilising in Africa. [156437]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** DFID has received no representations to channel more aid assistance towards fighting malaria on the basis that HIV/AIDS rates are stabilising in Africa, or, any specific representations about trends in HIV/AIDS rates. The global UNAIDS epidemic update of December 2003 (available at www.unaids.org) records that among some populations in sub-Saharan Africa, for example in Zambia, and groups, for example, pregnant women, HIV rates are stabilising. However, UNAID's overall conclusions are that we are not witnessing a decline in sub-Saharan Africa's epidemic. Even if prevalence rates stabilise it may not mean that infection rates have dropped. Rather, it may mean that a persistently high number of new infections is offset by an increasing number of deaths. In such cases it will still be necessary to fully support prevention programmes, while scaling up provision for treatment and care. In terms of African countries where the UK's support is predominantly through budget support, decisions on the balance of investment between different public health priorities are for country governments to make.

DFID has contributed £48 million over the period September 1999 to March 2004 to Roll Back Malaria who operate globally but with priority given to sub-Saharan Africa where the burden is highest. We have committed $280 million over eight years to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria.

## Malaria

**Mr. Pike:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with countries affected by malaria on the economic impact on *(a)* public services and *(b)* the stability of their societies. [157792]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** Malaria is a leading cause of mortality and morbidity in many poor countries, limiting social and economic development. The UK, as part of an international effort, is committed to reducing the impact of malaria. We support the Roll Back Malaria partnership, and look to it to inform us on the impact of malaria in developing countries.

DFID is in regular contact with health officials in developing countries and provides assistance through its support to developing country programmes. As part of the international effort, we are working to ensure that the Roll Back Malaria partnership lends its support to nationally led programmes, processes and strategies, and provides sound evidence-based support for the effective use of additional resources from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria.

**Mr. Pike:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the *(a)* economic and *(b)* social impact of malaria on developing countries. [157793]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** Malaria is a leading cause of mortality and morbidity in many developing countries, limiting economic and social development. It is understood to be both a disease of poverty and a cause of poverty. Annual economic growth in countries with high malaria transmission is lower than in countries without malaria and in some African countries it penalises economic growth by up to 1.3 per cent. per year. This leads to substantial differences in GDP between countries and severely restrains the economic growth of the entire region.

The social impact of malaria includes the loss of earnings, human pain and suffering. It hampers children's social development and educational opportunities. The disease affects individual and household decision-making in ways that have a negative impact on economic productivity and growth.

As part of an international effort, the UK is committed to reducing the impact of malaria. We provide support through global partnerships such as Roll Back Malaria and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria as well as supporting country programmes (projects, support to health sectors and general budget support).

## Ministerial Speeches

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many speeches he made between 9 June 2003 and 1 February 2004; and where a copy of each speech can be obtained. [156151]

**Hilary Benn:** I have made a number of speeches on a wide range of domestic and international issues. Copies of speeches, where available, can be found on the Departmental website at www.dfid.gov.uk

## Nepal

**Mr. Colman:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much aid his Department gave to Nepal in each year since 2000; how much aid it plans to give in 2004; and if he will break down the total in each case by category. [R] [158855]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** UK bilateral aid to Nepal since 2000 is as follows:

*£000*

| *Financial year* | *Technical co-operation* | *Project or sector aid* | *Grants/other aid in kind* | *Humanitarian assistance* | *Total DFID programme* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1999–2000 | 11,119 | 2,092 | 1,636 | — | 14,847 |
| 2000–01 | 13,686 | 2,742 | 1,267 | — | 17,695 |
| 2001–02 | 18,750 | 1,805 | 659 | 2,201 | 23,414 |
| 2002–03 | 24,599 | 2,038 | 1,156 | 94 | 27,887 |

In the financial years (FY) 2003–04, DFID is on track to spend approximately £30 million in Nepal, and the aid framework for FY 2004–05 is set to increase to £35 million.

**Mr. Colman:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development which non-governmental organisations based in the UK are financially supported by his Department to work in Nepal. [R] [158856]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** We are supporting three projects in Nepal under our Civil Society Challenge Fund. These are:

| *Agency* | *Project* | *Budget 2004–05* |
|---|---|---|
| Handicap International | Handicap in Development | 85,000 |
| Minority Rights Group | Promoting rights | 28,218 |
| Nepal Leprosy Trust | Problems of Stigma | 84,000 |

In addition we are also providing £56.26 million in strategic support to 15 major UK based non-governmental organisations in the form of Partnership Programme Agreements. A number of these organisations currently support activities in Nepal, including VSO who have 29 volunteers working in the Nepalese education sector.

### Recruitment

**Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the cost of recruitment of civil servants for the Department was in each financial year since 1996–97, broken down by *(a)* delegated or contracted out recruitment procedures and *(b)* recruitment procedures carried out by the Department. [158186]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** DFID currently undertakes all its recruitment in-house, and does not therefore delegate or contract out any of its recruitment procedures.

No figures are available for the cost of recruitment of civil servants for DFID for the financial years since 1996–97. To obtain this information would incur a disproportionate cost to DFID.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Anti-terrorism Legislation

**Ms Oona King:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been detained under United Kingdom anti-terrorism legislation since 11 September 2001; how many are in detention; how many of the total number detained have been charged; and how many are Muslims in each case. [156754]

**Mr. Blunkett:** 16 people have been certified and detained under Part 4 of the Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security (ATCS) Act, of whom 14 remain in detention. Anonymised details are provided at the Home Office website at: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs3/atcsa_detainees.html

Under the Terrorism Act, Section 41 relates to the power of a constable to arrest, and detain for up to 14 days, without warrant a person whom he reasonably suspects to be a terrorist. A full 14 day detention is subject to judicial approval at various stages of the detention. From 11 September 2001 to 31 January 2004, 544 individuals were arrested and subsequently detained under this power.

In addition, six people have been convicted and detained for offences under that act. Of these, four have now left detention.

Schedule 7 of the Terrorism Act 2000 allows an examining officer at a port or border control post to detain a person for up to nine hours (starting from the time at which the examination begins) in order to determine whether the person has been involved in the commissioning, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism. To date, 47 people have been detained under this power.

Details of convictions under the Terrorism Act 2000 are provided on the Home Office website at: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs3/tatc_arrest_stats.html

I do not believe that the religion of an individual is relevant to whether or not they may be involved in terrorism and this information is not collated centrally.

### Identity Cards

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how the introduction of identity cards will protect people from identity fraud and theft. [157005]

**Beverley Hughes:** The incorporation of advanced biometric information into identity documents and the development of an electronic national identity register were announced by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary in his statement on a national identity cards scheme on 11 November. These measures would provide a unique link between the identity card and the person to whom it was issued. They would also protect people from identity fraud and theft by:

(a) helping to ensure that fraudsters could not set up multiple identities;

(b) providing United Kingdom residents with an easy and secure way of proving their identity;

(c) allowing Government Departments who provide a public service and authorised private sector organisations to identify with whom they are dealing.

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what personal information will be contained on the National Identity Register; and what legal and procedural safeguards will limit access to an identity cardholder's record on the National Identity Register; [157006]

(2) who will have access to the information stored on the national identity card database. [157039]

**Beverley Hughes:** Data held on the National Identity Register will be basic identity information—such as name, address, date of birth, immigration status and a confirmed biometric—and this will be set out in statute.

The legislation will allow the cards scheme to be used by any authorised service—public or private—to establish identity with the consent of the card-holder, but with strict limits on the information available.

While police and other organisations will not have routine access to data stored on the National Identity Register, there will, in statute, be specified circumstances for disclosure from the National Identity Register, for example, in cases of serious crime. This will be subject to independent oversight as at the present time.

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how, under the current proposals, individuals will gain access to services where an identity card is required if their card is lost or stolen. [157259]

**Beverley Hughes:** An identity card, although very helpful to public services as a reliable means of proving identity, would not become mandatory until a specific further parliamentary decision on a move to compulsion. Where the identity card is used to access public services we will want to ensure that procedures are in place to help those whose card has been lost or stolen, especially in cases of emergency. We will be giving detailed consideration to how this will be achieved.

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how his Department measures the amount of public support for the identity card proposal; [157301]

(2) what the reasons were for discarding 5,000 responses to the Entitlement Card consultation. [157302]

**Beverley Hughes:** During July 2002 and January 2003 the Home Office carried out extensive research into public attitudes to the proposals for what were then known as entitlement cards. The results of this research were published as "Identity Cards: A Summary of Findings from the Consultation Exercise on Entitlement Cards and Identity Fraud" (Cm 6019 of November 2003).

The Government did not discard 5,000 responses. The publication included a section on page 63 breaking down the 5,031 replies received via the website of a privacy organisation and explaining how these replies had been received.

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his policy is on whether an identity card scheme should be under the control of a new independent statutory body. [158721]

**Beverley Hughes:** The Government will address this in the draft legislation announced in the Queen's Speech and will consider the comments which will be received on the draft Bill.

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has conducted of the *(a)* costs and *(b)* consequences of a major breach of the national identity card database. [158709]

**Beverley Hughes:** The security and integrity of the database are integral to maintaining trust in the identity cards scheme. Home Office officials are already working with security experts to ensure that security issues are considered from the start of the database design, and with other Government Departments which have similar databases with similar security needs, such as the United Kingdom Passport Service.

The specifications and design of the database and its security features will take into account security advice from the earliest stages. The design process will include threat and vulnerability assessments. Threats which will be assessed will include unauthorised internal and external access to data. These threat and vulnerability assessments will examine the risks and consequences of attacks on the databases and weigh up the costs and benefits of various defence strategies.

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how identity cards will enable the identification of illegal immigrants in the UK if it will not be compulsory to carry the card. [158712]

**Beverley Hughes:** The National Identity Register will link each individual's record to a biometric that is unique to that person. This means that even without a card being produced, it will be possible to check someone's biometric information directly with the National Identity Register to establish his or her identity. This could be done with the person's consent or without consent in certain limited circumstances such as establishing the identity of persons who have been arrested for deceiving an immigration officer as to their real identity.

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many identity cards for young people purchasing alcohol and tobacco are in circulation; and what plans he has to change these arrangements. [156040]

**Beverley Hughes:** There is no national proof of age card and therefore no figures are held centrally for the number of cards issued by the various existing card schemes.

The Government's plans for a national identity cards scheme would provide a nationally accepted, useful and secure way of proving and determining age when young people wish to purchase age restricted products such as alcohol. However, this is some way in the future—the introduction of plain identity cards on a phased basis would, on current plans, begin during 2007–08.

In the shorter term, the Government have a strong interest in initiatives like the British Retail Consortium's Proof of Age Standards Scheme (PASS) which establishes a common standard for issuing the various proof of age cards that are available. This should go some way towards assisting retailers in recognising and accepting reputable cards when requesting proof of ID and for young people to prove their age.

### Security Passes

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many security passes have been reported *(a)* lost and *(b)* stolen by staff in departmental agencies in the last 12 months. [147976]

**Fiona Mactaggart:** The total number of security passes reported lost or stolen by departmental agencies for the year ending 31 December 2003 was 227: 215 lost and 12 stolen.

Passes issued by the agencies do not afford the holder access to central London Home Office buildings and Ministers.

## CABINET OFFICE

### Civil Servants (Pay)

**Mr. McGrady:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what pay award was awarded to civil servants in Great Britain on 1 April 2003. [158633]

**Mr. Alexander:** Pay outside of the Senior Civil Service is delegated to individual Departments and agencies. Information on individual pay awards is not held centrally.

The pay ranges for Senior Civil Servants were increased by 2.25 per cent. Individual Senior Civil Servants received performance related pay awards of between 0 and 9 per cent. depending on their personal contribution.

### Contingency Planning

**Patrick Mercer:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what part virtual reality equipment plays in enabling Sir David Omand to provide central co-ordination for contingency planning and the resilience capability programme. [158979]

**Mr. Alexander:** Computer-based scenario work is used extensively in developing the UK's civil contingency doctrine and planning, including the resilience capability programme.

In addition, the Emergency Planning College at Easingwold is studying the feasibility of adapting military synthetic environment technologies for the training of joint, multi-agency emergency management teams fundamental to the UK's resilience under a collaborative arrangement with the Defence Procurement Agency's Training and Simulation Integrated Project Team.

**Patrick Mercer:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what arrangements are in place for those involved in contingency planning to receive appropriate professional and career development. [158980]

**Mr. Alexander:** The Emergency Planning College at Easingwold is the primary provider of training and professional development for emergency planning staff employed in the public sector, including local government and the emergency and health services. The latter groups account for some 80 per cent. of the college's annual training throughput of 6,500. The college currently delivers a range of generic courses reflecting the diverse requirements of its customers.

Major changes in the training regime have been under development since last summer. These will take effect in September 2004, when the college will introduce a new programme based on a spine of core courses and a range of optional modules tailored to meet specific needs. This architecture reflects best practice and will provide the foundation for subsequent professional and academic accreditation of the college's courses across the span from NVQ to postgraduate.

### Asset Sales

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what assets were sold by his Department in each year since 1997 to date; what the value of each item was; and if he will estimate the value of asset sales planned for 2003–04 and 2004–05. [159344]

**Mr. Alexander:** Assets that are routinely disposed of include plant and machinery, which in the main comprise motor cars, owned by the Government Car and Despatch Agency, and fixtures and fittings, which includes office furniture and IT equipment.

*Fixed asset disposals at Net Book Value (NBV) for the Cabinet Office*

£000

| Year ended 31 March | Amount |
|---|---|
| 2000 | 1,698 |
| 2001 | 1,703 |
| 2002 | 1,608 |
| 2003 | 14,928 |
| 2004 | [1]4,274 |
| 2005 | [2]— |

[1] Estimate
[2] Not available

Details prior to 2000 are not held.

### Better Regulation Taskforce

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what account is taken of the promotion of sustainable development in the work of the Better Regulation Taskforce. [159335]

**Mr. Alexander:** The Better Regulation Task Force advises the Government on action to ensure that regulation and its enforcement meet the principles of good regulation. The Task Force's principles are entirely consistent with our commitment to sustainable development and we seek to apply them when implementing policy. For example, the Government has accepted the helpful recommendations made by the Task Force in its report "Environmental Regulation: Getting the Message Across" (July 2003) on ways to improve the implementation of regulations on producer responsibility.

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the most recently enacted legislation is which he proposes to repeal following a report of the Better Regulation Taskforce. [159339]

**Mr. Alexander:** The Government seeks to act on the recommendations of the Better Regulation Task Force wherever possible. Major reforms currently

underway, or recently enacted, that follow earlier recommendations made by the Task Force include the reform of planning law, liquor licensing and fire safety.

### Business Regulations

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many proposals to impose new regulations on business have been dropped following regulatory impact assessments. [159340]

**Mr. Alexander:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave my hon. Friend the Member for North Norfolk (Norman Lamb) of 2 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 715W.

### Civil Contingencies Bill

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what plans he has to table amendments to the Civil Contingencies Bill. [158901]

**Mr. Alexander:** Following a commitment given to the hon. Member for Sheffield Hallam during Committee Stage, the Government will amend the Bill to require a declaration of compatibility with the Human Rights Act to be made when emergency regulations are brought forward.

The Government will also amend the Bill to make provisions regarding cross-border co-operation, following a commitment given to the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland. This follows discussions with the Scottish Executive.

The Government will keep the need to table further amendments to the Bill under review.

### Information and Communication Service

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the expenditure of the Government Information and Communication Service's operations within the Cabinet Office was *(a)* in the latest year for which figures are available and *(b)* in 1996–97; and if he will make a statement. [159576]

**Mr. Alexander:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Lewes (Norman Baker) on 14 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 767W.

### New Deal for Disabled People

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many people have been employed in *(a)* central Government and *(b)* the public sector under the New Deal for Disabled People. [159342]

**Mr. Alexander:** 20 people joined the Civil Service under the New Deal for Disabled People in the period 2 July 2002 to 1 October 2003. Data for the most recent quarter ending 1 January 2004 is not yet complete, but at least 12 people have joined under the scheme during that quarter.

Data on the number of people that have been employed in the public sector (excluding the Civil Service) under the New Deal for Disabled People is not collected centrally.

### Non-departmental Public Bodies

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the expenditure by non-departmental public bodies of the Office was in *(a)* 1996–97 and *(b)* the latest year for which figures are available in (i) cash, (ii) real terms and (iii) as a percentage of gross national product. [159333]

**Mr. Alexander:** The expenditure by non-departmental bodies of the Cabinet Office in cash and real terms for 1996–97 and 2002–03, the latest year for which figures are available, is set out in the following table.

*Expenditure by non-departmental bodies of the Cabinet Office*

| *Financial year* | *Cash terms £ million* | *Real terms £ million* | *As percentage of gross national product* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1996–97 | 1.047 | 1.212 | 0.00014 |
| 2002–03 | 2.088 | 2.088 | 0.00019 |

## DEFENCE

### Defence Housing (Aldershot)

**Mr. Gerald Howarth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* single living units and *(b)* married quarters in the Aldershot constituency (i) are unoccupied and (ii) have been unoccupied for three months or more. [156830]

**Mr. Caplin:** As at 26 February, of a total of 1,808 family quarters in the Aldershot constituency, 247 were unoccupied. 113 of the properties had been unoccupied for more than three months. Unoccupied service family housing may be allocated or under offer to incoming families, awaiting modernisation or earmarked for disposal.

Services single living accommodation (SLA) in the Aldershot constituency comprises 6,643 bed spaces, shared between two sites, Aldershot and Minley. Of these, some 1,064 are currently unoccupied. Some vacancies are unavoidable, since various groups have to be accommodated separately from others, for example, female personnel from male, and successive training troops from each other.

No figures are available that identify those bed spaces unoccupied for more than three months.

### Departmental Buildings

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the *(a)* land and *(b)* buildings in central London owned by (i) his Department, (ii) its agencies and (iii) the UK armed forces, giving the value in each case. [156709]

**Mr. Caplin:** The following major properties in central London are used by the Ministry of Defence (including agencies and service personnel).

| Building | Description | Freehold or leasehold |
|---|---|---|
| Horse Guards* | Offices | Freehold |
| Northumberland House* | Offices | Freehold |
| Old War Office* | Offices | Freehold |
| The Citadel* | Offices | Freehold |
| Main Building* | Offices | Freehold |
| Chelsea Barracks* | Barracks | Freehold |
| Wellington Barracks* | Barracks | Part Leasehold and part Freehold |
| Clerkenwell Road | Offices | Leasehold |
| ACIO, The Strand | Shop with offices | Leasehold |
| Castlewood House | Offices | Leasehold |
| Regents Park Barracks* | Barracks | Leasehold |
| St. John's Wood Barracks | Barracks | Leasehold |
| Metropole Building | Offices | Leasehold |
| Great Scotland Yard* | Offices | Leasehold |
| St. Giles Court | Offices | Leasehold |
| RCDS Seaford House* | Offices | Leasehold |
| St. George's Court | Offices | Leasehold |
| Ibex House | Offices | Leasehold |
| Hyde Park Barracks* | Barracks | Leasehold |
| Rochester Row | Offices and barracks | Leasehold |

*Notes:*
1. Central London has been defined as the area within the Central London congestion charging zone but includes major buildings adjacent to that area.
2. Married quarters and buildings used solely by visiting forces and reserve forces are excluded.
3. The National Asset Register, (NAR), published by HM Treasury provides a valuation of those assets denoted by * in the table. A copy of the NAR has been placed in the Library of the House and can be accessed on the HM Treasury website at http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk. It should be noted that this is an asset valuation as at 19 July 2001 and does not represent the disposal value of these buildings.

### Hydrographic Office

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his latest estimate is of the net asset value of the hydrographic office; and if he will make a statement. [156608]

**Mr. Caplin:** The estimated net asset value of the United Kingdom hydrographic office at 31 January 2004, as represented by total assets less current liabilities, was £65.2 million.

### Inglis Barracks

**Mr. Dismore:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the timetable for the services vacating the Inglis Barracks, Mill Hill site is; what steps are *(a)* being taken and *(b)* to be taken, concerning the marketing of the site; what plans he has to ensure the preservation of the officers' mess and war memorial as part of future development; what discussions his Department has had with the planning authority concerning the future use of the site; and if he will make a statement. [158285]

**Mr. Caplin:** The British Forces Post Office presently situated at Inglis Barracks and Frith Lane, Mill Hill is planned to move to RAF Northolt. The relocation of BFPO forms part of a wider consolidation of the MOD estate in London through Project MODEL (Ministry of Defence Estate London). The timetable for the relocation depends on the construction of a new operational facility at RAF Northolt, and the current project programme suggests that construction work will not be finished until the first quarter of 2007 at the earliest.

Following completion of the new facility, at RAF Northolt, there would then be a period of approximately six months to transfer operations to RAF Northolt and to decommission the Mill Hill site in readiness for disposal. These dates are subject to the MOD's usual project approval process.

Preliminary discussions have already taken place with the Local Planning Authority and others, such as English Partnership on the future re-use of the site with a view to developing over the next 12 months a development framework document for the Inglis Barracks site and the surrounding area. The negotiations will address the future of both the officers' mess and war memorial.

Additionally, the issue of military heritage is being considered at length and all interested parties will be involved in discussions to ensure that these aspects are treated in an appropriate manner.

Once the outcome of the work we have in hand is known, we will decide how best to take forward the marketing of the site.

### Iraq

**Mr. Keetch:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many accidental killings of civilians in Iraq have been reported by British forces since the end of combat operations, in addition to the 17 cases now under investigation; and if he will make a statement. [146850]

**Mr. Ingram** *[holding answer 14 January 2004]*: None. As well as the cases under investigation UK forces have reported 19 Iraqi civilian fatalities. All involved assailants attacking British forces and in defending themselves the soldiers involved were acting clearly within their Rules of Engagement.

**Adam Price:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will name the six Iraqis who have died in British custody in Iraq giving the *(a)* approximate time, *(b)* date and *(c)* place of their deaths; and which regiments were responsible for their detention at the time of their deaths. [147713]

**Mr. Ingram:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Leyton and Wanstead (Harry Cohen) on 19 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 918W.

We do not release details of units who are involved in any incident that has been the subject of an SIB investigation, unless the case is referred for court martial.

All deaths occurred within the United Kingdom area of operations in Iraq.

### Personnel Budgets (Scotland)

**Angus Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how much of its total personnel budget the *(a)* Army Personnel Centre, *(b)* Army Training and Recruiting Agency, *(c)* Defence Dental Agency, *(d)* Defence Bills Agency and *(e)* Armed Forces Personnel and Administration Agency spent in Scotland from the start of financial year 2003–04 to December 2004, (i) in monetary terms and (ii) as a percentage of the total; and if he will make a statement; [159354]

(2) how much of its total personnel budget the *(a)* Defence Analytical Services Agency, *(b)* Defence Housing Executive, *(c)* Defence Intelligence and Security Centre, *(d)* Defence Estates, *(e)* Defence Geographic and Imagery Intelligence Agency and *(f)* Naval Manning Agency spent in Scotland from the start of financial year 2003–04 to December 2004, (i) in monetary terms and (ii) as a percentage of the total; and if he will make a statement; [159355]

(3) how much of its total personnel budget *(a)* Service Children's Education, *(b)* the Duke of York's Royal Military School, *(c)* the Naval Recruiting and Training Agency, *(d)* the RAF Personnel Manning Agency, *(e)* the RAF Training Group Defence Agency and *(f)* the Warship Support Agency spent in Scotland from the start of financial year 2003–04 to December 2004, (i) in monetary terms and (ii) as a percentage of the total; and if he will make a statement; [159356]

(4) how much of its total personnel budget the *(a)* Defence Procurement Agency, *(b)* Defence Transport and Movements Agency, *(c)* Medical Supplies Agency, *(d)* Defence Communications Services Agency, *(e)* Defence Storage and Distribution Agency and *(f)* Veterans Agency spent in Scotland from the start of financial year 2003–04 to December 2004, (i) in monetary terms and (ii) as a percentage of the total; and if he will make a statement; [159357]

(5) how much of its total personnel budget the *(a)* British Forces Post Office, *(b)* Defence Vetting Agency, *(c)* Defence Medical Education, and Training Agency, *(d)* Disposal Services Agency, *(e)* Pay and Personnel Agency, *(f)* Defence Aviation Repair Agency and *(g)* Meteorological Office spent in Scotland from the start of financial year 2003–04 to December 2003, (i) in monetary terms and (ii) as a percentage of total; and if he will make a statement; [159358]

(6) how much of its total personnel budget the *(a)* United Kingdom Hydrographic Office, *(b)* Defence Export Services Organisation, *(c)* Defence Medical Services, *(d)* Army Base Repair Organisation *(e)* Defence Evaluation and Research Agency and *(f)* Defence Secondary Care Agency spent in Scotland from the start of financial year 2003–04 to December 2003, (i) in monetary terms and (ii) as a percentage of total; and if he will make a statement. [159359]

**Mr. Caplin:** Regional spending figures for personnel costs are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### Service Personnel (Demobilisation)

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what resources his Department has allocated to replace the EU Konver programme, to help servicemen and women in moving from the armed forces to civilian occupation. [158620]

**Mr. Caplin:** The two Konver programmes which ran from 1993–94 and from 1995–99 were aimed at areas affected by the running down of defence-related industries and military installations, and the measures funded included training for new jobs, support for other businesses, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises, and the conversion and re-use of ex-military land.

The Ministry of Defence's resettlement programme which supports Service leavers moving from the armed forces to civilian life predated the Konver programme and was not affected by the closure of Konver II in 1999. Until October 1998, the career transition services programme was managed in-house, and the current contract placed in 1998, is not due to expire until September 2005. Arrangements are currently in hand to retender this requirement for a further period of at least seven years.

### Suez Medal

**Mr. Gerald Howarth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how long on average it has taken to process claims for the campaign medal for those ex-service personnel who served in the Suez Canal zone between 1951 and 1954. [156831]

**Mr. Caplin:** At this stage it is not possible to give a meaningful average figure. Over 34,000 claims have been received, the majority by the Army Medal Office (AMO), which has had to spend more time than is usual to acknowledge the huge number of letters which have arrived in the last four months. This has delayed the assessing of individual claims, though the backlog of letters requiring acknowledgement has now been cleared. The AMO are aiming to process between 250 and 300 cases a week, but many variables can and do impinge on this target.

**Mr. Gerald Howarth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many claims his Department has received for campaign medals for those ex-service personnel who served in the Suez Canal zone between 1951 and 1954 from *(a)* former Naval personnel, *(b)* former Army personnel and *(c)* former RAF personnel. [156833]

**Mr. Caplin:** The Ministry of Defence has received the following applications from veterans and their families up to week ending 20 February 2004.

| *Service* | *Number of applications* |
|---|---|
| Royal Navy | 1,521 |
| Royal Marines | 622 |
| Army | 25,048 |
| Royal Air Force | 7,076 |
| Total applications | 34,267 |

**Mr. Gerald Howarth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many of his Department's personnel are processing claims for a campaign medal for those ex-service personnel who served in the Suez Canal Zone between 1951 and 1954; and when he expects this process to be complete. [156834]

**Mr. Caplin:** The number of people who are dealing with applications for the new campaign medal for service in the Suez Canal Zone varies to meet the demand. Some staff are occupied full-time on this task, particularly with assessing individual entitlement to the medal, while support staff are working both on the Canal Zone medals and others as part of their duties. The individual medal offices have the following staff addressing this task:

Royal Naval Medal Office: four staff assessing claims, plus one part-time clerk ordering and despatching the medals.

Royal Marines Medal Office: overall one half of one person.

Army Medal Office: Nine staff directly processing claims, plus three people acknowledging claims, stamping and despatching medals.

Royal Air Force Medal Office: overall three personnel receiving, assessing and despatching medals.

It is not possible to say when the process will be complete as it will depend entirely on when veterans and their families apply for the medal.

### Radioactive Contamination (Hebrides)

**Mr. MacDonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place a copy of the Summary Report of Radioactive Contamination problems at the RA Range Hebrides and the decontamination of the Radiac Source Store and Compound, produced by Naval Radiation Protection Services, in September 1980, in the Library. [156722]

**Mr. Caplin:** Arrangements are in hand to de-classify the report, and, as soon as this has been done, a copy will be placed in the Library of the House.

### Welsh Infantry

**Mr. Llwyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* establishment and *(b)* current strength is of each of the regular Welsh infantry battalions; and where they are located. [158896]

**Mr. Caplin:** The establishment, strength and location of the Welsh Infantry Battalions, as at 1 January 2004, are included in the following table:

| *Regiment* | *Unit establishment* | *Unit strength* | *Location* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Wales | 741 | 680 | Barker Barracks Paderborn Germany |
| 1st Battalion, Welsh Guards | 618 | 660 | RAF St. Athan Vale of Glamorgan Wales |
| 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh Fusiliers | 668 | 620 | New Mons Barracks Aldershot |

## MINISTER FOR WOMEN

### Equal Pay

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Minister for Women what the difference in pay in Greater London was between *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time (i) male and (ii) female workers in each year since 1997. [158445]

**Ms Hewitt:** The following table shows the mean hourly pay gap in Greater London between *(a)* men and women in full-time employment and *(b)* men in full-time employment and women in part-time employment in each year since 1997.

*Percentage*

| | *Pay gap between men's and women's full-time mean hourly earnings* | *Pay gap between men's mean full-time hourly earnings and women's mean part-time hourly earnings* |
|---|---|---|
| 1997 | 23.4 | 45.7 |
| 1998 | 23.3 | 45.1 |
| 1999 | 23.3 | 45.2 |
| 2000 | 22.7 | 48.0 |
| 2001 | 23.0 | 51.1 |
| 2002 | 23.0 | 48.9 |
| 2003 | 23.6 | 46.0 |

*Note:*
Figures for men's part-time hourly earnings are not available due to small sample sizes.

## TREASURY

### Unemployment (Anniesland)

**John Robertson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the most recent figure is for unemployment in Glasgow, Anniesland. [158619]

**John Healey:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Mr John Robertson, dated 8 March 2004:*

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about unemployment in the Glasgow Anniesland Parliamentary Constituency. (158619)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) compiles statistics of unemployment from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) following the internationally standard International Labour Organisation definitions. For Parliamentary constituencies, information about unemployment rates, but not levels, is available, subject to the sample size being sufficiently large. However, the sample size for Glasgow Anniesland is too small to give reliable estimates of unemployment.

ONS also publishes data on the number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). In January 2004 there were 1,864 JSA claimants in the Glasgow Anniesland Parliamentary Constituency. This represents 4.9 per cent. of the working age population of the area.

### Child Trust Fund

**Mr. George Osborne:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the impact of the proposed EU investment services directive on the sales regime for Child Trust Funds. [158614]

**Ruth Kelly:** The Government are continuing to work with the Financial Services Authority on the development of the regulatory regime for the Child Trust Fund. The Government believe that its plans for the Child Trust Fund are consistent with the draft version of the investment services directive agreed by the Council in October 2003.

### Work Force

**Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the change has been in the net size of the work force in the UK since 1997. [157812]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Mark Simmonds, dated 8 March 2004:*

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about skilled migrant workers in the NHS and in the Education sector. (157584)

The attached table gives the available information from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) for the three month period ending in November 2003. "Migrant" workers have been identified from the survey as those people working in the UK whose nationality is not British. The survey does not analyse data specifically according to "skills", but for this purpose "skills" have been represented in terms of a person's highest qualification.

As with any statistical sample survey, estimates for the LFS are subject to sampling variability.

*Non-British nationals of working age[1] working in the NHS and the education sector, by highest qualification held—3-month period ending November 2003*

*Thousands*

| | *Health authority or NHS trust* | *Education sector[2]* |
|---|---|---|
| *Highest qualification* | | |
| Degree or equivalent | 41 | 23 |
| Higher education | 35 | [3] |
| GCE A-level or equivalent | [3] | [3] |
| GCSE grades A-C or equivalent | [3] | [3] |
| Other qualifications | 36 | 10 |
| No qualification | [3] | [3] |

[1] Applies to all men aged 16 to 64 and women 16 to 59.
[2] This includes university, polytechnic or other grant funded educational establishments.
[3] Sample size too small for reliable estimate.
*Source:*
ONS—Labour Force Survey

### Debt Relief

**Mrs. Calton:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether sufficient funds are available from the money committed by the G8 in Canada in 2002 for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries fund for top-up debt relief to provide the sum required for Ethiopia to meet the sustainable debt to export ratio set by the World Bank. [158574]

**John Healey:** Following the enhancement of the HIPC Initiative in 1999, it became apparent that some countries would reach Completion Point with deteriorated debt indicators compared to the projections at Decision Point. As a result, the Initiative provides the option of additional debt relief, or 'topping-up', at Completion Point, beyond that committed at Decision Point, when exceptional and exogenous factors have caused a substantial deterioration in a country's long-term debt sustainability. At the G8 summit in Kananaskis, leaders agreed to fund the financing shortfall in the HIPC Trust Fund, pledging up to an extra US $1 billion, part of which would be used to cover additional costs of topping up.

Ethiopia is shortly expected to reach its HIPC Completion Point with a debt-to-export ratio in excess of the 150 per cent. target set by the IMF and World Bank, and so should be eligible for consideration for topping up. The UK has been working closely with the Ethiopian government and supports the case for topping up. The potential costs have not been finalised, but it is expected that the resources pledged in 2002 will cover the costs for the HIPC Trust Fund.

**Mrs. Calton:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the paper, prepared by the World Bank on Completion Point for Ethiopia, has been presented to the Boards of the *(a)* World Bank and *(b)* Interntional Monetary Fund. [158576]

**John Healey:** Ethiopia is expected to reach Completion Point in the HIPC Initiative shortly. The Completion Point paper has yet to be presented to the Boards of either the World Bank or the IMF.

**Mrs. Calton:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the date by which the *(a)* World Bank and *(b)* International Monetary Fund will decide on the Completion Point for Ethiopia. [158592]

**John Healey:** The Executive Boards of the World Bank and the IMF were scheduled to discuss Ethiopia's Completion Point at the end of February 2004. New dates for these meetings are expected to be set shortly. The UK has been working closely with the Ethiopian government and supports the case for topping up Ethiopia's debt relief at Completion Point.

### Equitable Life

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer on what date he expects to publish the Penrose Report on Equitable Life. [158873]

**Norman Lamb:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will publish the Penrose Report. [159633]

**Ruth Kelly:** The Penrose Report on Equitable Life is being published today in full, copies of which are available in the Library of the House (HC 290).

### EU Savings Directive

**Mr. Streeter:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the effect of the EU Savings Directive on UK dependent territories. [159421]

**Dawn Primarolo:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Ribble Valley (Mr. Evans) on 12 December 2002 *Official Report*, column 475W.

**Mr. Streeter:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the status is of the EU Savings Directive; and whether he intends to implement it in the *(a)* UK and *(b)* dependent territories before ensuring that it applies equally in other states with a similar financial services industry. [159422]

**Dawn Primarolo:** The EU Savings Directive was adopted by ECOFIN on the 3 June 2003. The proposed commencement date of 1 January 2005 in the Directive is contingent on agreements being in place with Switzerland, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, and San Marino to apply from the same date equivalent measures as in the Directive, and on arrangements being in place with the associated and dependent territories listed in Article 17 of the Directive to apply from the same date the same measures as in the Directive.

## Fuel Duty

**Mrs. Spelman:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the impact on air quality of the increase in fuel duty on liquefied petroleum gas in the Pre-Budget Report 2003. [158820]

**John Healey:** I refer the hon. Lady to the reply I gave on 1 March to the hon. Member for Castle Point (Bob Spink) *Official Report*, column 690W.

## National Statistics

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the death rates from *(a)* cancer and *(b)* coronary heart disease were in (i) the North West and (ii) each Lancashire constituency or district in each of the last three years for which figures are available. [158825]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Lindsay Hoyle dated 8 March 2004:*

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question concerning what the latest death rates from *(a)* cancer and *(b)* coronary heart disease are in (i) the North West and (ii) in each Lancashire constituency or district in each of the last three years for which figures are available. (158825)

The latest year for which the figures requested are available is 2002 and these are given, with figures for 2000 and 2001, in the attached table.

*Death rates[1] from cancer and coronary heart disease[2] in the north west Government office region[3] and local authorities in the former county of Lancashire,[3,4] 2000 to 2002[5].*

| | *Age standardised death rates per 100,000 population[1]* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* |
| *Cancer* | | | |
| North West | 211 | 208 | 205 |
| Blackburn with Darwen | 208 | 198 | 218 |
| Blackpool | 211 | 229 | 218 |
| Burnley | 215 | 181 | 235 |
| Chorley | 224 | 200 | 175 |
| Fylde | 193 | 170 | 177 |
| Hyndburn | 207 | 228 | 207 |
| Lancaster | 182 | 176 | 201 |
| Pendle | 168 | 195 | 177 |
| Preston | 178 | 212 | 208 |
| Ribble Valley | 168 | 200 | 156 |
| Rossendale | 164 | 205 | 188 |
| South Ribble | 206 | 193 | 203 |
| West Lancashire | 203 | 203 | 192 |
| Wyre | 207 | 180 | 179 |
| *Coronary heart disease* | | | |
| North West | 157 | 155 | 146 |
| Blackburn with Darwen | 175 | 171 | 165 |
| Blackpool | 172 | 146 | 137 |
| Burnley | 168 | 166 | 152 |
| Chorley | 163 | 134 | 144 |
| Fylde | 138 | 130 | 119 |
| Hyndbum | 165 | 177 | 151 |
| Lancaster | 141 | 155 | 133 |
| Pendle | 157 | 134 | 154 |
| Preston | 164 | 158 | 130 |
| Ribble Valley | 137 | 135 | 122 |
| Rossendale | 166 | 146 | 149 |
| South Ribble | 144 | 144 | 125 |
| West Lancashire | 151 | 143 | 146 |
| Wyre | 142 | 122 | 124 |

[1] Rates per 100,000 population standardised to the European Standard Population.
[2] The cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) for 2000, and the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) for 2001–2002. The codes used are listed below:
Cancer (malignant neoplasms)—/CD-9 140–208; ICD-10 COO-C97;
Coronary Heart Disease—1CD-9 410–414; ICD-10 120–125.
[3] Usual residents of these areas.
[4] The former county of Lancashire comprises the current county and the unitary authorities of Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool.
[5] Deaths occurring in the calendar years 2000 to 2002.

## Private Schools

**Mr. Byers:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the revenue which would be raised if VAT were to be applied to private school fees. [159785]

**John Healey:** The provision of education in return for fees in private schools is exempt from VAT, in accordance with the requirements of the European Union VAT Directives on which UK VAT law is based.

The cost of the VAT exemption for private education, as last published in the Tax ready reckoner and tax reliefs' in December 2003, was estimated at £150 million.

## Stamp Duty

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment his Department has made of the case for amending the stamp duty brackets in this year's Budget. [158656]

**Ruth Kelly:** All aspects of the tax system are kept under review as part of the annual budget process.

## Temporary Staff

**Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many staff the Department employs on a temporary basis through employment agencies; what percentage this is of total staff employed; and how much the Department paid employment agencies to supply temporary staff in *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2002–03 and *(c)* 2003–04 to the most recent date for which figures are available. [158240]

**Ruth Kelly:** HM Treasury presently employs around 30 staff at any one time through employment agencies, some 3 per cent. of the total employed. Payments to such agencies were £788,000 in 2001–02; £927,000 in 2002–03; and £983,000 in the first 11 months of 2003–04.

## Websites

**Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost in *(a)* financial and *(b)* other terms was in (i) each financial year since 1997 and (ii) 2003–04 until the latest date for which figures are

available of (A) developing and (B) maintaining (1) his Department's website and (2) each website for which his Department is responsible; and how many (C) unique hosts and (D) hits there were in each month for each website in (iii) each financial year since 1997 and (iv) 2003–04 until the latest date for which numbers are available. [155854]

**Ruth Kelly:** The Treasury's public website (www.hm-treasury.gov.uk) is run by the department's publishing and internet unit. At present, 3.5 full time equivalent staff work on web-based projects.

The direct costs of running the site over the last 12 months was £84,613.32. During this period, the site had 38 million page views and more than two million visitors. For information on costs for earlier periods, I refer the hon. member to the replies I gave the hon. member for Buckingham (John Bercow) on 23 March 2003 (*Official Report*, column 60W) and to the hon. member for Arundel and South Downs on 19 December 2001 (*Official Report*, column 321W).

The Treasury also maintains the Euro preparations website (www.euro.aov.uk') at a cost of £32,782 in the current financial year, £36,793 during 2002–03, £59,030 during 2001–02 and £30,399 during 2000–01. The site has received 1.7 million visits since the site was re-launched by the Chancellor in March 2001.

In co-operation with the Cabinet Office, the Treasury maintains the Invest to Save Budget website (www.isb.gov.uk1) at a cost of £11,515 during 2000–01, £41,959 during 2001—02, £11,116 during 2002–03 and £62,875 during 2003–04 when the website and the database of project information that is accessed through it was redeveloped.

The department is currently participating in the joint Treasury, Bank of England and Financial Services Authority financial continuity website and has paid £5,705.80 in development costs during this financial year.

Other smaller sites run and managed by the Treasury are maintained by the Publishing unit with assistance from the Information Services (*Official Report*, column 60W) and to the hon. member for Arundel and South Downs on 19 December 2001 (*Official Report*, column 321W).

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Beagle 2 Project

**Mr. Blunt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much public money was spent on the Beagle 2 project. [158577]

**Ms Hewitt:** The Government made a financial commitment of up to £20 million to the Beagle 2 project. The Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council contributed to the Mars Express Mission through the European Space Agency's science programme and additionally awarded grants totalling £5 million in support of Beagle 2's science instruments and their operation. The Millennium Commission also provided £1 million towards the Beagle Operations Centre.

### Broadband

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what role Ofcom will have in promoting the take-up of broadband. [157243]

**Mr. Timms:** The Communications Act 2003 (c.21) Part 1, page 3 sets out the general duties of Ofcom in carrying out their functions, including the desirability of encouraging the availability and use of high speed data transfer services throughout the United Kingdom.

The Government believe that a competitive market is key to the successful promotion of broadband. Ofcom is continuing to promote effective and sustainable competition in the broadband market.

Ofcom is consulting on its Annual Plan until 11 March 2004. In this, Ofcom proposes to publish a broadband consumer guide in Summer 2004 to help and encourage consumers to take advantage of the choices and services available to them.

### Business Output

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the level of business output in *(a)* the North West and *(b)* Lancashire was in the last year for which figures were available. [157914]

**Jacqui Smith:** The value of business output in 2000, measured by gross value added, and calculated as the sum of all sectors excluding the public sector, was as follows:

| | *£ billion* |
|---|---|
| Northwest | 70.8 |
| Lancashire | 13.8 |

### Business Statistics

**Mr. Llwyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many businesses registered for bankruptcy in *(a)* London, broken down by borough and *(b)* Wales, broken down by local authority, in each of the past three years. [158038]

**Mr. Sutcliffe** *[holding answer 3 March 2004]:* Insolvency figures are only available on the basis of the Official Receivers Office dealing with the cases, therefore it is not possible to identify precisely insolvencies in London or Wales. Both company and individual insolvencies are included in the following table, as the individual bankruptcy figures only include the self-employed along with consumer bankruptcies. Company

insolvencies are made up of Company Compulsory Liquidations and Creditors Voluntary Liquidations of which only Company Compulsory Liquidations are available on an Official Receivers Office basis. The table gives annual figures for the number of individual Bankruptcies and Company Compulsory Liquidations dealt with by the Official Receivers Office in London and combined for the offices of Cardiff and Swansea.

| | *2001* | *2002* | *2003* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Individual bankruptcies and Company Compulsory Liquidations registered at the Official Receivers Office in London* | | | |
| Individual bankruptcies | 1,427 | 1,457 | 1,933 |
| Company Compulsory Liquidations | 911 | 1,147 | 864 |
| *Individual bankruptcies and Company Compulsory Liquidations registered at the Official Receivers Offices in Cardiff and Swansea* | | | |
| Individual bankruptcies | 951 | 1,018 | 1,054 |
| Company Compulsory Liquidations | 167 | 184 | 169 |

### Business Support

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what evaluation her Department has made of the regional development agency-led business support pilots in the *(a)* North West, *(b)* West Midlands and *(c)* East Midlands; and how these regions compare to non-participating regions. [157231]

**Jacqui Smith:** The independent research organisation, ECOTEC Research and Consulting Ltd., was commissioned in December 2003 to make an initial qualitative assessment of the progress of the 3 Regional Development Agency-led pilots, compared to non-participating regions.

Fieldwork for the evaluation is still in progress, and findings will be available in late spring.

**Brian Cotter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what money her Department has allocated for business support schemes; and how much of this money has gone unclaimed in each of the last five years. [149478]

**Ms Hewitt:** The following table shows the final net allocation for the programmes defined as Function A: Promotion of enterprise, innovation and increased productivity in the Departmental Estimates and Expenditure Plans Reports/Departmental Report for the years 1998–99 to 2002–03.

| *Financial year* | *Final allocation (£million)* |
|---|---|
| 1998–1999 | 596.4 |
| 1999–2000 | 647.7 |
| 2000–01 | 693.3 |
| 2001–02 | 793.4 |
| 2002–03 | 779.7 |

Under business support schemes businesses normally make applications that, where they meet the relevant scheme criteria, result in offers being made by the Department. Information on the amount of such offers which go unclaimed, in the sense that they are not taken up, is not readily available and could be compiled only at disproportionate cost.

### Consumer Credit

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the highest *(a)* store card interest rate and *(b)* bank credit card rate in the UK are; and if she will make a statement on the effect on consumers of the rates charged. [159088]

**Mr. Sutcliffe** *[holding answer 5 March 2004]:* The Department does not collect data on the interest rates charged by lenders.

The credit market is a competitive market. It is, however, clearly important that charges for credit should be clear and that consumers understand how much they will have to pay for borrowing. The Office of Fair Trading is currently undertaking a study into the store card market, which is expected to be completed shortly. Our proposals for reform of consumer credit legislation, published in the White Paper "Fair, Clear and Competitive: the Consumer Credit Market in the 21st Century", will among other things ensure that all consumer credit advertising, including the advertising of credit cards, is clear, fair and not misleading and that APRs are advertised on a consistent basis.

The consultation period closes on 15 March 2004 and I anticipate that the new regulations should come into force on 31 October 2004.

### Consumer Direct

**Mr. Andrew Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the budget of Consumer Direct is for the next three financial years. [157461]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** The budget of Consumer Direct for the next three financial years is:

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 2003–04 | 6 |
| 2004–05 | 11 |
| 2005–06 | 16 |

This may be subject to adjustment depending on the speed of roll out following implementation of the Consumer Direct pathfinder nations/regions this summer. The pathfinders are Scotland, Wales, Yorkshire and Humberside and the South West.

### Credit Card Fraud

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department is taking to address the concerns of on-line consumers about credit card fraud. [157273]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** The Consumer Protection (Distance Selling) Regulations 2000 protect consumers against payment card fraud including credit cards. The Regulations apply to contracts made at a distance including on-line ones. The Card issuer is required to reimburse consumers the full amount in the event of fraudulent use of the consumer's card.

In addition, the Consumer Credit Act 1974 allows consumers to recover the cost of a purchase made by credit card from either the supplier or the credit card provider in the event of a breach of contract or misrepresentation. This provides additional protection should a consumer be unable to trace the supplier. The Banking Code says that the consumer's liability for misuse of a card will be limited unless there is evidence that the consumer has acted fraudulently or without reasonable care.

The Home Office has recently launched a website to combat fraud over the internet. The 'e-tailing mini site' forms part of the Crime Reduction Website and includes information to help on-line consumers protect themselves from fraud. The website address is http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/etailing.

### Directors' Remuneration

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the respondents to the consultation document Rewards for Failure—Directors Remuneration—Contracts, Performance and Severance; and if she will list those respondents who *(a)* advocated legislative provisions and *(b)* did not want legislation to address executive remuneration. [159350]

**Jacqui Smith:** There were 112 responses in all, from a wide range of parties: institutional investor, companies, trades unions, accountants, remuneration advisers and many representative organisations. Some responses were sent in confidence. These apart, all responses are available for inspection on application to the DTI Library.

The consultation was principally about best practice options, but sought views on three questions relating to possible legislative changes arising from recommendations of the Company Law Review. Of these, there was majority support only for that which asked whether companies legislation should provide for the prohibition of rolling contracts having a notice or contract period in excess of the period permitted by section 319 of the Companies Act 1985.

### Employment Regulation

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many recommendations were made by the recent Better Regulation Task Force report on employment regulation; how many have been implemented by her Department; and by what methods. [155321]

**Nigel Griffiths:** The Better Regulation Task Force (BRTF) made 12 recommendations in its report of May 2002. The Government published their response to this report, accepting the recommendations, in August 2002. This explains how the recommendations are being taken forward and is available from the Libraries of the House.

The Government response to the report can be found at: http://www.dti. gov.uk/er/brtfresponse.htm.

### Export Credits Guarantee Department

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the Export Credits Guarantee Department's maximum liability was in each financial year since 1998–99 *(a)* in the passenger aircraft sector, *(b)* in the renewable energy sector excluding large hydro-energy and energy from waste technologies, *(c)* in the non-renewable energy sector, *(d)* for exports to the United States, *(e)* in the defence aircraft sector and *(f)* for large hydro-energy exports. [151681]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** ECGD does not categorise its business precisely in line with the question but, from information available, ECGD's maximum possible liability on future amounts at risk at the end of each of the Financial Years for the categories listed was as set out in the table.

It is important to note that maximum liability is not the actual amount of cover.

*£ million*

| *Sector* | *1998–99* | *1999–2000* | *2000–01* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *(a)* Passenger aircraft sector | 3,602 | 4,392 | 5,192 | 5,256 | 4,570 |
| *(b)* Renewable energy sector | 105 | 42 | 40 | 33 | 13 |
| *(c)* Non-renewable energy sector | 3,718 | 4,726 | 5,227 | 3,688 | 3,123 |
| *(d)* United States | 351 | 533 | 752 | 762 | 654 |
| *(e)* Defence aircraft sector | 779 | 714 | 1,304 | 1,117 | 1,229 |
| *(f)* Large hydro-energy sector | 122 | 92 | 66 | 47 | 13 |

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Export Credits Guarantee Department had received the Human Rights Watch report of January 1999 on human rights abuses in connection with the Dabhol power project in India when it provided overseas investment insurance for the project. [158564]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien** *[holding answer 4 March 2004]*: ECGD had not received a copy of the Human Rights Watch report at that time.

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment the Export Credits Guarantee Department made of the social, environmental and human rights impact of the Dabhol

Power Project before it provided overseas investment insurance to banks for investing in the project; if she will place in the Library the relevant documentation; and if she will make a statement. [158567]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien** *[holding answer 4 March 2004]*: ECGD did not at the time have a policy on social, environmental and human rights impact assessment. As a result, no such assessment was carried out.

Following the publication of its Business Principles in December 2000, ECGD's assessment of projects now takes into account the Government's international policies, including those on sustainable development, environment and human rights.

### Fireworks

**Mr. Dismore:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress is being made on the control of fireworks. [158284]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** Under the Fireworks Act 2003 we have already made the Fireworks Regulations 2003 which came into force on 22 December. These Regulations make it an offence for the under 18s to possess fireworks in public places and for all members of the public to possess the large and powerful category 4 fireworks used at professionally organised displays.

Also we are currently consulting on draft regulations to be made under the Consumer Protection Act 1987 to enshrine in law the firework industry's voluntary ban on air bombs.

Preliminary consultations on implementing the remainder of the Fireworks Act are continuing and draft regulations will be published during the first half of this year to introduce a national curfew banning the use of fireworks during anti-social hours; a noise limit of 120 decibels on consumer type fireworks; a compulsory training course for operators of public displays and a new licensing system for the sale of fireworks.

### Gender Equality

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action she is taking to ensure equality between men and women in the workplace. [155807]

**Ms Hewitt:** The Government are taking action on a number of fronts to ensure equality between men and women in the workplace. We are continuing to improve the workings of the Equal Pay Act and the Sex Discrimination Act, for example through the introduction of the Equal Pay questionnaire in April 2003 and our planned consultation on speeding up and simplifying equal value tribunals. The Government are taking forward policies to tackle the pay gap that help secure equal pay, and broader causes of the pay gap, such as women's lower level of work experience and the part-time pay gap. The Government have led by example in committing all Civil Service departments and agencies to review their pay systems and produce action plans to close any equal pay gaps. The Government have also provided funding for the EOC to develop equal pay tool kits so all organisations can carry out equal pay reviews.

In addition, we are working to remove existing barriers to equality, such as our work to promote women's access to sectors where they are currently under-represented, and to increase diversity in the boardroom. We have introduced measures to help parents maintain links with the world of work and better balance their work and home lives, which will contribute to a reduction of the pay gap. The Government have provided funding to expand childcare provision to meet the changing needs of families. The Government also welcome the EOC's investigation into modern apprenticeships and the concentration of men and women in different professions.

### Labour Disputes

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the average cost of working days lost owing to labour disputes in Greater London in the *(a)* public and *(b)* private sector in each year between 1995 and 2003. [158432]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** The DTI does not make these estimates. The Office for National Statistics provides statistics on the number of stoppages and days lost through industrial action. Their latest set of statistics for the United Kingdom show that the number of working days lost in 2003 fell to 497,000 and the number of stoppages is at an all time low.

### Landfill Directive

**Dr. Whitehead:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what arrangements she is making to ensure that the United Kingdom complies with the provisions of the Landfill Directive relating to the disposal of tyres. [159020]

**Mr. Timms:** The Landfill Directive requires the introduction of a ban on the disposal of most whole used tyres to landfill from July 2003, and this has been achieved by The Landfill (England and Wales) Regulations 2002. Regulations have also been introduced covering Scotland and Northern Ireland. Shredded tyres are also due to be banned from disposal to landfill, and this ban will take full effect from July 2006.

**Dr. Whitehead:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of end-of-life tyres were disposed of in ways that met the terms of the EU Landfill Directive in 2003. [159021]

**Mr. Timms:** The data to compile used tyre statistics for 2003 are currently being collected. Provisional figures suggest that value was recovered from around 80 per cent., based on 450,000 tonnes of used tyre arisings. This recovery rate is significantly higher than in previous years.

**Dr. Whitehead:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what arrangements she is making to ensure that all UK end-of-life tyres will be shredded prior to 2006. [159022]

**Mr. Timms:** The infrastructure to reprocess used tyres continues to grow, as evidenced by provisional statistics for 2003 showing a recover rate of around 80 per cent. used tyre arisings. It follows that tyres are being increasingly diverted from landfill disposal, which figures suggest is running at around a quarter of 2001

levels. Companies have already installed significant shredding capacity, both as a pre-treatment stage prior to recovery or as a means of reducing transport costs. The requirement to shred tyres, prior to landfill disposal until July 2006, should not therefore present undue difficulty for the industry.

### Minimum Wage

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many companies have been convicted of breaking the rules on the minimum wage in each year since its introduction; and what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of *(a)* compliance teams and *(b)* local enforcement pilot projects in improving compliance with the minimum wage. [157222]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** The following table provides details of the number of employers investigated by the Inland Revenue where non-compliance with the minimum wage was found.

| | *Number of employers* |
|---|---|
| 1999–000 | 1,280 |
| 2000–01 | 2,119 |
| 2001–02 | 1,937 |
| 2002–03 | 1,996 |
| 2003–04[1] | 1,813 |

[1] To 31 January 2004.

The Inland Revenue enforce the minimum wage on behalf of the DTI through a service level agreement with the DTI. Both Departments monitor performance to ensure value for money is achieved. We intend to evaluate on the effectiveness of the local enforcement pilot projects later this year.

**Annabelle Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to allow citizens of EU accession states to claim, from 1 May onwards, the national minimum wage while (i) living and (ii) working in the United Kingdom. [156971]

**Mr. Timms** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]:* The National Minimum Wage Act 1998 provides that all qualifying workers who work in the UK are entitled to be paid at least the national minimum wage regardless of their country of origin.

We have announced that individuals from the accession states will be entitled to work in the UK provided they meet certain conditions. These will include registering with the Home Office under its workers' registration scheme, which was announced last week.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people in each Lancashire constituency are earning the minimum wage. [157187]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** It is not possible to provide estimates of the number of people earning the national minimum wage specifically for each Lancashire constituency. However, based on the Office for National Statistics' Low Pay data released in 2003, the DTI estimates that around 140,000 people in the North West stood to benefit from the introduction of the national minimum wage in April 1999.

The DTI estimates that between 130,000 and 160,000 people in the North West benefited from the increase in minimum wage rates in October 2003.

### National Business Angels Networks

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the costs of the matchmaking activities element of the National Business Angels Networks was; and when it was decided not to continue funding this element. [157240]

**Nigel Griffiths:** It is not possible to identify, separately, the costs of the matchmaking activities element of the National Business Angels Network. As I stated in my earlier reply of 2 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 647W, it was as a result of the findings of the external evaluation that we decided not to provide any funding for these activities from the start of the current financial year.

Our current agreement letter makes it explicit that NBAN's matchmaking facility is expected to operate separately from the rest of its activities and that no DTI grant monies should be used to subsidise this element.

### Packaging

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she is taking to enforce regulations limiting excessive packaging on products. [159009]

**Jacqui Smith:** The Packaging (Essential Requirements) Regulations 2003 state that packaging volume and weight must be the minimum amount to maintain necessary levels of safety, hygiene and acceptance for the packed product and for the consumer. The regulations are enforced by local Trading Standards Officers who work closely with the packaging industry and producers to advise them on best practice in packaging design and to resolve complaints of excessive packaging. A recent study commissioned by the DTI highlights the extensive changes brought about since the introduction of the Essential Requirements. These relate to improvements in packaging design, including minimisation. This report can be viewed at www.dti.gov.uk/sustainability/packagingfinalreport.pdf and is also available from the DTI publications order line (0870 150 2500) by quoting unique reference number 03/1364.

### Parliamentary Questions

**Brian Cotter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she will respond to the question tabled by the hon. Member for Weston-Super-Mare on 19 January 2004 on funding for business support schemes. [159267]

**Ms Hewitt** *[holding answer 5 March 2002]:* I have replied today.

### Post Office

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what contribution her Department is making following the announcement by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

on 16 July 2003, to facilitate the reconfiguration of NIREX as a body entirely independent of the nuclear industry. [158910]

**Mr. Timms** *[holding answer 5 March 2004]*: The Department is continuing to work with Defra and other departments to determine the future of Nirex.

**Mrs. Calton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the future of Post Office Ltd. [159181]

**Mr. Timms** *[holding answer 5 March 2004]*: There are many challenges facing Post Office Ltd. in ensuring that its network of post offices can remain viable and sustainable. The Performance and Innovation Report published in 2000 showed quite starkly that the post office network had not kept pace with the changing needs of its customers and was suffering from lack of investment. A strong management team has been put in place and given the task of turning the company round and building a commercially successful future for the network, by introducing new products and services to bring in new customers.

**Mrs. Calton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment has been made of the ability of Post Office Ltd. adequately to serve all those in local communities who need access to local post offices, with particular reference to the Network Reinvention Programme. [159182]

**Mr. Timms** *[holding answer 5 March 2004]*: Post Office Ltd. is committed to ensuring that, at the end of the network reinvention programme, nationally at least 95 per cent. of the urban population will still live within one mile of a post office and the majority within half a mile.

**Mrs. Calton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment has been made of the conformity of *(a)* Post Office Ltd. and *(b)* Postwatch with the guidance offered in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Performance and Innovation Unit Report 2000 in each year since 2000. [159183]

**Mr. Timms** *[holding answer 5 March 2004]*: The recommendations of the Cabinet Office Performance and Innovation Unit's 2000 Report on modernising the post office network were accepted in full by the Government. In line with the Report, several have now been fully implemented, and implementation of others continues in conjunction with Post Office Ltd. and other stakeholders.

In line with the Performance and Innovation Unit's recommendation, the Postal Services Commission reports annually on the post office network and copies are available in the Libraries of the House.

### Public Service Agreement

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to publish regional analyses of her Department's net spending on Promotion of Enterprise, Innovation and Increased Productivity for 2002–03. [157217]

**Ms Hewitt:** My Department's spring 2003 Departmental Report (Cm 5916, May 2003) provided regional breakdowns of Government funding for 2002–03 for the Regional Development Agencies and expenditure on Regional Selective Assistance (Chapter 10, figures 10.1 and 10.2). Updated information will be detailed in the spring 2004 Departmental Report, which is due to be published in April 2004.

The Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses (PESA) 2003 (Cm 50901, May 2003) provided a more wide-ranging analysis of public expenditure by country and region for 1998–99 to 2001–02. The 2004 edition will be published alongside this spring's Departmental Reports.

### Refrigerators

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* non-domestic and *(b)* domestic refrigerators were bought in each year since 1997. [158087]

**Jacqui Smith:** The data requested are not available from official sources.

### Regional Economic Strategies

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans her Department has to introduce a standardised method of monitoring and reporting on delivery of regional economic strategies by each regional development agency. [157223]

**Jacqui Smith:** I refer the hon. Member to my answer given on 19 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1043W.

### Renewable Energy

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which projects have benefited from the Renewable Energy Initiative of the Export Credit Guarantee Department. [151991]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** The Renewable Energy Initiative (R.E.I) has so far produced 24 initial inquiries, and we are hopeful that over time some of these will develop into firm business. The REI was never going to produce quick wins but is about raising awareness.

### VAT Registration

**Brian Cotter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many businesses have *(a)* registered and *(b)* de-registered for VAT since 1997 in each of the 88 deprived local authorities in England. [156712]

**Ms Hewitt:** *[holding answer 26 February 2004]*: The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit has defined 88 local authorities in England as being deprived for the purposes of targeting the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. The number of VAT registrations and de-registrations for each deprived local authority between 1997 and 2002 is available from the Libraries of the House. Data for 2003 will not be available until autumn 2004.

### Working Time

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many initiatives designed to support innovative working time reform have been sponsored by her Department since 1997; and at what cost. [158843]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** The Work Life Balance Challenge Fund has helped employers develop and implement flexible working policies through 448 projects, helping some 1.2 million employees, at a cost of £10.5 million over the last three years. As a result over 80 per cent. of these employers report that they permit some of their employees to adopt flexible working-time arrangements. The Work Life Balance Campaign has spent £1.2 million this year promoting flexible working, producing publicity materials such as our current "50 cases studies" booklet. This helps employers see how firms can adapt flexible work policies, and shows such policies are generally inexpensive but often produce substantial savings. The campaign also helps to sponsor events including the Work Life Balance Trust week-long awareness campaigns that take place each September, and increases awareness of the benefits of work-life balance for those who have to care for elder dependents.

In addition, from April 2003, mothers and fathers with children under six or disabled children under 18 have the right to request a flexible working pattern, which equates to 3.7 million employees eligible to make a request. In the RIA before implementation of the flexible working law we estimated the total recurring costs to employers at £296 million: implementation costs of £6 million, with a £34 million one-off cost; request handling £114 million; and accommodating changes to working patterns £176 million. As the legislation has been in operation for less than a year we do not have confirmation of these estimates at this time.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with *(a)* the British Chambers of Commerce, *(b)* the Federation of Small Businesses, *(c)* the Confederation of British Industry and *(d)* Labour Members of the European Parliament regarding the UK opt-out from the Working Time Directive. [158845]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State meets with the CBI on a monthly basis to discuss a variety of issues, including Working Time. To my knowledge, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has not discussed Working Time with either the British Chambers of Commerce or the Federation of Small Businesses; however, my hon. Friend the Minister for Small Business and Enterprise and I have with the Federation of Small Businesses very recently, although they did not ask for Working Time to be on the agenda on either of these occasions. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has telephoned Stephen Hughes MEP about the Working Time Directive and I visited the European Parliament on 20 January and saw several MEP's including Gary Titley and Claude Moraes. Officials in my Department frequently meet various organisations, representing all sides of business and employees, to discuss Working Time including the opt-out.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what her policy is on the *(a)* reform and *(b)* removal of the UK opt-out from the Working Time Directive. [158846]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** The Government are committed to the retention of the opt-out from the 48-hour weekly working time limit. We are concerned to hear about possible misuse of the opt-out but do not believe that this is a reason to abolish it. It is better, we believe, if it were to be established that there are problem areas, to consider what safeguards are necessary to ensure that it works properly.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she will reply to the question tabled by the hon. Member for Eddisbury on 5 February on the UK opt-out from the EU Working Time Directive. [158847]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** The PQ tabled by the hon. Member for Eddisbury on 5 February, was answered on 26 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 497W.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### Benefit Payments

**Ian Lucas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many adults are in receipt of *(a)* Disability Living Allowance, *(b)* Incapacity Benefit and *(c)* Attendance Allowance in each of the local authority wards in Wrexham for the latest year for which figures are available; and what percentage of the population this represents. [158714]

**Maria Eagle:** The numbers of adults in receipt of the benefits listed, in each of the local authority wards in Wrexham, is indicated in the table.

| | *Disability Living Allowance* | | *Incapacity Benefit* | | *Attendance Allowance* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Ward name*[2] | *Number of recipients*[3] | *Percentage of population*[4] | *Number of recipients*[3] | *Percentage of population*[4] | *Number of recipients*[3] | *Percentage of population*[4] |
| Acton | 240 | 9.73 | 195 | 11.47 | 160 | 20.86 |
| Borras Park | 110 | 5.11 | 120 | 7.34 | 65 | 12.45 |
| Bronington | 85 | 3.21 | 85 | 3.89 | 65 | 13.89 |
| Brymbo | 220 | 10.40 | 185 | 10.99 | 90 | 21.03 |
| Brynyffynnon | 175 | 6.87 | 185 | 8.59 | 90 | 22.96 |
| Bryn Cefn | 120 | 7.75 | 130 | 10.10 | 50 | 18.94 |
| Cartrefle | 185 | 10.65 | 180 | 13.47 | 105 | 26.79 |
| Cefn | 460 | 11.81 | 395 | 12.99 | 215 | 25.12 |
| Dyffryn Ceiriog/Ceiriog Valley | 90 | 4.83 | 90 | 6.24 | 60 | 14.25 |
| Chirk North | 135 | 6.84 | 115 | 7.28 | 60 | 15.58 |
| Chirk South | 65 | 4.33 | 55 | 5.10 | 70 | 16.59 |
| Coedpoeth | 285 | 7.64 | 275 | 9.06 | 140 | 20.23 |
| Erddig | 115 | 6.24 | 75 | 5.18 | 90 | 22.78 |
| Esclusham | 190 | 8.95 | 145 | 8.45 | 80 | 19.66 |
| Garden Village | 85 | 4.92 | 75 | 5.97 | 65 | 13.63 |
| Gresford East and West | 100 | 4.10 | 110 | 6.20 | 150 | 22.35 |

| Ward name[2] | Disability Living Allowance | | Incapacity Benefit | | Attendance Allowance | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number of recipients[3] | Percentage of population[4] | Number of recipients[3] | Percentage of population[4] | Number of recipients[3] | Percentage of population[4] |
| Grosvenor | 135 | 6.68 | 140 | 9.04 | 120 | 25.21 |
| Gwenfro | 155 | 11.22 | 145 | 13.06 | 70 | 25.93 |
| Gwersyllt East and South | 215 | 6.26 | 200 | 6.90 | 100 | 18.87 |
| Gwersyllt North | 185 | 9.04 | 190 | 10.66 | 55 | 20.30 |
| Gwersyllt West | 245 | 10.18 | 185 | 9.07 | 105 | 28.53 |
| Hermitage | 205 | 10.63 | 225 | 15.35 | 110 | 23.50 |
| Holt | 145 | 6.30 | 115 | 6.18 | 90 | 20.50 |
| Johnstown | 210 | 7.87 | 200 | 9.12 | 95 | 19.75 |
| Little Acton | 95 | 4.90 | 80 | 5.25 | 60 | 14.39 |
| Llangollen Rural | 90 | 5.56 | 90 | 7.12 | 65 | 18.11 |
| Llay | 285 | 7.18 | 250 | 7.67 | 130 | 18.49 |
| Maesydre | 150 | 9.07 | 120 | 9.97 | 75 | 16.74 |
| Marchwiel | 90 | 4.61 | 90 | 5.59 | 60 | 17.39 |
| Marford and Hoseley | 50 | 2.56 | 45 | 2.74 | 25 | 8.09 |
| Minera | 110 | 5.56 | 110 | 6.71 | 45 | 13.16 |
| New Broughton | 175 | 6.83 | 195 | 9.38 | 105 | 21.47 |
| Offa | 110 | 5.96 | 110 | 7.04 | 45 | 16.07 |
| Overton | 75 | 2.97 | 65 | 3.29 | 90 | 16.39 |
| Pant | 170 | 9.64 | 185 | 13.34 | 90 | 24.00 |
| Penycae | 195 | 11.33 | 190 | 12.82 | 45 | 18.83 |
| Penycae and Ruabon South | 140 | 7.34 | 145 | 9.29 | 65 | 18.73 |
| Plas Madoc | 210 | 15.85 | 260 | 23.57 | 50 | 22.52 |
| Ponciau | 310 | 8.27 | 320 | 11.30 | 240 | 26.32 |
| Queensway | 185 | 10.81 | 280 | 18.87 | 45 | 19.57 |
| Rhosnesni | 130 | 5.31 | 110 | 5.36 | 65 | 16.37 |
| Rossett | 85 | 3.17 | 85 | 4.00 | 85 | 15.04 |
| Ruabon | 150 | 7.84 | 185 | 12.42 | 80 | 18.91 |
| Smithfield | 195 | 10.67 | 210 | 14.41 | 95 | 25.61 |
| Stansty | 155 | 8.58 | 115 | 8.44 | 85 | 18.97 |
| Whitegate | 205 | 9.44 | 215 | 11.43 | 50 | 16.67 |
| Wynnstay | 235 | 14.89 | 250 | 19.17 | 60 | 21.98 |

[1] Wards are based on 2003 Ward boundaries.
[2] Number of Recipients—DLA aged 17 and over, IB aged 16 and over, AA aged 65 and over.
[3] Percentage rates based on relevant resident populations from the 2001 Census (DLA Population aged 16 and over, IB Population aged 16–65, AA Population aged 65 and over).
[4] All ward level benefit data is the latest currently available, August 2002.

*Notes:*
1. The figures given for incapacity benefit exclude residual severe disablement allowance cases.
2. All benefit counts have been rounded to a multiple of five to protect the confidentiality of individual claimants, percentages have been rounded to two decimal places.

*Source:*
IAD Information Centre, Department for Work and Pensions.

**Mr. Dhanda:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps his Department is taking to simplify the procedure for individuals wishing to request the direct payment of their benefits. [156825]

**Mr. Pond:** Continual monitoring and evaluation throughout the conversion process has resulted in the implementation of a number of improvements to letters, leaflets, scripts and the forms that customers complete. We will continue to monitor our operational processes closely and will make further changes if we see any evidence in future that these are not working effectively.

## Disabled People

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many projects in Greater London received funding to promote participation by disabled people in the workplace in each year since 1997. [158450]

**Maria Eagle:** Jobcentre Plus run a number of national programmes to help disabled people overcome barriers to employment; all of these are available in London.

The New Deal for Disabled People (NDDP) supports the Government's commitment to "work for those who can and support for those who cannot" and is designed to help people with disabilities and health conditions in finding and sustaining paid employment. NDDP is the first programme specifically designed to support people on disability and health-related benefits into employment. Participation in NDDP is entirely voluntary.

The Access to Work programme is open to disabled people already in employment (including self-employment), people changing jobs and unemployed people about to start work. It helps towards the additional employment costs resulting from disability.

In April 2001, the former Supported Employment Programme was modernised and renamed Workstep; it places greater emphasis on developing disabled people and helping them move into mainstream employment where possible.

Work Preparation is an individually tailored programme that enables people to overcome barriers to work associated with their disability, and prepares them to join the labour market with the necessary confidence to find and keep work.

The Job Introduction Scheme provides a weekly grant of £75 towards the employment costs incurred during the first few weeks of employment. This is usually paid for six weeks but may be extended to a total of 13 weeks. The scheme is for use at the discretion of Jobcentre Plus staff in situations where a disabled applicant is considered suitable, but the employer has genuine doubts about the individual's ability to cope with the proposed job or place of work.

### Ethnic Minority Outreach Programme

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he plans to announce the extension of the Ethnic Minority Outreach Programme. [156122]

**Mr. Browne:** My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced the extension of the Ethnic Minority Outreach Programme in July 2002 as part of the 2002 Spending Review 'Opportunity and Security for All'.

The additional £14 million funding will be available from April 2004 for two years. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has no plans to make a further announcement at this time.

### Ministerial Visits

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) if he will make a statement on his recent visit to Leicester; [156123]

(2) if he will make a statement on his visit to open the outreach centre provided by Business-to-Business (UK) Ltd. [156126]

**Mr. Browne:** My right hon. Friend has not visited Leicester recently. However, I was pleased to be able to visit the two Jobcentre Plus Offices in Charles street and Wellington street, Leicester on 4 February 2004, where I met staff, employers and partners who work in or use the offices. Jobcentre Plus in Leicester now offers a truly modern service, offering a range of job and benefit help to its customers—including access to more than 400,000 vacancies Europe-wide.

I also visited Leicester on 25 November 2003 to open the Business-to-Business service, awarded a contract by Jobcentre Plus to deliver Outreach services to the local ethnic minority population. I look forward to seeing the results generated by this innovative provision.

### New Deal

**Paul Holmes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much funding has been allocated to advertising for each of the New Deal programmes in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [153462]

**Mr. Browne:** The available information on advertising media spend for the New Deal programme since 1997 is in the table.

| | *New Deal programme* | *Spend*[1] *(£)* |
|---|---|---|
| 1997–98 | New Deal | 3,571,000 |
| | New Deal for Lone Parents | 54,000 |
| 1998–99 | New Deal | 4,381,000 |
| | New Deal for Lone Parents | 1,400,000 |
| 1999–2000 | New Deal | 261,000 |
| | New Deal for Lone Parents | 655,000 |
| | New Deal for Partners | 201,000 |
| 2000–01 | New Deal 50 Plus | 2,270,000 |
| | New Deal for Lone Parents | 1,588,000 |
| 2001–02 | New Deal 25 Plus | 613,000 |
| | New Deal for Disabled People | 350,000 |
| 2002–03 | New Deal for Musicians | 33,000 |
| 2003–04[2] | New Deal | 5,800,000 |

[1] Figures are rounded to the nearest thousand and exclude VAT.
[2] Allocated budget.

*Notes:*
1. Unless otherwise specified, spend is for generic New Deal advertising.
2. Figures exclude provision to advertise some local New Deal activities. This information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

*Source:*
COI Communications.

### Students

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what joint projects his Department is conducting with the Department for Education and Skills to increase the number of students entering *(a)* access courses and *(b)* further education; and what progress has been made to date. [156803]

**Mr. Browne:** This Department is not conducting any joint projects with the Department for Education and Skills to increase the number of students entering access courses and further education.

However, through Work Based Learning for Adults, this Department does offer people access to a range of occupational skills training and gives them the opportunity to work towards a recognised qualification that will increase their chances of finding work.

We also contribute to the Department for Education and Skills' target on Basic Skills by screening clients for basic skills needs, making referrals for assessment and then offering training to those who need it.

### Trust Beneficiaries

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) for what reason distributions from trusts are disregarded by the Department for the purposes of assessing care and means tested benefits, with particular reference to beneficiaries of the Macfarlane and Eileen trusts; and if he will make a statement. [154979]

(2) for what reasons the Department does not permit beneficiaries of the Thalidomide Trust to discount their distributions when being assessed for care and means tested benefits; and if he will make a statement. [154981]

**Maria Eagle:** The purpose of means tested benefits is to safeguard against anyone falling below a standard set by Parliament as being the minimum subsistence level. They are paid out of public funds and do not require

National Insurance contributions to have been paid by the beneficiaries. The rules on the treatment of income and capital strike a balance between protecting people who are less well off and protecting the taxpayer by ensuring that help is directed towards people who need it most.

The Macfarlane and Eileen Trusts exist to help people who have been infected with HIV from contaminated blood products received as part of NHS treatment and are government funded. At the time the trusts were set up, there was considerable stigma attached to HIV and AIDS and it was considered inappropriate that people should have to disclose their condition to benefits staff. As such, it was decided that there should be no need to disclose payment from the Macfarlane or Eileen trusts.

The Thalidomide Trust is a private scheme funded by pharmaceutical companies responsible for producing thalidomide. It is treated in the same way as other personal injury payments; capital that is placed in trust for an individual can be disregarded. Income from an individual's trust can also be disregarded as long as the income is used for other than day to day living expenses. We have no plans to change these arrangements.

The financial assessment for residential accommodation is assessed by the Department for Health. Payments from the Eileen and Macfarlane trusts are disregarded; payments from the Thalidomide Trust are taken into account in the same way as they are for assessing means tested benefits. For Home Care charges, councils have a minimum requirement to follow the capital rules for residential care; however, councils can be more generous if they wish.

## CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### Sporting Opportunities (Children)

10. **Mrs. Calton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on her Department's progress on her Public Service Agreement target to enhance the take-up of sporting opportunities by five to 16-year-olds. [158925]

**Mr. Caborn:** Data on the number of pupils who choose to take up the entitlement to two hours each week of high-quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum are currently being collected for the first time. The results will be published in April.

Initial findings from Phase 1 School Sport Partnerships, published last week, provide compelling evidence of the difference that School Sport Partnerships are making.

### Second World War

11. **Hugh Bayley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans the Heritage Lottery Fund has to mark the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. [158926]

**Estelle Morris:** Lottery distributors recognise this important anniversary. The New Opportunities Fund has announced an initiative called "Veterans Reunited" and the Heritage Lottery Fund will make a further announcement shortly on how it expects to lend its support.

### School Playing Fields

12. **Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on lottery funding for school playing fields. [158927]

**Mr. Caborn:** Lottery funding will continue to be made available for the provision of new school sports facilities—including playing fields.

The Government have put in place a number of measures to safeguard existing playing fields and to ensure that effective community use is being made of them.

### Museums

13. **David Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the contribution of museums to the UK economy in each of the last three years; and if she will make a statement. [158928]

**Estelle Morris:** The National Museums and Galleries sponsored by my Department attract around 9 million tourists from overseas annually and so make a significant contribution to our economy. In this context, I look forward to the publication tomorrow of the report by the National Museums' Directors' Conference: "Valuing Museums", and to considering its findings.

14. **Mr. Hugo Swire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many museums in receipt of grants from the National Lottery have closed in each of the past three years. [158929]

**Estelle Morris:** No museum registered through the MLA, and which has been in receipt of grants from the National Lottery, has closed in the past three years. We have information only on registered museums.

### Rugby Union

15. **Mr. Randall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent discussions she has had with the authorities representing rugby union about the improvement of stadia. [158930]

**Mr. Caborn:** I recently met Howard Thomas, Chief Executive of Premier Rugby, to discuss his proposal for the creation of a Rugby Union Stadia Development Trust to help rugby clubs improve the capacity of their stadia.

### Horse Racing

16. **Mr. Laurence Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the progress of the Office of Fair Trading investigation into the control of horse racing. [158931]

**Mr. Caborn:** The racing authorities are in continuing discussion with the OFT about their response to the Rule 14 notice which it issued. It remains my hope that these discussions produce a satisfactory outcome.

## Digital Television

17. **Michael Fabricant:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what progress has been made with the digital television action plan with respect to the dates for analogue switch-off in different regions; and if she will make a statement. [158933]

**Tessa Jowell:** We are working with the stakeholders, within the Digital Television Action Plan, to ensure that the availability and affordability criteria set for switchover are met so that we can, if we choose, take the decision to order the switching off of analogue terrestrial transmission by 2010. We expect implementation of this to be phased over four years, region by region. The exact timetable and the order in which regions will be switched has yet to be determined. We are having discussions with the stakeholders and will undertake a public consultation before we announce the timetable.

**Miss Kirkbride:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps she is taking to encourage the sale of digital television sets; and if she will make a statement. [158718]

**Estelle Morris:** Consumers who are planning to buy a new television set should be able to make an informed choice between buying a television set with digital decoder integrated into it, and a television set that will require a set top box to enable it to be used for viewing digital television broadcasts. Through the Digital Television Action Plan, we are working with broadcasters, manufacturers, retailers and consumer representatives to make sure that consumers have clear and consistent information, including helpful messages about the benefits of digital equipment.

## Licensed Premises (Policing Costs)

19. **Mr. John Denham**: What assessment she has made of the implications of allowing police authorities to raise a levy on city centre licensed premises to pay for policing costs. [158935]

**Mr. Caborn:** We do not consider that the case has yet been made for imposing a compulsory levy on licensed premises for the costs of policing. We believe that the right way forward is through voluntary schemes where they can be justified. The implementation of the Licensing Act 2003 and the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for England to be published shortly will do a great deal to address the issues that the honourable Member has previously raised about the policing of the night-time economy.

## Arts Council Grants

**Mr. Moss:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) if she will list the Arts Council grants for capital projects by *(a)* name and *(b)* funding level for each year since 1998; [159232]

(2) if she will list by *(a)* name and *(b)* the revenue funding level the Arts Council grants paid in each year since 1998 to (i) dance companies, (ii) theatre/drama companies, (iii) opera companies, (iv) visual arts organisations, (v) literature organisations and (vi) other arts organisations. [159234]

**Estelle Morris:** The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Moss:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the Arts Council grants for Capital projects broken down by funding level, which were agreed but not commenced, as at 1 March 2004. [159233]

**Estelle Morris:** The following table supplied by Arts Council England lists all Capital projects where the first payment has not yet been made. Awards made in the recent Grants for the Arts Capital round, announced in February this year, have not been included. In total the list comprises 54 projects totalling £77,105,741.

| *Applicant* | *Programme name* | *Award amount (£)* |
|---|---|---|
| ADUN Society | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 5,000 |
| Afro Caribbean Resource Centre Ltd. | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 5,000 |
| Almeida Theatre Company Ltd. | Capital Programme One | 1,000,000 |
| Art Asia Trust Ltd. | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 3,500 |
| Asian Music Circuit Ltd. | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 53,132 |
| Asian Music Circuit Ltd. | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 100,000 |
| Association of Black Photographers | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 4,535,450 |
| Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 50,000 |
| Belgrade Theatre Trust (Coventry) Ltd. | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 2,741,000 |
| Bernie Grant Centre Ltd. | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 50,000 |
| Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan; Institute of Indian Culture | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 150,000 |
| Birmingham Hippodrome Theatre Trust Ltd. | Capital Programme One | 1,000,000 |
| Black Voices Limited | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 100,000 |
| Bluecoat Arts Centre Ltd. | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 2,750,000 |
| Bristol City Council | Capital Programme One | 2,060,000 |
| Centre for the Children's Book | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 465,000 |
| Chichester Festival Theatre | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 510,669 |
| Chinese Arts Centre (CAC) | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 100,000 |
| Colchester Borough Council | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 5,000,000 |
| Creative Art House | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 970,000 |
| Dance North Ltd. | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 700,000 |

| *Applicant* | *Programme name* | *Award amount (£)* |
|---|---|---|
| Derby City Council | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 50,000 |
| Derby City Council | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 60,000 |
| Derby City Council | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 2,500,000 |
| Devon Guild Of Craftsmen | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 150,000 |
| Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 50,000 |
| Hackney Empire Theatre | Capital Programme One | 1,000,000 |
| Hampshire County Council | Capital Programme One | 100,000 |
| Hampshire County Council | Capital Programme One | 400,000 |
| Hextable School | Capital Programme One | 1,983,103 |
| Inner City Music Limited | Capital Programme One | 247,725 |
| Jazz Services Ltd. | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 50,000 |
| Junction CDC Ltd. | Capital Programme One | 300,000 |
| Kent County Council | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 50,000 |
| Kent County Council | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 60,000 |
| Kent County Council | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 250,000 |
| Lowry Centre Trust | Capital Programme round 1 | 250,000 |
| Lyric Theatre Hammersmith Ltd. | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 220,000 |
| Middlesbrough Borough Council | Capital Programme One | 4,150,000 |
| Momentum Arts | Arts Programme round 1 | 25,000 |
| Momentum Arts | Arts Programme round 1 | 70,000 |
| Norfolk and Norwich Film Theatre Ltd. | Capital Programme One | 2,559,728 |
| Northern Ballet Theatre Ltd. | Capital Programme One | 2,560,457 |
| Northern Stage | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 500,000 |
| Northern Stage | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 2,432,649 |
| Palace Theatre Watford Ltd. | Capital Programme round 1 | 250,000 |
| Photographers' Gallery | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 3,420,000 |
| Roundhouse Trust | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 50,000 |
| Roundhouse Trust | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 1,200,000 |
| Roundhouse Trust | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 2,560,000 |
| Salisbury Arts Centre | Capital Programme One | 393,820 |
| Salisbury Arts Centre | Capital Programme One | 1,561,708 |
| Skylight Circus Arts | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 25,000 |
| Slough Borough Council | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 70,000 |
| South Bank Board Ltd. | Capital Programme One | 94,000 |
| South Bank Board Ltd. | Capital Programme One | 242,000 |
| South Bank Board Ltd. | Capital Programme One | 20,000,000 |
| Southampton City Council | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 50,000 |
| Southampton City Council | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 70,000 |
| Spike Island Artspace Ltd. | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 750,000 |
| Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 80,000 |
| Stroud Valley Artspace | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 188,100 |
| The Art Exchange | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 100,000 |
| The Art Exchange | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 2,708,000 |
| Theatre Royal Plymouth Ltd. | Capital Programme One | 250,000 |
| Torridge District Council | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 25,000 |
| Unicorn Theatre for Children | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 500,000 |
| University of Lincoln | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 50,000 |
| Yaa Asantewaa Arts and Community Centre | Arts Capital Programme round 1 | 100,000 |

### Athletics Track (Chorley)

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what grants can be made available for the provision of an athletics track in Chorley. [157976]

**Mr. Caborn:** Applications for grants for the provision of new athletics facilities can be made to the following programmes: Community Club Development Programme administered by Sport England, New Opportunities on Physical Education in Schools scheme administered by the New Opportunities Fund. Applications for grants for the refurbishment of existing athletics facilities can be made to Sport England.

### BBC Charter Review

**Miss Kirkbride:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what budget has been set for the BBC Charter review process. [157796]

**Tessa Jowell:** Provision for Charter Review is made within the overall departmental budget. The first phase for which figures are available is the public consultation, which is expected to cost around £330,000 in the 2003–04 financial year, excluding staff costs.

### Cricket Tour (Zimbabwe)

**Mr. Don Foster:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will instruct the England and Wales Cricket Board not to proceed with its planned tour of Zimbabwe this year. [159231]

**Mr. Caborn:** The decision to tour in Zimbabwe is entirely a matter for the ECB. There are no powers for the Government to intervene in any way. However, because of the deteriorating political and human rights

situation in the country, I do not support the tour, in the same way that I would not support any activity capable of being used by the Mugabe regime for propaganda purposes.

## National Lottery

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much Heritage Lottery funding has been awarded in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough in each of the last five years; and how many projects were awarded funding. [158435]

**Estelle Morris:** These figures have been supplied by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Both tables have figures for each London borough, in each of the last five financial years. The figure in brackets is the number of decisions made.

*Table (a): Lottery funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, (excluding awards for all grants)*

£

| *Local authority* | *1998–99* | *1999–2000* | *2000–01* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* | *2003–04* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Barking and Dagenham | 506,900 (3) | Nil | 23,000 (2) | 620,800 (2) | 464,000 (1) | 49,700 (1) |
| Barnet | Nil | Nil | 4,847,600 (4) | | 458,600 (2) | 24,500 (1) |
| Bexley | Nil | Nil | 126,600 (3) | 15,600 (1) | 143,000 (3) | 45,000 (1) |
| Brent | Nil | Nil | 224,600 (4) | 872,000 (2) | 129,900 (6) | 26,800 (2) |
| Bromley | 650,675 (2) | Nil | 615,100 (3) | Nil | Nil | 89,500 (2) |
| Camden | 53,200 (1) | 1,342,020 (5) | 398,800 (9) | 4,913,300 (18) | 6,152,740 (19) | 8,201,200 (18) |
| City of London | 392,000 (3) | 243,000 (1) | 149,500 (1) | 39,800 (7) | 498,300 (3) | 99,934 (3) |
| Croydon | 29,000 (1) | 61,800 (1) | 290,100 (2) | 48,700 (3) | 94,800 (2) | 66,700 (3) |
| Ealing | 139,000 (1) | | 239,100 (5) | 174,700 (4) | | 22,400 (1) |
| Enfield | 2,400,700 (3) | 95,546 (2) | 126,200 (3) | 343,000 (1) | 3,800 (1) | Nil |
| Greenwich | 1,698,000 (4) | 184,200 (2) | 10,891,600 (9) | 221,100 (3) | 460,500 (3) | 437,400 (4) |
| Hackney | 992,400 (3) | 1,612,800 (6) | 4,094,800 (7) | 617,700 (10) | 5,240,450 (7) | 954,600 (5) |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | Nil | Nil | 46,900 (1) | 25,000 (2) | 361,400 (6) | 102,300 (4) |
| Haringey | Nil | Nil | 226,500 (5) | 2,862,750 (4) | 177,400 (3) | 73,000 (3) |
| Harrow | 628,600 (2) | Nil | 15,700 (1) | Nil | 100,500 (2) | 50,000 (1) |
| Havering | Nil | Nil | 335,000 (1) | Nil | Nil | 50,000 (1) |
| Hillingdon | Nil | Nil | 24,400 (1) | 57,300 (3) | 48,600 (1) | Nil |
| Hounslow | 618,000 (1) | Nil | 361,200 (3) | 177,400 (4) | 173,100 (5) | 100,000 (2) |
| Islington | 3,503,000 (3) | 595,200 (3) | 595,000 (6) | 2,674,900 (7) | 615,732 (11) | 204,800 (6) |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 15,389,920 (4) | 100,900 (2) | 341,900 (5) | 1,140,020 (8) | 4,074,400 (11) | 15,359,200 (6) |
| Kingston Upon Thames | Nil | Nil | 31,300 (1) | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| Lambeth | 488,000 (4) | 877,300 (5) | 543,500 (5) | 122,500 (2) | 15,045,400 (3) | 73,700 (2) |
| Lewisham | 11,059,200 (4) | 1,342,000 (1) | 22,500 (1) | 575,314 (4) | 1,369,200 (3) | 648,300 |
| Southwark | 2,961,000 (4) | Nil | 1,269,600 (11) | 28,900 (3) | 2,821,200 (7) | 651,600 (5) |
| Sutton | Nil | Nil | 36,900 (2) | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| Tower Hamlets | 464,200 (8) | 352,000 (3) | 1,156,200 (9) | 6,334,700 (10) | 7,657,800 (16) | 2,015,300 (13) |
| Waltham Forest | Nil | 612,300 (2) | 275,000 (1) | 364,000 (2) | 109,355 (3) | 201,800 (5) |
| Wandsworth | 127,000 (1) | 298,900 (2) | 366,800 (4) | 598,000 (2) | 686,000 (3) | 29,000 (1) |
| Westminster | 7,055,317 (16) | 5,953,006 (20) | 15,462,300 (11) | 18,312,102 (20) | 4,074,942 (15) | 14,249,500 (16) |
| Total | 53,352,812 (92) | 13,901,072 (58) | 42,975,700 (123) | 41,529,186 (128) | 51,519,219 (148) | 44,477,784 (121) |

*Table (b): Awards for all grants, that the Heritage Lottery Fund have made with other Distributing Bodies*

£

| *Local authority* | *1999–2000* | *2000–01* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* | *2003–04* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Barking and Dagenham | 1,635 (1) | 13,635 (3) | 16,199 (4) | 4,600 (2) | 6,616 (2) |
| Barnet | 3,500 (1) | 19,996 (6) | 5,000 (1) | 10,941 (3) | 6,523 (2) |
| Bexley | 6,579 (2) | 12,154 (3) | 8,690 (2) | Nil | 1,667 (1) |
| Brent | Nil | 17,064 (4) | 30,270 (7) | 35,002 (8) | 12,762 (3) |
| Bromley | 19,285 (7) | 15,575 (5) | 16,065 (5) | 5,000 (1) | 3,960 (1) |
| Camden | 5,000 (1) | 64,284 (14) | 4,980 (1) | 35,707 (8) | 17,979 (4) |
| City of London | Nil | Nil | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| Croydon | 7,946 (2) | 18,405 (4) | 28,464 (7) | 16,500 (4) | 11,930 (4) |
| Ealing | 3,809 (1) | 13,410 (3) | 12,790 (3) | 13,632 (3) | 4,900 (1) |
| Enfield | 4,997 (1) | 20,147 (5) | 9,526 (3) | 14,650 (3) | 15,000 (3) |
| Greenwich | 18,728 (5) | 28,813 (7) | 24,955 (5) | 14,616 (4) | 22,622 (5) |
| Hackney | 4,670 (1) | 8,600 (2) | 60,005 (15) | 35,969 (9) | 29,460 (6) |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 1,500 (1) | 9,850 (3) | 4,950 (1) | 2,000 (1) | 2,230 (1) |
| Haringey | 6,710 (2) | 20,320 (5) | 14,671 (3) | 38,655 (8) | 9,250 (2) |
| Harrow | 2,980 (3) | 23,771 (5) | 5,000 (1) | 13,142 (1) | 19,370 (4) |
| Havering | 3,180 (2) | 7,957 (3) | 1,571 (1) | 10,175(3) | 3,850 (1) |
| Hillingdon | 2,500 (1) | 8,239 (2) | 9,876 (2) | 3,650 (1) | 9,400 (2) |
| Hounslow | 3,213 (1) | 18,106 (4) | 19,686 (5) | Nil | 9,950 (2) |
| Islington | 1,5188 (4) | 40,965 (11) | 18,800 (4) | 18,769 (4) | 9,030 (2) |
| Kensington and Chelsea | Nil | 2,700 (1) | 5,000 (1) | 9,940 (2) | Nil |
| Kingston Upon Thames | 1,7675 (5) | 3,688 (1) | 4,947 (2) | 10,000 (2) | 9,999 (2) |
| Lambeth | 3,750 (1) | 55,945(13) | 43,684(10) | 34,586 (10) | 11,350 (3) |
| Lewisham | 9,363 (2) | 9,610 (3) | 23,890 (5) | 29,261 (7) | 4,530 (1) |
| Merton | 3,227 (1) | 12,203 (3) | Nil | 4,250 (1) | 9,350 (2) |
| Newham | 9,900 (2) | 23,145 (5) | 14,340 (3) | 33,650 (7) | 39,848 (8) |
| Redbridge | Nil | 8,486 (2) | Nil | 21,923 (6) | 10,000 (2) |

*Table (b): Awards for all grants, that the Heritage Lottery Fund have made with other Distributing Bodies*

£

| *Local authority* | *1999–2000* | *2000–01* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* | *2003–04* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Richmond upon Thames | 9,954 (2) | 17,000 (4) | Nil | 10,715 (3) | Nil |
| Southwark | 14,900 (3) | 41,103 (11) | 20,411 (5) | 39,649 (9) | 21,150 (5) |
| Sutton | 9,250 (2) | 4,676 (1) | 4,250 (1) | 500 (1) | 2,550 (1) |
| Tower Hamlets | 19,400 (3) | 39,170 (9) | 20,905 (5) | 24,468 (5) | 48,692 (10) |
| Waltham Forest | 18,006 (5) | 21,764 (5) | 19,754 (4) | 36,284 (8) | 4,281 (1) |
| Wandsworth | Nil | 1,958 (1) | Nil | 6,040 (2) | 3,400 (1) |
| Westminster | 10,000 (2) | 10,000 (2) | 20,261 (5) | 10,000 (2) | 9,820 (2) |
| Total | 236,845 (64) | 571,636 (150) | 468,940 (111) | 544,274 (130) | 371,469 (84) |

### North-West (Transport Links)

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will hold discussions with the Secretary of State for Transport about improving *(a)* rail and *(b)* road links to the North West to allow quicker access for tourists. [158616]

**Mr. Caborn:** The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) works with the Department for Transport to ensure that tourism priorities are given due consideration in transport policy.

On 1 April 2003, the North West Regional Development Agency (NWDA) took on strategic responsibility for tourism in the North West region. DCMS has issued guidance to all the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) on how tourism should be incorporated in their Corporate Plans and Regional Economic Strategies; this includes the importance of linking regional tourism strategies with regional transport strategies.

I understand that the three northern RDAs have commissioned a 20-year transport vision for the North of England, due to be launched in April 2004. It will recommend a number of strategic transport projects that will seek to improve the economic performance of the North, including tourism in the North West.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many people travelled by *(a)* road and *(b)* rail to holiday in (i) the North West and (ii) Lancashire in 2003. [158617]

**Mr. Caborn:** I understand from the North West Tourist Board that statistics on tourism performance for 2003 will not be available until the middle of the year. I will write to my hon. Friend again once the figures have been received.

### Public Libraries

**Mr. Don Foster:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimates she has made of public library spending in each year since 1990 on *(a)* information and communications technology equipment, *(b)* building renovations, *(c)* book stocks and *(d)* audio-visual material stocks; and if she will make a statement. [158967]

**Estelle Morris:** This information is not held centrally. However, information about expenditure on libraries, including expenditure on book and audio-visual material stocks is contained in the annual Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy Public Library Statistics, copies of which are available in the Library of the House.

### Remembrance Services

**Mr. Peter Duncan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) how much has been allocated from the New Opportunities Fund to fund travel expenses of ex-servicemen and women wanting to travel to remembrance services in each year since its introduction; [158968]

(2) for how long the New Opportunities Fund has provided travel expenses to ex-servicemen and women wanting to attend remembrance services in *(a)* the UK and *(b)* Europe; [158969]

(3) if she will make a statement on the provision of financial aid through the New Opportunities Fund to help ex-servicemen and women travel to remembrance services; [158971]

(4) what criteria were used when deciding whether individual servicemen and women are entitled to benefit from the funding of their travel expenses to remembrance services by the New Opportunities Fund; [158973]

(5) how many servicemen and women have benefited from the funding of travel expenses to remembrance services by the New Opportunities Fund in each of the last three years for which figures are available. [158974]

**Estelle Morris:** The New Opportunities Fund launched its Heroes Return scheme on 9 February 2004. This scheme is providing £10 million funding for Second World War veterans their wives or husbands, widows or widowers, and, where required, carers to visit the overseas areas where the veterans saw active service. The main criterion is that ex-servicemen and women saw active service with or alongside the British Armed Forces in the Second World War. Further details on the Heroes Return can be obtained from the Veterans Agency on 0800 169 2277.

A second scheme, Home Front Recall, will be launched later in the spring. This will provide funding projects and events in the UK for veterans and others within the broader community to commemorate the events leading to the end of the Second World War. More details of how this scheme will operate will be available when it is launched.

The New Opportunities Fund has not previously operated a scheme in relation to veterans, but the National Lottery as a whole has provided over £3 million of funding to veterans and veterans organisations since 1995.

**Mr. Peter Duncan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether ex-servicemen and women from *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* Northern Ireland, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* England are entitled to equal

financial aid through the New Opportunities Fund to travel to remembrance services in (i) the UK and (ii) Europe. [158970]

**Estelle Morris:** On (i), the New Opportunities Fund will shortly be launching its Home Front Recall scheme, which will fund the costs of commemorative projects and events in the UK to mark the events that led to the end of the second world war. Details of the application process for grants will be announced when the scheme is launched later in the spring, but it will be a UK-wide scheme providing funding in all four UK countries.

On (ii), the New Opportunities Fund launched its Heroes Return scheme in February 2004. This scheme provides funding for second world war veterans, their wives or husbands, widows or widowers, and, where required, carers to visit the areas in Europe (and, indeed, other parts of the world) where the veterans saw active service. It is a UK-wide scheme and veterans from Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England are entitled to equal financial assistance.

**Mr. Peter Duncan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what representations she received from ex-servicemen and women during the creation of the initiative by the New Opportunities Fund to fund their travel expenses to remembrance services. [158972]

**Estelle Morris:** The New Opportunities Fund (NOF), as part of its role in developing the Heroes Return scheme, has discussed the scheme widely with veterans and veterans' organisations. In particular, the fund has worked closely with the Confederation of British Service and Ex-service Organisations (COBSEO), which is the representative body for the UK's veterans' organisations, since the Heroes Return scheme was first proposed. In addition, the fund has arranged meetings with many of the major veterans organisations, such as the Royal British Legion. COBSEO and NOF are currently running seminars across the UK to explain the nature of the Heroes Return scheme directly to a large number of veterans' organisations.

### S4C

**Mrs. Helen Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she expects to complete the review of the funding for S4C. [158932]

**Tessa Jowell:** Following a request from the S4C Authority, I have commissioned an independent review of S4C, to be carried out by Roger Laughton, Head of Bournemouth University Media School. He will be assisted by Meurig Royles as Welsh language assessor. I have asked Mr. Laughton to report back to me at the beginning of May.

### Tourism Prospectus

**Mr. Sanders:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when her Department expects to release the Tourism Prospectus announced on 17 November 2003. [159253]

**Mr. Caborn:** It is anticipated that the Prospectus will be released by the early summer. The first round of consultation last year produced a number of valuable contributions from stakeholders. These have been reflected in a new draft, which will be sent out for final stakeholder consultation in the next few weeks. The Prospectus will be an agreed statement of actions and responsibilities between the major players in tourism, both in the public and private sectors.

### Weymouth Transmitter

**Jim Knight:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when the Weymouth transmitter will be upgraded. [159236]

**Estelle Morris:** Broadcasters, through contracts with transmission operators, are responsible for maintaining the terrestrial network. But until the analogue signals are turned off, there will not be enough frequencies available to enable all the transmitters to carry digital terrestrial services. We believe that digital switchover could be achieved between 2006 and 2010, subject to our affordability and availability criteria being met.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Cancer

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have died from cancer in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [157336]

**Mr. Pearson:** The following table gives the number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland each year from 1993 to 2002 caused by "malignant neoplasms"[1].

[1] Cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes C00-C97 (2001–2002) and the Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes 140–208 (1993–2000).

*Number of registered deaths by year in Northern Ireland caused by "malignant neoplasms"*

| | *Deaths* |
|---|---|
| 1993 | 3,624 |
| 1994 | 3,595 |
| 1995 | 3,491 |
| 1996 | 3,623 |
| 1997 | 3,589 |
| 1998 | 3,648 |
| 1999 | 3,552 |
| 2000 | 3,541 |
| 2001 | 3,696 |
| 2002 | 3,652 |

### Citizenship Ceremonies

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether citizenship ceremonies will take place in Northern Ireland. [157825]

**Mr. Paul Murphy:** Yes, the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 applies to all parts of the United Kingdom.

### Alternative Power Sources

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent progress has been made in the development of alternative power sources in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [157657]

**Mr. Pearson:** During the past year, the ability of the Northern Ireland electricity system to accommodate a broad range of renewable energy generation has been fully assessed, as has the potential for generating electricity from tidal streams in the waters around Northern Ireland.

Renewable energy generation connected to the Northern Ireland grid increased from 45 megawatts in 2002 to 86 megawatts in 2003. All of this increase was wind based, although important projects using wood waste (five megawatts) and landfill gas (four megawatts) will be completed during 2004.

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is currently assessing the economic potential of biomass for energy generation in Northern Ireland and will report its conclusions in the autumn.

I intend to support the development of renewable energy by introducing a Renewable Obligation from April 2005 and I will be consulting shortly on the draft scheme of operation and legislation for the Obligation.

### Assembly Deputy Speakers

**David Burnside:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the *(a)* role and *(b)* cost of the deputy speakers of the Northern Ireland Assembly has been since suspension. [156668]

**Mr. Paul Murphy:** The status of the Deputy Speakers, under Section 39 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, has not been affected by suspension but, since they have not been required to exercise any statutory functions, they have not received any payment as Deputy Speakers.

### Assets Recovery Agency

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been recovered by the Assets Recovery Agency in Northern Ireland from people associated with *(a)* Loyalist paramilitaries and *(b)* Republican paramilitaries since its creation. [156609]

**Jane Kennedy:** Currently 24 cases are under active investigation by the Assets Recovery Agency in Northern Ireland with a total asset value of over £8 million. The agency has frozen assets in a total of four cases and adopted a further two cases for taxation. These cases involve around £2.7 million of assets. The cases cover the whole range of organised crime among all groupings and areas across Northern Ireland.

### Belfast City Airport

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he will report the outcome of the review into the current planning agreement affecting Belfast City airport; and if he will make a statement. [159274]

**Angela Smith:** While Belfast City airport has formally requested a review of the current planning agreement, Planning Service has not yet been advised of what changes to the agreement they are proposing. However, to move this issue forward a meeting with representatives of the City airport has been scheduled for 10 March 2004.

I am, therefore, not yet in a position to advise when the outcome of such a review will be known.

### Disability Discrimination

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to extend provisions against discrimination against people on grounds of disability. [152593]

**Mr. Spellar:** We are committed to the elimination of discrimination against disabled people in Northern Ireland and are continuing to build on the significant impact made by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). We intend to extend the DDA to provide further protection for people with disabilities.

New Regulations, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004, will extend and improve protection for disabled people in the field of employment and vocational training from 1 October 2004.

A number of measures in relation to transport will extend protection for disabled people in Northern Ireland. The Department of the Environment intends to begin consultation in April 2004 on proposals to implement the Government's commitment on making (public hire) taxis accessible to disabled people.

The Department of the Environment also intends to extend provisions relating to the carrying of guide dogs, hearing dogs and other prescribed categories of dogs to licensed drivers of private hire vehicles in mid 2004.

The Northern Ireland Executive agreed in principle to proceed to removal of the transport exemption in Northern Ireland. It is proposed to issue a Northern Ireland consultation document on the removal of the exemption based on the consultation by the Department for Transport in Great Britain by May 2004.

In education, Special Educational Needs and Disability legislation, which will effectively extend the provisions of the DDA to education in Northern Ireland, is in preparation and is expected to be made later this year.

Finally, the single Equality Bill which will harmonise (extending and updating where appropriate) existing anti-discrimination legislation in Northern Ireland, including that relating to disability, will be the subject of a Green Paper public consultation in the spring.

By extending the legislation in these ways we will strengthen and improve civil rights for disabled people.

### Government Records

**Mr. Paul Marsden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which documents are held by his office written by *(a)* P. H. Pearse, *(b)* Thomas J. Clarke, *(c)* Thomas Macdonagh, *(d)* Edward Daly, *(e)* William Pearse, *(f)* Michael O'Hanrahan, *(g)* Joseph Mary Plunkett, *(h)* John MacBride, *(i)* Sean Heuston, *(j)* Michael Mallin, *(k)* Eamónn Ceannt, *(l)* Con Colbert, *(m)* Thomas Kent, *(n)* Sean MacDiarmada, *(o)* James Connolly and *(p)* Sir Roger Casement. [156302]

**Mr. Paul Murphy:** It is not possible to identify documents, which may have been written by the names listed, without detailed research covering a large number of documents. A full answer could therefore be provided only to the hon. Member at disproportionate cost. Government records are normally transferred to the National Archives after 30 years and information on these records can be accessed through its website at: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

### Electronic Voting

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to bring forward proposals to amend legislation to enable the piloting of electronic counting of votes in *(a)* local council, *(b)* Assembly and *(c)* Westminster elections in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [158281]

**Mr. Spellar:** As I indicated in my reply of 15 December to the hon. Lady, *Official Report*, column 737W, the Government is interested in hearing views from interest parties on ensuring that election counts are as efficient and effective as possible. I am aware that the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland is looking at the issue of electronic counting.

### Fisheries

**Mr. McGrady:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made in introducing transitional aid for Northern Ireland fishermen affected by this year's sea closures; and if he will make a statement on the timescale for aid. [158637]

**Mr. Pearson:** A transitional aid scheme has been drawn up in consultation with the local industry and is currently under consideration by the European Commission. My officials are pressing the Commission for their views, but I am not able to judge when I shall be in a position to announce the launch of the scheme.

### GM Crops

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his Department's policy is on the growing of genetically modified crops in Northern Ireland. [158871]

**Angela Smith:** The Department of the Environment is the competent authority within the UK regulatory system for the control of the deliberate release and marketing of genetically modified crops in Northern Ireland. The Department deals with applications to grow GM crops on a case-by-case basis and decisions are taken following advice received from the UK's statutory advisory body, the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment. There are currently no applications for GM trials or commercial growing in Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland Ministers are working closely with their counterparts in the rest of the UK, in considering the overall policy for genetic modification, based on the available evidence following the results of the farmscale trials and the outcome of the recent GM dialogue, and intend to set out their conclusions shortly.

### Killyleagh Development

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the Department of Environment intends to make a statement on the proposed Gocean development in Killyleagh. [158531]

**Angela Smith:** I have now received a detailed report on this proposal and intend to make a decision very soon.

### MRSA

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what guidance is available to *(a)* doctors, *(b)* nurses and *(c)* other healthcare personnel on preventing the spread of MRSA in hospitals in Northern Ireland. [158872]

**Angela Smith:** The Chief Medical Officer issued guidance to the Northern Ireland health service on MRSA and the management and control of hospital infection, and on resistance to antibiotics and other antimicrobial agents, in 1999 and 2000, respectively. Leaflets and pamphlets on MRSA are also available from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for patients and their relatives, and in the form of guidelines for residential and nursing home staff for the management of residents with MRSA. The Department issued an Antimicrobial Resistance Action Plan in 2002 and is taking forward many of its recommendations. Professional journals such as that of the Hospital Infection Society are also a valuable resource for healthcare personnel in their efforts to prevent the spread of MRSA and similar nosocomial infections.

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have died from MRSA in each hospital in Northern Ireland since 2000; what steps he is taking to reduce such deaths; and if he will make a statement. [158876]

**Angela Smith:** The information requested is not available.

Surveillance, which is an important tool in the fight against infection, is quantified in Northern Ireland by the reports of MRSA blood cultures published by the Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre. Its second annual report, for 2002–03, indicated that the overall rate of patient episodes of MRSA bacteraemias in acute hospital trusts showed a slight reduction, from 218 to 228 over the previous year while 39.1 per cent. of staphylococcus aureus patient episodes were MRSA compared to 39 per cent. These figures compare favourably with England and Scotland.

Considerable resources have been devoted to addressing nosocomial infections, including MRSA, in the last three years. Hand hygiene has been particularly encouraged in hospitals. Figures indicate that there are currently 15 per cent. fewer prescriptions being written for antibiotic drugs than there were in 1998.

### Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

**David Burnside:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the *(a)* role, *(b)* composition and *(c)* budget of the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission has been since suspension. [156667]

**Mr. Paul Murphy:** Although the membership of the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission remained unchanged following suspension, the provisions of paragraph 8 of the Schedule to the Northern Ireland Act 2000 prevent the Assembly Commission from meeting and transfer the Assembly Commission's functions to me, as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. The Assembly Commission has therefore had no role or budget since suspension.

### Northern Ireland Electricity

**Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what criteria were used to decide whether to *(a)* purchase and *(b)* dispose of Northern Ireland Electricity lands at Camlough, Co.Armagh in relation to the aborted pump storage of electricity generation project. [157318]

**Mr. Pearson:** The lands were vested in the early 1970s to facilitate the intended development by the former Electricity Board for Northern Ireland of a pump storage electricity generation project. The compensation paid to the landowners was based on the assessed open market value of the lands at that time.

Since the project did not proceed, the lands are being disposed of by Northern Ireland Electricity plc in accordance with a Disposal Strategy drawn up by the company and approved by the then Electricity Regulator under the terms of a formal Consent in 1997. The lands have been offered back to their original owners or their successors in title at the prices originally paid.

### Paramilitary Activities

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his assessment is of the involvement of the *(a)* Provisional IRA, *(b)* INLA, *(c)* Real IRA, *(d)* UDA, *(e)* UVF and *(f)* LVF in (i) punishment beatings, (ii) drug trafficking and dealing, (iii) intelligence gathering and (iv) violence. [156631]

**Jane Kennedy:** Both Loyalist and Republican paramilitary groups have been involved in paramilitary style attacks, intelligence gathering and violence. Paramilitaries have also been involved in drug trafficking and dealing. The Government do not comment on specific intelligence matters. It is now time for all paramilitary groupings to bring their activities to a complete and permanent end.

### Police (North Belfast)

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many police vehicles were assigned for patrol in North Belfast in each year since 1996. [156627]

**Jane Kennedy:** The number of vehicles deployed on a daily basis within Northern Ireland (previously the three Sub-Divisions of Antrim Road/North Street/Tennent Street) over the years in question were:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1996 | 13 vehicles—10 Sub-Divisional Mobile Patrols and three Neighbourhood Patrols |
| 1997 | 13 vehicles—10 Sub-Divisional Mobile Patrols and three Neighbourhood Patrols |
| 1998 | 13 vehicles—10 Sub-Divisional Mobile Patrols and three Neighbourhood Patrols |
| 1999 | 13 vehicles—10 Sub-Divisional Mobile Patrols and three Neighbourhood Patrols |
| 2000 | 13 vehicles—10 Sub-Divisional Mobile Patrols and three Neighbourhood Patrols |
| 2001 | 11 vehicles—Eight District Mobile Patrols and three Neighbourhood Patrols |
| 2002 | 11 vehicles—Eight District Mobile Patrols and three Neighbourhood Patrols |
| 2003 | 11 vehicles—Six Response Policing Patrols and five Sector Policing Patrols |

### Police Ombudsman's Office

**Mr. Peter Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what powers of arrest officers from the Police Ombudsman's Office of Northern Ireland have over civilians. [156689]

**Jane Kennedy:** The Police and Criminal Evidence (Application to Police Ombudsman) Order (Northern Ireland) 2000 provides that certain powers set out in the Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, including some general powers of arrest, will apply in relation to formal investigations by the Ombudsman under section 56 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 1998. In addition, section 56(3) of that Act gives certain officers of the Ombudsman, for the purpose of conducting or assisting in the conduct of a formal investigation, the powers and privileges of a constable and these would include a power to arrest civilians.

### Power Cuts

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many unexpected power cuts there were in Northern Ireland in the last three years for which figures are available; what the cause was in each case; and what steps he is taking to secure the continuity of the power supply in Northern Ireland. [157656]

**Mr. Pearson:** The following table gives a breakdown of the unexpected power cuts recorded on the NIE network between 2001 and 2003. It does not distinguish between minor cuts of very short duration and more extensive power failures.

*Unexpected power cuts recorded on the NIE network*

| *Direct Cause of power cut* | *2001* | *2002* | *2003* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Weather and environment | 2,012 | 1,614 | 1,516 |
| Ageing, wear and tear NIE equipment | 2,001 | 2,072 | 1,753 |
| Third party | 1,439 | 1,387 | 1,213 |
| Vandalism | 118 | 112 | 120 |
| Transient faults | 2,601 | 2,526 | 2,078 |
| Other faults (birds, animals, manufacturing faults etc.) | 215 | 211 | 222 |
| Total | 8,386 | 7,922 | 6,902 |

I am satisfied that both the generation and supply of electricity in Northern Ireland are adequate to meet expected demand for at least the next five years.

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) works closely with the Northern Ireland Authority for Energy Regulation (NIAER) and the industry to ensure continuity of supply through a variety of measures. These include extensive investment

in the transmission and distribution network to ensure that there is minimum disruption of power supplies due to network related problems. Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE) has invested some £418 million in the period 1998 to 2003 and this has contributed to a significant reduction in the incidence of power cuts related to network ageing, wear and tear, transient faults and to adverse weather conditions.

European Directive 2003/54/EC Schedule 4 requires member states to monitor security of supply issues, reporting every two years to the Commission on findings and measures taken to address problems. Such monitoring is currently the joint responsibility of DETI and the NIAER.

### Safety Strategy (Older People)

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he will publish the Community Safety Strategy for Older People. [156580]

**Mr. Paul Murphy:** A draft Community Safety Strategy for Older People is currently being completed and will be issued for consultation later this month.Community safety and the removal of the fear of crime from older people is a central issue within the Community Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland, and the focus of the strategy being drafted.

Following a period of consultation, the Strategy will begin to be implemented later this year.

### Sign Language

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to introduce interpreter training in Northern Ireland for those seeking to learn sign language. [157338]

**Jane Kennedy:** A programme to train Sign Language Interpreters was introduced in Northern Ireland in 1999 with funding from the European Social Fund and the Department for Employment and Learning. The programme—the Sign Language Interpreters Programme (SLIP)—was initiated by the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID). A number of Further Education Colleges also provide training in sign language, below interpreter level.

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the case for providing signing to accommodate deaf people in any new Northern Ireland assembly. [157344]

**Mr. Paul Murphy:** Any assessment for the provision of facilities for any new Northern Ireland Assembly, including signing to accommodate deaf people, is a matter for the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission upon restoration.

### Sinn Fein

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1163W, what evidence he has collated on the involvement of Sinn Fein in criminal activity. [157757]

**Jane Kennedy:** The investigation and collation of evidence is a matter for the Chief Constable in the first instance. He will pursue that evidence wherever it leads and will take action where there is a case to answer, through the judicial process.

### Slow Driving

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals have been penalised for slow driving in each of the last five years. [157346]

**Mr. Paul Murphy:** The Chief Constable has advised me that there is no specific offence of slow driving. However, depending on the circumstances, the driver concerned may commit an offence of careless driving.

### Speeding

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many motorists in Northern Ireland were convicted of speed-related offences in each police district in the last five years for which figures are available as a result of being caught by a speed camera. [157668]

**Mr. Paul Murphy:** The Chief Constable has advised me that speed cameras are only operated by trained Road Policing Officers who are a regional resource and therefore not dedicated to a specific District Command Unit.

During the past five years 72,093 individuals were detected exceeding the speed limit and were accordingly in receipt of a Notice of Intention to Prosecute.

### Statutory Registration

**Mr. Wiggin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost of administering the Statutory Registration Scheme in Northern Ireland was in the last year for which figures are available. [157720]

**Mr. Pearson:** The cost of administering both the Statutory Certification Scheme and the Voluntary Classification Scheme in Northern Ireland by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board for the financial year 2002–03 was as follows:

*£000*

| | *Amount* |
|---|---|
| Salaries | 216 |
| Staff expenses | 28 |
| Cost of printing and establishment signs | 9 |
| *Overheads apportioned as follows*[1] | |
| Premises | 29 |
| General office | 31 |
| Staff development | 5 |
| Total gross costs | 318 |
| Less income from both schemes | 176 |
| Total net cost | 142 |

[1] Based on eight staff in unit and total staff of 12 in NITB.

The split of staff time would approximate to 40 per cent. to Statutory Certification Scheme and 60 per cent. to Voluntary Classification Scheme resulting in a net overall expense of running the Statutory Certification Scheme of £57,000 for the financial year 2002–03.

### Union Flag

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the current arrangements are for the flying of the Union flag on buildings owned or used by each Department and its constituent agencies in Northern Ireland. [158530]

**Mr. Spellar:** The current arrangements for flying the Union flag and other flags from Government buildings in Northern Ireland are set out in the Flags Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000.

### Westminster Hall

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make it his policy to have senior Ministers reply to debates in Westminster Hall. [159616]

**Mr. Paul Murphy:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to this question today by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House of Commons.

### Unionist Paramilitaries

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many and what types of crime were directly related to the activities of Unionist paramilitary groups in the last 12 months for which records are available. [158092]

**Jane Kennedy:** The information requested is as follows.

*Security Situation Statistics for Northern Ireland*
*1 February 2003—31 January 2004*

| *Types of crime* | [1]*By Loyalists* |
|---|---|
| Number of deaths as a result of the security situation[2] | 7 |
| Number of shooting incidents | 135 |
| Number of bombing incidents[3] | 41 |
| Number of casualties as a result of paramilitary style assaults | 110 |
| Number of casualties as a result of paramilitary style shootings | 107 |

[1] Attribution is as perceived by PSNI based on the information available.
[2] Includes all deaths due to the security situation.
[3] An individual bombing incident may involve one or more explosive devices. Incidents recorded include explosion and defusings. Incidents involving hoax devices, petrol bombings or incendiaries are excluded.
*Note:*
Statistics are provisional and may be subject to minor amendment.

### Workforce (Religious Designations)

**Mr. Gregory Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the composition of the monitored full-time workforce (11+) was, broken down by religious designation in *(a)* 1992 and *(b)* 2002; and if he will publish this information. [157613]

**Mr. Spellar:** Information regarding the composition of the monitored full-time workforce, broken down by religious designation in 1992 and 2002 is as follows:

| *Protestant* | *Roman Catholic* | *Non-determined* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *1992* | | | |
| 235,330 | 132,694 | 18,051 | 386,075 |
| (60.9 per cent.) | (34.4 per cent.) | (4.7 per cent.) | — |
| *2002* | | | |
| 230,804 | 154,218 | 18,822 | 403,844 |
| (57.2 per cent.) | (38.2 per cent.) | (4.7 per cent.) | — |

*Source:*
Fair Employment Commission Monitoring Report (No. 3) 1992.
Equality Commission for Northern Ireland Monitoring Report (No. 13) 2002.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Afghanistan

**Mr. Ancram:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions his Department has had with *(a)* the International Security Assistance Force, *(b)* NATO, *(c)* the UN Secretary General's Special Representative to Afghanistan, *(d)* the EU's Special Representative to Afghanistan and *(e)* other organisations and governmental representatives based in Afghanistan regarding the need to increase the number of international troops on the ground in Afghanistan in the build up to and carrying out of elections in Afghanistan. [158837]

**Mr. Straw:** NATO took over leadership of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in August 2003. The UK has been closely involved with other allies in discussions in NATO of plans for the expansion of ISAF beyond Kabul. My right hon. Friends the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Defence and I met the NATO Secretary-General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, in London on 12 February 2004; our discussions included Afghanistan.

The UK regularly discusses preparations for elections with the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative, Jean Arnault, with the EU Special Representative, Francesc Vendrell, and with the Afghan transitional administration. We also meet regularly in Kabul and London with non-governmental organisations working in Afghanistan to discuss a wide range of issues, including security and election preparations. I visited Kabul on 5 March where I had discussions with President Karzai, Foreign Minister Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, Monsieur Arnault and others.

### Asbestos

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the buildings occupied by his staff, including agencies, which require *(a)* remedial work on and *(b)* the removal of asbestos; what that work will cost; what budgets are available for this work for (i) 2004 and (ii) 2005; and what budget is available for future asbestos surveys. [159366]

**Mr. Rammell:** Completed asbestos surveys of buildings occupied by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the UK showed that no essential remedial or removal works were required. The next full survey is not due until 2012. In view of this no budget has been set aside for essential work.

None the less, budgets for interim local surveys during maintenance and project work will be allocated for 2004 and 2005. These are expected to be in the region of £20,000 pa for reactive maintenance, and £50,000 pa for project works.

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what proportion of buildings occupied by *(a)* staff of the Department and *(b)* staff of the Department's executive agencies have been surveyed for the purpose of identifying the presence of asbestos prior to implementation of the control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002. [159373]

**Mr. Rammell:** Almost all of the building space occupied by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the UK was surveyed prior to the implementation of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002. Surveys of the remaining space are due to be completed before May 2004.

### Burma

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the International Confederation of Trade Unions about the use of forced labour in Burma. [157468]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** I have had no discussions with the International Confederation of Trade Unions (ICFTU) on this issue. I am concerned about the use of forced labour in Burma. The ICFTU co-operates closely with the International Labour Organisation (ILO). We fully support the ILO and call upon the Burmese authorities to end permanently the use of forced labour.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the conditions for the people living in relocation or concentration camps in areas of Burma controlled by the State Peace and Development Council. [157471]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** I am concerned about the reported poor condition of relocation camps in Burma. Most of the major relocation sites are in areas where there is still ongoing fighting, so accurate estimates and independent assessment of the conditions (or numbers involved) is not possible. From the information that we have, conditions in most of the camps are reported to be very poor—inadequate housing, medical and educational facilities. Separation of villagers from their farmlands, and lack of alternative land in or near the camps, also causes great hardship.

In areas of Karenni State where there are now cease-fires some of the former relocation sites have been largely abandoned as people have returned to their villages. Some of those remaining, particularly where the relocation site is on the edge of a town, do so (semi) voluntarily because educational and other opportunities in the town are actually better than in their village.

We provide support to the United Nation High Commission for Refugees who are working to improve the conditions in camps.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what communication there has been between *(a)* his Department, *(b)* the European Union and *(c)* the United Nations and Aung San Suu Kyi since May 2003. [157721]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** Since May 2003, the Burmese regime has repeatedly rejected my attempts to speak to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The regime has also failed to respond to repeated requests by our ambassador to call on her. The UN Secretary General's Special Envoy to Burma, Tan Sri Razali Ismail, has met Aurig San Suu Kyi on three separate occasions since May 2003, most recently on 2 March 2004. The UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Burma, Sergio Pinheiro, has seen Aung San Suu Kyi once since May 2003.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the extent of *(a)* extra-judicial killings and *(b)* forced labour in the ethnic minority states of Burma since January. [157728]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** I am concerned about reports of extra-judicial killings and forced labour in the ethnic minority states of Burma since January. These issues and other human rights violations have been highlighted by successive UK co-sponsored UN Resolutions, most recently at the UN General Assembly in December 2003. These issues will remain a strong focus for the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Burma, Sergio Pinheiro and UN Secretary General's Special Envoy to Burma, Tan Sri Razali Ismail. We will work to ensure that these issues are addressed at the UN Commission on Human Rights in April 2004.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the extent of land confiscation by the Burmese Government; and what representations he has made about it. [157729]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** I am concerned about reports of land confiscation by the Burmese Government. The confiscation of land by armed forces and other human rights violations have been highlighted by successive UK co-sponsored UN Resolutions, most recently at the UN General Assembly in December 2003. These issues will remain a strong focus for the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Burma, Sergio Pinheiro and UN Secretary General's Special Envoy to Burma, Tan Sri Razali Ismail. We will work to ensure that these issues are addressed at the UN Commission on Human Rights in April 2004.

### Colombia

**Jeremy Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations have been made to the Government of Colombia concerning arrests and detention of trade union leaders and human rights activists in Colombia; and if he will make a statement. [159240]

**Mr. Rammell:** Our embassy in Bogota make regular representations to the Colombian authorities on issues relating to human rights concerns. Our ambassador called on the Vice President of Colombia on 4 March and raised a number of concerns on human rights, trades unionist issues and tackling collusion with paramilitarism in Colombia. We are also seeking information from the Colombian Government on the case of Luz Perly Córdoba of the Colombian agricultural workers' union Fensuagro, who has recently been reportedly detained. I continue to raise relevant concerns in my own contacts with Colombian Ministers.

### Correspondence

**Mr. Kaufman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter to him dated 26 January from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. Mosammat Meherun Nessa Begum. [157907]

**Mr. Mullin:** On 1 March my right hon. Friend's letter of 26 January was transferred to the Home Office for reply as the content concerned a Home Office matter.

### Cyprus

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assistance the Government will offer *(a)* Greek Cypriot and *(b)* Turkish Cypriot controlled areas of Cyprus for the monitoring of a referendum on a settlement. [159136]

**Mr. MacShane:** The British High Commission in Nicosia is working closely with the UN to ensure that work on the UN Secretary General's proposals is completed on time for the referendums in April. We are discussing with the UN what assistance the UK can best offer to ensure the smooth conduct of those referendums.

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what *(a)* legal and *(b)* constitutional changes will be made to the guarantor powers and obligations for the UK in relation to Cyprus following its accession to the EU. [159137]

**Mr. MacShane:** The Treaty of Guarantee will remain in force following Cyprus's accession whether or not there is a settlement. Until there is a settlement the UK's responsibilities as a Guarantor Power will remain unchanged. In the event of a settlement on the basis of the Annan Plan the Treaty of Guarantee will be amended to cover not only the new United Cyprus Republic but also the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot constituent states.

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what trading and movement of goods rules will apply to arrangements between the Turkish and Greek Cypriot controlled areas of Cyprus after accession to the EU *(a)* in the event of a solution to the situation in Cyprus and *(b)* if a solution is not achieved. [159138]

**Mr. MacShane:** The European Commission is currently considering the necessary arrangements for each scenario, but is unlikely to finalise these arrangements until the outcome of the present negotiations is clear. We remain in close contact with the Commission on these and other issues related to a Cyprus settlement.

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Secretary-General of the UN that his role in deciding deadlock points in the Cyprus Settlement Plan must be strictly restricted to the basis of the plan and not involve issues that are outside the plan. [159139]

**Mr. MacShane:** In his statement in New York on 13 February the UN Secretary-General said

> "As a final resort, in the event of a continuing and persistent deadlock, the parties have invited the Secretary-General to use his discretion to finalise the text to be submitted to referenda on the basis of his plan. I therefore see no scope for covering issues outwith the basis of the plan".

The UK believes that the Annan Plan offers the only realistic basis for a solution to the Cyprus problem.

**Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of talks taking place to reunify Cyprus. [159230]

**Mr. MacShane:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Surrey Heath (Mr. Hawkins) on 27 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 580W, and also to the reply my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary gave to the hon. Member for Taunton (Mr. Flook) in the House on 2 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 748. We will keep the House informed as matters progress.

### Departmental Costs

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his latest estimate is of the cost to his Department of *(a)* the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, *(b)* the British Council and *(c)* British Trade International for each year from 1996–97 to 2005–06 (planned); and if he will make a statement. [156610]

**Mr. Rammell:** The cost to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is shown in the following table:

*£ million*

| | *(a) Westminster Foundation for Democracy*[1] | *(b) British Council*[2] | *(c) UK Trade and Investment*[3] |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Outturn* | | | |
| 1996–97 | 2.5 | 102.4 | — |
| 1997–98 | 2.7 | 96.2 | — |
| 1998–99 | 3.0 | 97.1 | — |
| 1999–2000 | 4.0 | 133.3 | — |
| 2000–01 | 4.2 | 137.7 | 155.8 |
| 2001–02 | 4.3 | 145.0 | 136.3 |
| 2002–03 | 4.2 | 151.5 | 141.2 |
| *Budget* | | | |
| 2003–04 | 4.1 | 165.5 | 141.2 |
| *Plan* | | | |
| 2004–05 | 4.1 | 169.6 | 142.2 |
| 2005–06 | n/a | 179.6 | 144.2 |

[1] A full review of the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) will take place in summer 2004. This will determine the level of grant-in-aid WFD will receive in 2005–06 and beyond.

[2] From 1999–2000 the FCO assumed responsibility for DFID's share of grant-in-aid to the British Council. A machinery of government transfer from DFID to the FCO covered this increase in expenditure.

[3] British Trade International (BTI) (now UK Trade and Investment) was established in May 1999. 2000–01 is the first full year for which we have a separate figure for BTI.

*Note:*

The figures for 2004–05 and 2005–06 indicate current spending plans. All future resource allocations may be subject to review in the light of changing foreign policy priorities. 2005–06 spending plans will be covered by the 2004 Spending Review.

### EU (Internal Migration)

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with EC accession states on internal migration within the EU. [158978]

**Mr. MacShane:** My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has informed his colleagues in the 10 accession countries of the UK's policy on the free movement of workers in the EU after 1 May 2004, as set out by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary in his statement to the House on 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 23–25.

### Haiti

**Ms Abbott:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action the Government took to support efforts for a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Haiti. [159175]

**Mr. Rammell:** The UK, working alongside its EU partners, has been supporting the efforts of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Organisation of American States (OAS) and the United Nations to find a peaceful solution to the crisis in Haiti. The EU was present at CARICOM discussions with President Aristide in Kingston on 31 January, and on 21 February the EU took part in an international Mission, involving the US, Canada, France, OAS and CARICOM, which met Aristide and members of the opposition in Haiti.

The UK supported UN Security Council Resolution 1529 which authorises the deployment of a Multi-National Interim Force. This force has restored some order to the Haitian capital and the resolution also declares the Security Council's readiness, within three months, to establish and deploy a UN stabilisation force, which will support the continuation of a peaceful and constitutional political process.

**Ms Abbott:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action the Government have taken through their diplomatic mission in the Dominican Republic to influence the situation in Haiti. [159176]

**Mr. Rammell:** The British Embassy in the Dominican Republic has just two UK-based staff, the ambassador and the consul. The ambassador has made regular trips to Haiti over the past 18 months, most recently visiting Port-au-Prince in January. Throughout this period he has kept in close touch with key players in Haiti, including the Organisation of American States, US, EU and French ambassadors and the Prime, Finance and Foreign Ministers. The embassy has excellent working relations with UK and other NGOs based in Haiti, and is working closely with Christian Aid in implementing a Foreign and Commonwealth Office Human Rights Project Fund-supported project to reduce human rights abuses on the Haiti/Dominican Republic border.

During the current crisis, the embassy managed to secure agreements to evacuate UK nationals on US, French and Canadian aeroplanes, and several UK nationals left the country under such arrangements.

**Ms Abbott:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the Government's policy is on an international intervention in Haiti. [159177]

**Mr. Rammell:** The UK voted for UN Security Council Resolution 1529 which authorised the deployment of a Multi-National Interim Force to Haiti. This resolution, which was unanimously adopted, also declares the Security Council's readiness, within three

months, to establish and deploy a UN stabilisation force that will support the continuation of a peaceful and constitutional political process.

**Ms Abbott:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the UK's position is in the UN Security Council discussions on Haiti. [159178]

**Mr. Rammell:** The US and France, as members of the Friends of Haiti Group, lead discussions on Haiti in the Security Council. The Friends of Haiti tabled Security Council Resolution 1529 on 29 February, which the UK supported, and was unanimously adopted. This resolution authorises the immediate deployment of a Multi-National Interim Force, and declares the Security Council's readiness, within three months, to establish and deploy a UN stabilisation force that will support the continuation of a peaceful and constitutional political process.

The UK will continue to take an active part in Security Council discussions on Haiti over the coming months as details of the Stabilisation Force are agreed and remains fully supportive of the efforts of those more closely involved in achieving a political solution to the crisis in Haiti.

### Hong Kong

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the future of democracy in Hong Kong; and what recent discussions have taken place with China on Hong Kong. [157566]

**Mr. Rammell:** The Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR), a Chinese law which was promulgated in Beijing in April 1990, states that the methods for selecting the chief executive and forming the Legislative Council

> "shall be specified in the light of the actual situation in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and in accordance with the principle of gradual and orderly progress".

The "ultimate aim" is the selection of the chief executive and election of all members of the Legislative Council by universal suffrage.

Our position is consistent: we hope to see early progress towards the Basic Law's ultimate aims of the selection of the chief executive and the election of all members of the Legislative Council by universal suffrage, at a pace in line with the wishes of the people of Hong Kong. We most recently re-stated this position in the latest Report to Parliament on Hong Kong, which was published on 24 February (Cmnd 6125).

Ministers and officials regularly discuss Hong Kong matters when meeting members of the Chinese and Hong Kong SAR Governments. I did so with Assistant Foreign Minister Zhang Yesui and with Hong Kong's Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa when I visited China and Hong Kong in December.

### Internet Child Abuse

**Ms Shipley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what initiatives he has taken to tackle international internet child abuse. [158997]

**Mr. Rammell:** Since 2002, in conjunction with the National Hi-Tech Crime Unit, we have provided law enforcement agencies in 14 countries with specialised software, computers and training to detect paedophiles using internet chat rooms, and to target organised criminals who produce child pornography. Last year, we co-sponsored an international conference in the UK on combating on-line child abuse. We are co-sponsoring a follow-up conference this month. We are working with our G8 partners on the development and implementation of a strategy, including projects, to improve the exchange of information to combat on-line child abuse. This work includes outreach to non-G8 partners.

### Iraq

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps are being taken to safeguard Iraq's electricity infrastructure from vandalism; and if he will make a statement. [157651]

**Mr. Rammell:** Iraq's electrical infrastructure has been subject to looting for profit from the sale of copper and aluminium from transmission lines and pylons, and some sabotage attacks perpetrated by those intent on frustrating the reconstruction of Iraq.

Significant operational measures are being taken to combat both crimes, and these are proving successful. Iraqis are involved through private contractors in guarding electricity lines and installations, and this has succeeded in preventing much damage being done. Steps are also being taken to increase patrolling, introduce air surveillance and ensure the rapid repair of damage when it occurs.

### Nepal

**Mr. Colman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what financial support his Department has provided to Nepal in each year since 2000; and how much support it plans to provide in 2004. [R] [158858]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** In financial year 2000–01 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office provided in total £63,600 in financial support to Nepal; in 2001–02 this figure was £80,700; in 2002–03 £144,500, and in 2003–04 £59,400.

### Recruitment

**Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the cost of recruitment of civil servants for the Department was in each financial year since 1996–97, broken down by *(a)* delegated or contracted out recruitment procedures and *(b)* recruitment procedures carried out by the Department. [158188]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** The information requested is as follows:

| *Financial year* | *Cost of recruitment (£)* |
|---|---|
| 1997–98 | 995,293 |
| 1998–99 | 1,622,811 |
| 1999–2000 | 1,999,803 |
| 2000–01 | 2,543,387 |

| Financial year | Cost of recruitment (£) |
|---|---|
| 2001–02 | 2,791,659 |
| 2002–03 | 2,276,708 |
| 2003–04 (To date) | 1,341,832 |

The figures in the table include money spent on recruitment in its widest sense. This includes general marketing via careers fairs, as well as targeted marketing and newspaper advertising aimed at under-represented groups such as minority ethnic communities and women. Recruitment agencies are involved in most of our recruitment campaigns. A break down of the figures for money spent on contracted recruitment procedures and for money spent directly by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office over the period requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### Serbia

**Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the decision by the Serbian Government to try war crime suspects before domestic courts in Serbia. [159229]

**Mr. MacShane:** We welcome the establishment of a domestic war crimes court in Serbia. However, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) assessed that the Serbian national judiciary lacked the capacity to conduct fair war crimes trials in accordance with universally adopted standards. We welcome OSCE recommendations and urge the Serbian authorities to ensure effective domestic trials through adapting legislation and providing for the protection of victims and witnesses of war crimes. The first major trial, beginning in March, will be an important demonstration of the Serbian authorities' commitment to tackling war crimes allegedly committed by Serbian citizens. It is vital that the accused receive a fair trial and that justice is seen to be done.

The transfer of lower level war crimes suspects for trial in domestic courts is an important part of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) Completion Strategy. However such transfers can only take place where the Tribunal is satisfied that the trials will be conducted in accordance with universally adopted standards. In order for ICTY cases to be transferred to a domestic tribunal, Serbia must first co-operate fully with the ICTY and allow the domestic judiciary to work independently and impartially.

We continue to urge the new Serbian government to fulfil the international obligation of full and complete co-operation with the ICTY. In order for Serbia and Montenegro to realise her European aspirations, Belgrade must assist in the apprehension and transfer of all ICTY indictees and allow the ICTY full access to documents and witnesses.

### Sudan

**Dr. Tonge:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Sudanese Government regarding the situation in Darfur. [158697]

**Mr. Mullin:** We have lobbied at the highest levels in Khartoum on this matter, and our ambassador in Khartoum has discussed the situation with the First Vice-President on a number of occasions in recent weeks. Through our embassy in Khartoum and the UK Special Representative for Sudan, we are in almost daily contact with the Government of Sudan and the various Darfur groups. The EU issued a statement on 25 February appealing to the parties to ensure the protection of the civilian population and to allow humanitarian access to all those in need.

### Taliban

**Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the current numeric strength of the former Taliban regime of Afghanistan in *(a)* Afghanistan and *(b)* Pakistan. [158791]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** It is not easy to distinguish former Taliban and their sympathisers from other groups hostile to the current political process in Afghanistan. We believe that at any given time the number of former Taliban sympathisers in Afghanistan and Pakistan is in the very low thousands. But the remoteness and geography of the Pakistani border region with Afghanistan, the difficulty of maintaining border controls, and the movement of people across the border makes it difficult to give an accurate assessment.

**Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the current level of co-operation between members of the Pakistani Army and members of the former Taliban regime in Afghanistan. [158792]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** Pakistan is a key ally in the war against terror. We strongly support the efforts of the Pakistani Army to round up members of al-Qaeda and extreme elements of the former Taliban regime. The recent military operations into the formerly inaccessible tribal areas bordering Afghanistan are a good example of the commitment of the Pakistani Army in taking action against these groups.

### Turkey

**Mr. Arbuthnot:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the *(a)* administration of justice and *(b)* protection of the rights of overseas investors in Turkey. [158902]

**Mr. MacShane:** In its push to open accession negotiations with the European Union, Turkey continues to make determined efforts to improve the business environment for its overseas investors. This includes legal measures to simplify procedures for foreign investors and institutional reform to strengthen the rule of law.

We are aware of a few specific cases where British investors have faced difficulties in Turkey and we have raised these with the Turkish authorities.

Recent developments in Turkey include: a Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) law passed in 2003; efforts to set up an FDI promotion agency; and, on 15 March in Istanbul, an Investors Council, chaired by the World

Bank and the IMF, to give leading foreign investors in Turkey an opportunity to make recommendations to the Turkish authorities.

**John McDonnell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations his Department has made to the Turkish Government on the detention and imprisonment of Mr. Abdullah Ocalan. [159247]

**Mr. MacShane:** We raised the subject of the detention of Mr. Ocalan with the Turkish State Minister responsible for Human Rights in February 1999 and sought assurances that he would receive a fair trial and that his physical safety would be assured. British embassy staff also attended the trial.

Regarding his on-going imprisonment, I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Richmond Park (Dr. Tonge) on 5 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1192W.

We have not made representations to the Turkish Government regarding the imprisonment. We do, however, continue to monitor the situation closely, including through discussions with Mr. Ocalan's lawyer.

**John McDonnell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Turkish Government on the case of the detention of Leyla Zana, a Kurdish member of the Turkish Parliament. [159250]

**Mr. MacShane:** We regularly raise the case of Leyla Zana and her fellow DEP, MPs at Ministerial and official level. I underlined the importance of speeding up progress and ensuring impartiality with Foreign Minister Gul during my visit to Turkey in January 2004. Our Ambassador has also raised the case with Justice Minister Cicek. British embassy officials attend trial hearings and maintain close contact with Leyla Zana's lawyer, whom I also met.

### UN General Assembly Resolutions

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how the United Kingdom voted on United Nations General Assembly Resolution 58/40 (L12) in the UN First Committee on 27 October 2003 on the prohibition of the dumping of radioactive waste, and combating the hazards of radioactive wastes used in radiological warfare; and if he will make a statement. [151850]

**Mr. Rammell:** The United Kingdom joined consensus on United Nations General Assembly Resolution 58/40 (L12) in the UN First Committee on 27 October 2003 on the prohibition of the dumping of radioactive waste, and combating the hazards of radioactive wastes used in radiological warfare.

On 12 March 2001 the UK ratified the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management which was negotiated under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The convention's primary objective is to achieve and maintain a high level of safety worldwide in spent fuel and radioactive waste management. It came into force on 18 June 2001. The UK's first national report, demonstrating our compliance with the convention, was provided to the IAEA in May 2003. National reports are subject to a process of peer review and are updated every three years.

## ELECTORAL COMMISSION

### Elections

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission what steps the Commission is taking to improve voter turnout in June for *(a)* the London Assembly elections, *(b)* European elections, *(c)* Mayoral elections and *(d)* other local elections. [159235]

**Mr. Viggers:** The Electoral Commission has a duty under section 13 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 to "promote public awareness of:

(a) current electoral systems in the United Kingdom and any pending such systems, together with such matters connected with any such existing or pending systems as the Commission may determine;

(b) current systems of local government and national government in the United Kingdom and any pending such systems; and

(c) the institutions of the European Union."

To this end, I understand from the Chairman of the Commission that it will be running a UK-wide voter awareness campaign, comprising TV and press advertising, leaflets distributed to public places, PR, and outreach work targeting young 'hard to reach' audiences. This activity will be supported by a national telephone call centre and an elections website, from which members of the public will be able to find out which elections are taking place in their area on 10 June, how to register, how to vote, and what roles and powers are held by each of the democratic institutions being elected. The website will also carry links to other sites of relevance to the June elections.

## HEALTH

### Abortion

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many girls under the age of 16 had abortions in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [155176]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The information is shown in the table.

*Abortions by age for girls aged 15 and under, residents of England and Wales, 1998–2002*

| | *Total* |
|---|---|
| 1996 | 3,645 |
| 1997 | 3,434 |
| 1998 | 3,759 |
| 1999 | 3,603 |
| 2000 | 3,748 |
| 2001 | 3,658 |
| 2002 | 3,514 |

*Source:*
Data provided by Department of Health, Statistical Division.

### Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will publish the national Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy. [159283]

**Miss Melanie Johnson** *[holding answer 5 March 2004]*: The Government's Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for England is due to be published and implemented from 2004, in accordance with the timetable set out in the NHS Plan. This strategy will set the future direction for the development of alcohol prevention and treatment for all groups in the population.

### Benzodiazepines

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance he has issued to clinicians on the prescribing of benzodiazepines over the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [155155]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The Committee on the Safety of Medicines' advice of 1988 has been reiterated in the "Drug Misuse and Dependence—Guidelines on Clinical Management" (1999) and in the "British National Formulary", which is sent to all doctors within the national health service biannually.

The advice has been restated in the Chief Medical Officer's Update dated January 2004, which announced that the Department is planning to introduce instalment dispensing of benzodiazepines to minimise access to excessive doses.

### Blood Glucose Test Strips

**Mr. Swayne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to withdraw the free distribution of blood glucose test strips; and if he will make a statement. [158823]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Blood glucose testing strips will remain available free of charge to those people with type 1 and type 2 diabetes whose condition is controlled by insulin or tablets. Those people who have type 2 diabetes that is controlled by diet alone are not exempt from National Health Service prescription charges on that basis.

We have no plans to remove blood glucose testing strips form NHS prescriptions.

### Breast Feeding

**Sandra Osborne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research the Department has conducted on a potential link between decreasing breast feeding rates and increasing obesity rates among children. [158027]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The Department has not commissioned any research directly on a potential link between decreasing breastfeeding rates and increasing obesity rates among children.

Women in lower socio-economic groups (social class V) are more likely to be overweight or obese and they are less likely to breastfeed. Breastfeeding rates are increasing and the Infant Feeding Survey 2000 showed that there was a significant increase in the incidence of breastfeeding in social class V, from 50 per cent. in 1995 to 59 per cent. in 2000.

The Committee on Medical Aspects of Food and Nutrition Policy suggested in its report on the Scientific Review of the Welfare Food Scheme that breastfed infants are less likely to become overweight as children.

### Cancer Treatment

**Mrs. Calton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice his Department has given to schools relating to the effects of sun exposure; and what assessment has been made of the take-up of such guidance. [157801]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The 'SunSmart' campaign, run by Cancer Research UK and funded by the United Kingdom Health Departments, was launched in spring 2003. This launch phase of the campaign enabled new campaign messages to be disseminated to as wide an audience as possible and assisted in establishing the 'SunSmart' brand. Over 950,000-campaign information cards and 36,000 posters were distributed to general practitioners' surgeries, health promotion units, dermatologists and cinemas. Additionally, 350,000 specially designed postcards were distributed among secondary schools in the UK, reaching 40 per cent., of all 11 to 16-year-olds. 'SunSmart' is working with the Department for Education and Skills and teachers to develop guidelines to encourage schools to adopt their own 'SunSmart' policies and curricular activities.

Sun awareness information for young people is also contained on the "Wired For Health" website at www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk as part of the Healthy Schools Programme. The Department also developed the 'SunSafe' web pages in March 2002, which were designed with children in mind on the Department of Health website at www.doh.gov.uk/sunsafe.

### Capital Projects

**Mr. Luff:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received from primary care trusts in the West Midlands about the new funding arrangements for capital projects. [157963]

**Dr. Ladyman:** Ministers have not received formal representations from primary care trusts (PCTs) in the West Midlands. However, officials in the Department have received written representations from South Worcestershire PCT and West Midlands South Strategic Health Authority.

### Delayed Discharges

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 273W, on delayed discharges, what information on legal liabilities for reimbursement charges will be available in the future. [158214]

**Dr. Ladyman:** Data on the number of delayed discharges and the level of legal liabilities for reimbursement will be available in due course, once the data has been validated.

### Dentistry

**Mr. Swire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many dentists providing treatment on the NHS were registered in East Devon in each of the past seven years; [155304]

(2) how many dental practices providing dental care in the NHS there were in East Devon in each of the past seven years. [155305]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The tables show the number of National health service dentists on a head count basis and the number of practice addresses in North and East Devon Health Authority at September each year from 1997 to 2002. Following the health service re-organisation, figures for East Devon Primary Care Trust area, at September 2003, are given.

This information covers dentists working in the general dental services (GDS), personal dental services (PDS) and salaried service of the GDS. Excluded are the community and hospital dental services.

Dentists working in more than one dental service are included in each service, apart from dentists working in both PDS and GDS who are counted only once.

*National health service: Number of dentists at September each year*

| | *Health Authority North and East Devon* | *Primary Care Trust East Devon* |
|---|---|---|
| 1997 | 177 | — |
| 1998 | 185 | — |
| 1999 | 195 | — |
| 2000 | 199 | — |
| 2001 | 209 | — |
| 2002 | 206 | — |
| 2003 | — | 38 |

*National health service: Number of dental practices at August each year*

| | *Health Authority North and East Devon* | *Primary Care Trust East Devon* |
|---|---|---|
| 1997 | 82 | — |
| 1998 | 83 | — |
| 1999 | 86 | — |
| 2000 | 90 | — |
| 2001 | 90 | — |
| 2002 | 92 | — |
| 2003 | — | 17 |

**Mr. Wiggin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to increase the availability of NHS dentistry. [155373]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** We have provided new investment totalling £90 million to national health service dentistry over the last year. £59 million will support access, and strategic health authorities have been advised of their shares and are working with their primary care trusts (PCTs) to address access issues. £30 million is to support information technology and the balance of £1 million will support organisational development locally.

A NHS support team is currently working with 16 PCTs where it is hardest to find a NHS dentist to develop plans to overcome the problems. The team is backed by £9 million support funds to enable these hard-pressed areas to increase access. These measures build on steps we have already taken to improve access to NHS dentistry, including the establishment of dental access centres.

The Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act gives new duties for PCTs to secure the provision of primary dental services. From April 2005, PCTs will directly manage provision, commissioning dental services from local practices. With these new responsibilities will go the financial resources currently held centrally, which by 2005–06 are expected to total nearly £1.5 billion.

**Mrs. Humble:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS dentists there are in the Blackpool North and Fleetwood constituency. [157911]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Information is not collected on a constituency basis but at primary care trust (PCT) level. Data for Blackpool PCT and Wyre PCT, as at 31 December 2003, is shown in the table.

| *Primary care trust* | *General dental service (GDS)* | *Personal dental service (PDS)* |
|---|---|---|
| Blackpool | 46 | 1 |
| Wyre | 40 | — |

*Notes:*

1. PDS figure covers dentists not already working in the GDS.
2. Dentists are free to work in more than one PCT. Therefore, dentists who do some work in this area but more in another PCT have not been included.
3. Dentists in the GDS include principals, assistants and vocational dental practitioners. These figures are on a headcount basis rather than whole-time equivalent (wte) basis and therefore take no account of part-time working. In the CDS, the amount of time spent working in the national health service varies greatly, with a large proportion of dentists doing some private work. Dentists working solely in private dentistry are not covered by these figures.
4. These figures exclude dentists working in the community dental service, hospital dental service and salaried service of the GDS.

*Source:*

Dental Practice Board.

## Drug Misusers

**John Mann:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many UK drug addicts are on *(a)* subutex maintenance, *(b)* methadone maintenance and *(c)* naltraxone. [153981]

**Miss Melanie Johnson** *[holding answer 9 February 2004]:* The Department does not collect figures centrally on the number of drug misusers being maintained on subutex, methadone or naltrexone. However, the table represents the number of prescription items of Buprenorphine (Subutex), Methadone Hydrocloride and Naltrexone Hydrochloride (included in the British National Formulary (BNF) section 4.10, Substance Dependence) that were dispensed in the community in England in 2002.

*Thousand*

| *BNF 4.10 Drugs used in substance* | *Number of prescription items dispensed in 2002* |
|---|---|
| Buprenorphine (Subutex) | 164.3 |
| Methadone Hydrochloride | 1,330.7 |
| Naltrexone Hydrochloride | 21.9 |

This data covers drugs which are included in the British National Formulary (BNF) section 4.10, "Drugs used in substance dependence". The data excludes other

Buprenorphine, Methadone and Naltrexone drugs that are contained in other BNF sections since they are prescribed for reasons other than substance dependence.

The data excludes prescription items that are dispensed in hospitals or clinics. The Department does not have any information on the number of people who are prescribed these drugs. The information available is the number of prescription items that are dispensed in the community.

**Mrs. Calton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment has been made by strategic health authorities of *(a)* the facilities available for drug maintenance and withdrawal, *(b)* the availability of licensed prescribers for heroin addicts and *(c)* the incidence of heroin use. [153880]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** No formal assessment has been made by strategic health authorities of the three issues that the hon. Member raises.

However, I am able to inform her that the National Treatment Agency has confirmed that all areas of England now have access to facilities for drug maintenance and withdrawal and that there are currently 123 practitioners in England licensed by the Home Office to prescribe heroin. For other substitute prescribing medications, no licence is required.

**Mr. Hoyle** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what research has been undertaken into the link between *(a)* suffering long-term memory loss and *(b)* other side effects from taking ecstasy; [151283]

(2) what research has been carried out into the long-term use of cannabis with relation to *(a)* loss of memory and *(b)* other side effects. [151298]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** There is a wide range of published studies that have reported the results of research into the side-effects of ecstasy and cannabis. The Department commissioned the National Addiction Centre to review the evidence regarding the harmful effects of drugs of abuse and this is published as the Department of Health document Dangerousness of drugs (2003). A copy of which is available in the Library.

### Thames Valley Strategic Health Authority

**Tony Baldry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the projected financial outturn for the Thames Valley Strategic Health Authority for this financial year, broken down by county. [156459]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Audited information on the financial position of national health service trusts will be published in their individual annual accounts. This data will be available centrally in the autumn. We have no plans to publish un-audited information.

### Food Supplements Directive

**Chris Grayling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects the European Union Directive on food supplements to come into force in the United Kingdom. [158462]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-West (Mr. Best), on 14 October 2003, *Official Report*, column 218W.

### Gambling

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if the Government will incorporate responsibility for problem gambling under the auspices of the National Treatment Agency; [158316]

(2) what assessment the Government have made of the best method of meeting the health needs of problem gamblers; [158344]

(3) what plans he has to include responsibility for problem gambling under the auspices of the National Treatment Agency. [158349]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The most recent assessment of the extent of problem gambling is in the report of the independent Gambling Review Body (Cm 5206).

The national development group for specialised mental health services will review treatment for problem gambling to provide guidance that will help groups of primary care trusts to commission appropriate services and support the development of services in those areas where there are significant problems.

We have also encouraged the gambling industry to support the charitable trust, which it has established with a remit to fund both research into problem gambling and services for its treatment.

The Department has no plans to include responsibility for problem gambling under the auspices of the National Treatment Agency.

### Health Inequality

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out for each *(a)* primary care trust and *(b)* strategic health authority area the benchmark national indicators of health inequality, as set out in Annex C of the report on Tackling Health Inequalities. [157048]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The indicators in Annex C of "Tackling Health Inequalities: A Programme for Action" measure national progress on health inequalities. The London Public Health Observatory has produced a Local Basket of Indicators on health inequalities for all primary care trusts, and a copy of their report has been placed in the Library, and is available on the London Health Observatory website at: http://www.lho.org.uk/HIL/Inequalities In Health/Basket Of Indicators/Basket.htm

### Health Services (Worcestershire)

**Sir Michael Spicer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the future of the proposed new health centres in *(a)* Upton-on-Severn and *(b)* Malvern. [157854]

**Dr. Ladyman:** The future of the proposed new health centres in Upton-on-Severn and Malvern will depend on the priority for investment in these facilities relative to other such developments within the West Midlands

South area. West Midlands South Strategic Health Authority reports that this will be decided by a planning group comprising all of the primary care trust chief executives within the West Midlands South area.

**Sir Michael Spicer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement about the financial position of the *(a)* South Worcestershire Primary Care Trust and *(b)* Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust. [157855]

**Dr. Ladyman:** South Worcestershire Primary Care Trust (PCT) is forecasting to deliver a financial breakeven position at 31 March 2004.

The most recent board report from the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals National Health Service Trust forecasts a £10.9 million deficit. West Midlands South Strategic Health Authority (SHA) reports that it is anticipated that this figure may change as a consequence of a complete review of the financial position within the trust by the new executive team.

The PCTs within Worcestershire, the acute trust and the mental health trust are working with the West Midlands South SHA towards delivering a financial recovery plan to address the deficit. This plan contains a series of cost saving measures, which will be necessary to return the health economy to financial break-even.

**Sir Michael Spicer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the future of Pershore Community Hospital following South Worcestershire Primary Care Trust's announcement that the building of several health centres in Worcestershire is to be put on hold. [157971]

**Dr. Ladyman:** Significant new revenue funding is being made available to support public, private capital investment in the primary care estate based on local prioritisation of development proposals.

The future of the Pershore Community Hospital development will depend on the priority for investment in this facility relative to other such developments within the West Midlands South area. West Midlands South Strategic Health Authority reports that this will be decided by a planning group comprising all of the primary care trust chief executives within the West Midlands South area.

**Mr. Luff:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the future of capital projects for health centres, doctors' surgeries and hospitals provided under the auspice of the South Worcestershire Primary Care Trust. [157918]

**Sir Michael Spicer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the future of controls on private finance initiative revenue streams as they affect investments by South Worcestershire Primary Care Trust. [157970]

**Dr. Ladyman** *[holding answer 2 March 2004]:* Significant new revenue funding is being made available to support public, private capital investment in the primary care estate based on local prioritisation of development proposals.

As part of the implementation of the new primary medical service arrangements, baseline allocations have been notified to all primary care trusts (PCTs) for 2004–05, which include an element for new developments contractually agreed by 30 September 2003.

In addition, further growth funding is to be notified in the near future to PCTs to support prioritised developments contractually agreed after that date.

West Midlands South Strategic Health Authority has devolved responsibility for prioritisation of growth funding for premises development to a planning group comprising all of the PCT chief executives within the West Midlands South area.

## HIV/AIDS

**Mr. Nigel Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of field trials of vaccines to prevent HIV/AIDS carried out in *(a)* Kenya, *(b)* Uganda, *(c)* South Africa and *(d)* Botswana. [157487]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** I have been asked to reply.

Four different vaccines are currently in Phase I safety trials in Kenya, Uganda, South Africa and Botswana. Three of these are based on types of HIV prevalent in East and Southern Africa and one, in Botswana, on the type of HIV prevalent in Europe and the USA. Details of the trials, the vaccines under investigation and trials sponsors can be found on the clinical trials database maintained by the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI) at www.iavi.org/trials.

DFID supports the global effort to accelerate the development of safe and effective HIV vaccines as an important part of a comprehensive long-term response to HIV and AIDS. Trials currently underway in Africa provide an important contribution to these efforts, particularly in developing vaccines that will be appropriate for use by developing countries. The participation of African researchers in these efforts is particularly welcome. Given the difficult task of discovering and proving the efficacy of an HIV vaccine, it is important that a number of promising vaccine candidates are developed in parallel if chances of success are to be increased and efforts accelerated. As the current trials are completed DFID expects that decisions will be made regarding which of the candidates should progress to later stage trials to test vaccine efficacy. These decisions will be the responsibility of the sponsoring agencies.

Since 1998 DFID has provided funding to the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI) to progress global HIV vaccine efforts, with a particular focus on vaccines developed for use by developing countries. IAVI is a not-for-profit organisation with the mission to accelerate the development of safe and effective HIV vaccines and to ensure the rapid availability for use throughout the world. IAVI actively manages a research portfolio with its R&D partners, which includes support for eight vaccine candidates, three of which are currently in trials in the countries in question.

## Hospices

**Jeff Ennis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many *(a)* adult and *(b)* children's hospices are operating in England; [157731]

(2) how many *(a)* adult and *(b)* children's hospices in England receive no financial assistance from the NHS. [157732]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** There are 172 adult in-patient units (2,637 beds)[1] and 27 children's units (201) beds in England, the large majority of which are managed by the voluntary sector.

We do not collect information on financial assistance centrally. It is for the national health service locally to make arrangements for financial support to both adult and children's hospices based on the needs of the local population. We are investing an additional £50 million per annum in specialist palliative care for adults with cancer. Hospices are benefiting from this additional money.

[1] *Source:*
Hospice Information—January 2004.

### Human Papilloma Virus

**Mr. Lansley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the original planned publication date was for the results of the implementation pilots on human papilloma virus testing. [157405]

**Miss Melanie Johnson** *[holding answer 2 March 2004]:* A pilot of human papilloma virus (HPV) testing as triage for women whose cervical screening test results showed low grade abnormalities began in April 2001 as part of the pilot of liquid based cytology (LBC). In the pilot, women who were HPV positive were referred immediately for a follow-up examination by colposcopy. If the test showed women were HPV negative, they had a repeat screening test after six months and a second HPV test.

An independent evaluation of the pilot was commissioned by the Department from the Cancer Screening Evaluation Unit at the Institute of Cancer Research. The evaluation is covering all aspects of HPV testing as triage, including cost-effectiveness. As women who have low grade abnormalities but are HPV negative are retested six months later, the HPV arm of the pilot has taken longer than the LBC arm, as expected. Full follow-up of all women in the pilot is essential for completeness of the evaluation. The HPV evaluation report was due at the end of 2003, but the evaluation has proved more difficult than anticipated. It is important to get the evaluation right, as the cervical screening programmes involved four million women each year.

A draft of the evaluation report has been seen by the Advisory Committee on Cervical Screening, and will also go to the National Screening Committee, which originally commissioned the pilot, shortly. The evaluation report will then be peer reviewed in the usual way, and we expect publication of the full report in the summer. The evaluators will also publish aspects of the results in peer reviewed journals.

### Imported Infections

**Lynne Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the Cabinet Office Review into imported infections and immigration will be published. [158790]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The Cabinet Office is continuing to co-ordinate work between relevant Government Departments, including the Department of Health, to review imported infections and immigration. The purpose of the review is to establish the facts about the impact of immigration on public health and National Health Service expenditure, consider all relevant issues, including health screening, and suggest solutions should action be required. It is ongoing and no decisions have been taken yet.

### Local Authority Grants (Dorset)

**Jim Knight:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what grants were awarded to local authorities in Dorset by his Department in financial year 2003–04 that fall outside the revenue support grant. [156207]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** I refer the hon. Member to the response given by my right hon. Friend the Member for Greenwich and Woolwich (Mr. Raynsford), on 1 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 750W.

### Pharmaceutical Services

**John Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will place in the Library copies of responses to the consultation on proposals to reform and modernise the NHS (Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 1992 in relation to the proposed exemption of large shopping developments from the control of entry requirements for retail pharmacy services. [157513]

**Ms Rosie Winterton** *[holding answer 1 March 2004]:* Copies of 274 responses received in respect of the Department's consultation on proposals to reform and modernise the NHS (Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 1992, including those responses commenting on the proposed exemption from the control of entry requirements for pharmacy applications in respect of large shopping developments over 15,000 square metres gross lettable floor space, will be placed in the Library.

Responses received in confidence have not been placed in the Library under exemption 14 (Information given in confidence) of Part 2 of the Open Government Code of Practice.

We intend to publish a summary of these responses in due course.

**Sandra Gidley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the rate of inappropriate prescribing among those *(a)* under 65 years and *(b)* 65 years and over, broken down by gender, in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [157376]

**Dr. Ladyman:** We do not collect data centrally to make such an assessment.

**Mr. Truswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list those medical conditions whose sufferers qualify for free prescriptions; and what the cost to the NHS was in 2003–04 in respect of each condition. [158256]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The medical conditions conferring exemption from prescription charges are:

Permanent fistula (including caecostomy, colostomy, laryngostomy, or ileostomy) requiring continuous surgical dressing or an appliance;

The following disorders:

Forms of hypoadrenalism (including Addison's disease) for which specific substitution therapy is essential;

Diabetes insipidus and other forms of hypopituitarism;

Diabetes mellitus—except where treatment is by diet alone;

Hypoparathyroidism;

Myasthenia gravis;

Myxoedema;

Epilepsy requiring continuous anti-convulsive therapy;

A continuing physical disability which prevents the patient from leaving his residence without the help of another person.

In 2002–03, 38.2 million prescription items were dispensed in the community in England to holders of a medical exemption certificate. This represents charge revenue foregone of around £236.8 million. Information in respect of each condition is not available and information for 2003–04 is not yet available.

**Mr. Truswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the medical conditions about which representations have been made to his Department in the last three years proposing the granting of free drug prescriptions to sufferers of those conditions; and what his estimate is of the cost of free prescriptions in respect of each of these conditions. [158257]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The following list of conditions (as described by the person making the representations) have been identified as the subject of representations in respect of free prescriptions between 1 January 2000 and 31 December 2003.

Anhydrotic Ectodermal Dysplasia
Arthritis
Asthma
Bartter's Syndrome
Behcet's Syndrome
Budd-Chiari Syndrome
Cancer
Cerebral Palsy
Chronic Bronchitis
Coeliac Disease
Colitis
Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia
Crohns Disease
Cystic Fibrosis
Depression
Dermatomyositis
Diabetes (controlled by diet alone)
Disabilities (nature unspecified)
Dopa-responsive Dystonia
Downs Syndrome
Dystonia
Eczema
Emphysema
Glaucoma
Heart Disease
Hepatitis
High Blood Pressure
Hodgkins Disease
Hormone Replacement Therapy
Hypogonadism
Irritable Bowel Syndrome
Kidney Failure
Klinefelter's Syndrome
Leukaemia
Liver Failure/Disease
Lund Disease
Lupus
Malignant Brain Tumour
Mental Illness
Motor Neurone Disease
Multiple Sclerosis
Myositis Disease
Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
Overactive Thyroid
Pancreatic Defects
Parkinson's Disease
Phenylketonuria
Premature Ovarian Failure
Primary Biliary Cirrhosis
Primary Thrombocythaemia
Pulmonary Hypertension
Renal Failure
Schizophrenia
Sickle Cell Anaemia
Systematic Lupus Erythematosus
Thalassemia
Tourette's Syndrome
Transplant Patients
Tuberculosis
Turners Syndrome
Wegener's Granulomatosis

No estimates have been made of the cost of free prescriptions in respect of each of these conditions.

### Security Passes

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many security passes have been reported *(a)* lost and *(b)* stolen by staff in departmental agencies in the last 12 months. [147906]

**Ms Rosie Winterton** *[pursuant to her reply, 15 January 2004, Official Report, c. 859W]:* I regret my previous response was incorrect. The response should have read as follows.

"The records, where available, of building access passes issued by Department of Health Executive Agencies, and subsequently reported as lost or stolen, indicate that 37 passes were lost and three were stolen during the period 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2003."

### Sexual Health

**Phil Sawford:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action he has taken to implement the 2001 Sexual Health Strategy. [157917]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** A full programme of action to implement the strategy is taking place, as set out in the Strategy Implementation Action Plan (2002), backed by significant investment of £47.5 million, plus a further £40 million committed over the next two years. In addition, a further £26.4 million has been invested this year. The Government's response to the Health Select Committee report on sexual health published in September 2003 (cm 5959) contains details of the work being undertaken, including the national chlamydia screening programme; measures to improve access to services; improve genito-urinary medicine clinic premises; national sexual health promotion campaigns; and work to support local implementation.

**David Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of *(a)* gonorrhea, *(b)* syphilis, *(c)* chlamydia and *(d)* thrush have been diagnosed in the East Riding of Yorkshire in each of the last five years. [149670]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The information for the Yorkshire and Humberside area is shown in the table.

*Selected diagnosed STIs seen in Yorkshire and Humberside NHS Region 1998–2002*

| *Condition code* | *Condition name* | *Sex description* | *1998* | *1999* | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A1A2 | Primary and Secondary Infectious Syphilis | Male | 5 | 11 | 12 | 28 | 53 |
| A1A2 | Primary and Secondary Infectious Syphilis | Homosexually acquired | 0 | 5 | 3 | 10 | 16 |
| A1A2 | Primary and Secondary Infectious Syphilis | Female | 0 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 11 |
| B1B2 | Uncomplicated Gonorrhoea | Male | 562 | 582 | 911 | 1,016 | 1,421 |
| B1B2 | Uncomplicated Gonorrhoea | Homosexually acquired | 79 | 67 | 103 | 118 | 146 |
| B1B2 | Uncomplicated Gonorrhoea | Female | 318 | 332 | 445 | 503 | 673 |
| C4A,C4C | Uncomplicated Chlamydia Infection | Male | 2,222 | 2,491 | 2,617 | 3,290 | 4,234 |
| G4A,C4C | Uncomplicated Chlamydia Infection | Homosexually acquired | 24 | 32 | 34 | 44 | 62 |
| C4A,C4C | Uncomplicated Chlamydia Infection | Female | 3,135 | 3,478 | 3,742 | 4,549 | 5,479 |
| C7A | Anogenital Candidosis | Male | 480 | 475 | 486 | 429 | 403 |
| C7A | Anogenital Candidosis | Female | 5,267 | 5,093 | 4,967 | 5,273 | 5,358 |

*Source:*
Health Protection Agency
Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre

### Variant CJD (Rachel Forber)

**Mr. Lansley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he has referred the issue of possible transmission of variant CJD via *(a)* blood transfusion and *(b)* urine-derived products to the Spongiform Encephalopathies Advisory Committee for advice. [157592]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The first possible case of blood transfusion-associated transmission of variant Creutzfeldt Jakob disease (vCJD) was referred to the 81st meeting of the Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (SEAC) which took place on 25 February 2004.

The SEAC has not discussed urine-derived products.

### York District Hospital

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost of building the children's assessment and treatment area at York District Hospital was. [157521]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** This information is not available centrally in the format requested. However, this facility forms part of the modernised and expanded accident and emergency facility at York District Hospital, which cost £2.16 million.

## SOLICITOR-GENERAL

### Bonny Island

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Solicitor-General whether the Serious Fraud Office has received a request from *(a)* French authorities, *(b)* US authorities and *(c)* Nigerian authorities for assistance into investigations of allegations involving payments by the consortium TSKJ in connection with the Bonny Island liquified natural gas plant in Nigeria; and whether the SFO is investigating these allegations. [158311]

**The Solicitor-General:** For operational reasons the SFO cannot confirm or deny whether a specific matter has been referred to it, or is under investigation.

### Bribery

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Solicitor-General (1) if she will make a statement on Serious Fraud Office investigations into bribery of a foreign public official since 1997 under *(a)* the UK's corruption laws and *(b)* the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001; [158305]

(2) what the Serious Fraud Office's operational policy is on investigating allegations of bribery of a foreign public official which took place prior to the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 where an element of the offence may have occurred within the UK prior to February 2002. [158306]

**The Solicitor-General**: The purpose of the SFO is to investigate and prosecute suspected offences of serious or complex fraud that meet the published acceptance criteria agreed by Ministers. The SFO does not have separate operational policies relating to each offence that it can prosecute, nor does the SFO prioritise by reference to specific offences.

After a case has been accepted and the investigation has advanced, the SFO must then consider which offence/offences are the most appropriate to prosecute.

The facts of a case may give rise to a number of possible offences including for example conspiracy to defraud, theft, fraudulent trading as well as corruption. If a prosecution is justified by the evidence and public interest then the charge selected will be the one that best represents the conduct of the individuals charged.

A referral that includes bribery of a foreign official that took place prior to February 2002 would be assessed on the same basis as every other referral and this basis is outlined above.

The SFO has one investigation where bribery of a foreign official represents an element of the overall case. It is not known at present whether it will be appropriate to prosecute this element.

## EDUCATION AND SKILLS

### After-School and Breakfast Clubs

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* after school clubs and *(b)* breakfast clubs are run in Chorley schools, broken down by school. [157979]

**Margaret Hodge:** The Department does not keep figures on the number of after school and breakfast clubs on offer, by area or school. It is for local authorities and schools to determine what provision will best meet the needs of the young people in the area.

However, more such clubs have been established in a number of schools through Government funding for study support or child care provision. Lancashire local education authority has informed my Department that it has allocated £44,447 from the Department's Standards Fund this year to provide study support opportunities for young people in schools in Chorley. Study support includes activities such as sport, the creative arts and cultural activities, as well as after school and breakfast clubs. Chorley has also received £501,324 this year from the New Opportunities Fund "Out of School Childcare Programme" to fund 627 places.

### Alice House

**Shona McIsaac:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the future of Alice House in north-east Lincolnshire. [158119]

**Mr. Miliband:** It is for the local authority and the local education authority to make suitable provision that will best meet the needs of local children and young people, including teenage mothers.

### Arts and Humanities Research Council

**Helen Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will take steps to ensure that the proposed Arts and Humanities Research Council has the same status as science-based research councils when it is funded by the Office for Science and Technology; and what steps he is taking to safeguard funding for research in the arts and humanities. [158611]

**Alan Johnson:** The Higher Education Bill, currently before the House, provides for the proposed Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) to operate on the same lines as the existing science Research Councils under the auspices of the Office of Science and Technology.

As recommended by the Review of Arts and Humanities Research funding, we are providing for a once and for all transfer of funds from the DfES, the Department for Education and Learning in Northern Ireland, the Welsh Assembly and the Scottish Executive to the Department for Trade and Industry. The level of future funding for research including Arts and Humanities research is a matter for the Spending Review.

### Bodies (Costs)

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the running costs of the *(a)* Learning and Skills Council, *(b)* the Higher Education Funding Council and *(c)* the Sector Skills Agency were in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [156697]

**Alan Johnson:** The administration costs in 2002–03 (the most recent year for which figures are available) are in the table.

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| *(a)* Learning and Skills Council (LSC): | 223.3 |
| *(b)* Higher Education Funding Council | 15.69 |
| *(c)* Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) | 3.72 |

The different amounts reflect the different remits and structures of the three organisations. As part of the 2002 Spending Review, £218 million has been allocated in each of the three years 2003–04, 2004–05 and 2005–06 for the LSC's administration costs and have asked the LSC to find administrative economies so that it can manage with a flat cash administrative budget. As part of this, the LSC has already announced that its national office will be reducing by 200 posts, building on the 600 reductions already achieved through more efficient back-office functions.

*Notes:*

LSC: Figures include transition costs associated with establishing a new organisation. SSDA: 2002–03 was the SSDA's first year of operation and £1.05 million of the administration costs was attributed to the setting up of the Agency.

### Capital Expenditure (Rochdale)

**Mrs. Fitzsimons:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what capital funding has been spent on education in the Rochdale constituency since 1997; which schools benefited from additional capital investment in each year; how much funding each received; and how the funding has been spent. [158829]

**Mr. Miliband** *[holding answer 4 March 2004]:* The majority of capital support is allocated to schools and local education authorities by formula and they decide

how to invest it, in line with the priorities of their asset management plans. The Department does not, therefore, have complete information about capital investment in individual schools. This information should be held locally.

### Careers Guidance

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment his Department has made of the findings of the OECD review of careers guidance policies in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement. [157508]

**Margaret Hodge** *[holding answer 1 March 2004]:* The OECD report recognises the high quality of the UK's career guidance services, asserting that 'Compared to most other OECD countries, career guidance is very highly developed in the United Kingdom'.

The OECD places particular emphasis on: the importance of programmes designed to develop career management skills (as well as support when making decisions at key transition points); and access to impartial advice from an agency that is external to the learning institution in which the student is based. Both are key features of careers education and guidance provision in England.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans his Department has to revise the provision of careers guidance to under-19s; and if he will make a statement. [157510]

**Margaret Hodge:** The Connexions Service provides all 13 to19-year-olds with access to information, advice and guidance to help them make informed learning and career choices. This is complemented by support from learning institutions, in particular through schools' careers education programmes, available to all young people in years 9–11.

The Department has set in train an end-to-end review of the delivery of careers education and guidance, to assess the extent to which the support currently provided by Connexions and learning institutions meets the needs of all young people, taking account of the advice and support implications that arise from the reforms to 14–19 education announced in "14–19: Opportunity and Excellence", published in January 2003.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations he has received concerning the provision of careers guidance by Connexions personal advisers; and if he will make a statement. [157511]

**Margaret Hodge** *[holding answer 1 March 2004]:* A small number of Connexions Personal Advisers have written to DfES expressing concerns that not all young people are receiving support on making learning and career choices, because of Connexions' focus on reducing the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).

We have made it clear to Connexions Partnerships that providing access to careers information, advice and guidance to all young people—differentiated according to each individual's needs—is a key element of the preventative strategy to reduce NEETs.

### Child Care (Kirklees)

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many children there are under the age of eight in Kirklees; and how many registered child care places there are for children under the age of eight in Kirklees; [157491]

(2) what the ratio of child care places to children under eight is in *(a)* Kirklees and *(b)* England. [157492]

**Margaret Hodge:** This is a matter for the Office of Education and Standards (OFSTED) and I will ask Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to write to the hon. Member. OFSTED has been responsible for the registration and inspection of children's day care facilities since September 2001.

### Children (Access)

**Mr. Laurence Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if the Secretary of State will bring forward legislation to provide for a presumption at court that both parents have the right to spend time with their children following divorce; and if he will make a statement. [158911]

**Margaret Hodge** *[holding answer 5 March 2004]:* There are no current plans to establish a legal presumption of contact, following separation or divorce, between children and both of their parents. The Government support the view that, in general, children benefit from a continuing relationship with both parents following parental separation where it is in the best interests of the child and safe for all family members. The fundamental principle of the Children Act 1989 is that any court decision must be based on what is best for the child. There is no automatic "right" to contact for either fathers or mothers, but in practice the courts have taken the view that in most cases the child's welfare is best served by contact with both parents. This was stated by the Court of Appeal in Re: O (Contact: Imposition of Conditions) [1995] 2 FLR 124 in the following terms:

> "Where parents of a child are separated and the child is in the day-to-day care of one of them, it is almost always in the interests of the child that he or she should have contact with the other parent."

The Government will be publishing its response to the Children Act Sub-Committee Report, "Making Contact Work", which dealt with the issue of the facilitation and enforcement of contact orders in March.

### Children's Fund

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on *(a)* the (i) extent and (ii) duration of funding of the Children Fund's partnership with Portsmouth city council and *(b)* the impact of changes to that funding on existing projects. [152309]

**Margaret Hodge:** Portsmouth Children's Fund began operating in July 2001 and is approved until March 2006. It was allocated £1,010,000 per annum.

In its first two years the Children's Fund programme had a record of underspend. Efforts to ensure that all the money was spent have now led to a projected overspend. Revised allocations to some partnerships for 2003–04 were agreed following a mid year review of expenditure. This will ensure that the programme lives within its financial limits this year while honouring its commitments. However, Portsmouth's budget for 2003–04 was not revised following the mid year review.

For 2004–05 we have agreed revised allocations to all partnerships totalling £160 million. This is just below the originally announced total of £164.6 million. Portsmouth's revised allocation for 2004–05 is £981,768. We announced these allocations on 27 February and we are currently working with partnerships, through our regional teams, to assess the impact. The Portsmouth programme has welcomed the freedom to bring forward underspend from 2003–04 into 2004–05 to support its programme. I have made some provision available in the form of a contingency fund which partnerships can apply to, if a serious risk to service delivery in key programmes remains an issue.

I will not be taking final decisions on 2005–06 until I have consulted partnerships and discussed the future of the Children's Fund with key partners, in particular, the potential transition to children's trusts. However, I recognise that partnerships are keen to get some indication of funding levels for 2005–06, in order to help them plan effectively. Therefore I have advised partnerships that the budget for 2005–06 will be no less than £110 million. I will announce the final allocation in autumn 2004, following the outcome of the 2004 Spending Review.

**Mr. Steen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what changes have been made to central government funding allocations for the Children's Fund in this financial year, broken down by region; what assessment he has made of the impact such changes will have on services provided by the Children's Fund; and if he will make a statement. [153242]

**Margaret Hodge** *[holding answer 9 February 2004]:* The 2003–04 mid year review of expenditure identified approximately £12.5 million in underpsend from quarters 1 and 2 that could be redirected from Children's Fund partnerships. This figure was collated nationally and has not been broken down by region.

This action was taken to ensure the programme kept within its budget. The Department has assessed the impact of the review, working with representatives from the main voluntary sector organisations involved in the Fund, the LGA and the ADSS as well as with partnerships' ability to meet contractural obligations, we revisited them. Furthermore, we set aside some money to assist where there was a likelihood of premature closure of services.

Underspend taken back in the mid year review has meant revised allocations to some partnerships this year and ensures the programme can live within its financial limits while honouring its commitments.

**Mr. Goodman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what programmes in the Wycombe constituency receive money from the Buckinghamshire Children's Fund. [159260]

**Margaret Hodge** *[holding answer 5 March 2004]*: The following projects are currently receiving money from Buckinghamshire Children's Fund in the Wycombe constituency.

Ashill School project to supporting children during playtime;

Castlefield play worker project;

Green Street—Saturday school for children for Asian community;

Acacia Saturday school for African/Caribbean children across Wycombe;

Cresswicks Secondary School Heartstone project, which tackles racism;

South Bucks Young Carers project;

NCH project working with children with disabilities;

Bucks University for Young People project—run classes in Wycombe;

A crime prevention Youth Inclusion Support Panel and Restorative Justice project are in planning, expected to begin next year.

## City Academies

**Mr. Mark Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools from the independent sector have expressed interest in sponsoring city academies; and what proportion of city academies have already been sponsored by independent schools. [159787]

**Mr. Miliband:** Three schools from the independent sector are already sponsoring Academies and a number of others have expressed an interest. The United Learning Trust (ULT), a subsidiary of the Church Schools Company, which runs a federation of eight independent schools, sponsors the Manchester Academy, which opened in September 2003. ULT also sponsor a further four Academies which are currently in development.

## Classroom Assistants

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* part-time and *(b)* full-time classroom assistants were (i) recruited and (ii) employed in each London borough in each year since 1997. [159170]

**Mr. Miliband:** Data for recruitment of teaching assistants are not available. Data for teaching assistants in employment are available only as a total full-time equivalent (FTE) number at LEA level. The table shows the total FTE number of teaching assistants employed in maintained nursery, primary, secondary, all special schools and pupil referral units in January of each year since 1997 by London LEA[1,2].

[1] Includes maintained and non-maintained special schools.

[2] Includes nursery assistants in nursery schools, special needs support staff and minority ethnic pupil support staff.

| | | FTE number of teaching assistants | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
| | London | 8,210 | 8,910 | 9,840 | 11,790 | 14,380 | 15,390 | 17,590 |
| 202 | Camden | 200 | 240 | 250 | 300 | 360 | 440 | 470 |
| 201 | City of London | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 204 | Hackney | 210 | 250 | 290 | 380 | 420 | 490 | 530 |
| 205 | Hammersmith and Fulham | 190 | 200 | 210 | 250 | 240 | 260 | 300 |
| 309 | Haringey | 350 | 360 | 380 | 420 | 490 | 650 | 680 |
| 206 | Islington | 250 | 250 | 270 | 350 | 360 | 350 | 480 |
| 207 | Kensington and Chelsea | 130 | 140 | 140 | 170 | 210 | 220 | 260 |
| 208 | Lambeth | 300 | 350 | 390 | 500 | 560 | 580 | 640 |
| 209 | Lewisham | 280 | 290 | 320 | 410 | 570 | 470 | 560 |
| 316 | Newham | 280 | 280 | 390 | 500 | 960 | 720 | 1,070 |
| 210 | Southwark | 350 | 420 | 430 | 650 | 810 | 750 | 710 |
| 211 | Tower Hamlets | 370 | 400 | 450 | 510 | 800 | 970 | 950 |
| 212 | Wandsworth | 330 | 370 | 370 | 460 | 470 | 380 | 530 |
| 213 | Westminster | 150 | 170 | 160 | 190 | 190 | 310 | 280 |
| 301 | Barking and Dagenham | 300 | 290 | 310 | 320 | 400 | 500 | 510 |
| 302 | Barnet | 290 | 340 | 400 | 480 | 550 | 740 | 720 |
| 303 | Bexley | 200 | 230 | 280 | 310 | 380 | 320 | 560 |
| 304 | Brent | 260 | 300 | 360 | 390 | 440 | 450 | 470 |
| 305 | Bromley | 220 | 240 | 250 | 290 | 370 | 440 | 520 |
| 306 | Croydon | 400 | 410 | 510 | 530 | 660 | 630 | 870 |
| 307 | Ealing | 340 | 360 | 370 | 400 | 510 | 450 | 530 |
| 308 | Enfield | 250 | 290 | 290 | 500 | 590 | 810 | 880 |
| 203 | Greenwich | 360 | 400 | 430 | 510 | 650 | 650 | 730 |
| 310 | Harrow | 270 | 270 | 290 | 300 | 300 | 330 | 430 |
| 311 | Havering | 170 | 170 | 200 | 260 | 300 | 310 | 520 |
| 312 | Hillingdon | 330 | 370 | 410 | 450 | 540 | 560 | 640 |
| 313 | Hounslow | 280 | 280 | 290 | 330 | 380 | 400 | 400 |
| 314 | Kingston upon Thames | 130 | 130 | 150 | 170 | 220 | 220 | 250 |
| 315 | Merton | 190 | 200 | 220 | 240 | 290 | 250 | 300 |
| 317 | Redbridge | 200 | 230 | 270 | 370 | 450 | 580 | 620 |
| 318 | Richmond upon Thames | 100 | 110 | 110 | 130 | 160 | 210 | 220 |
| 319 | Sutton | 160 | 170 | 210 | 230 | 260 | 340 | 330 |
| 320 | Waltham Forest | 380 | 400 | 410 | 470 | 490 | 610 | 640 |

*Source:*
Annual Schools' Census

## Connexions

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance his Department has issued to Connexions area partnerships concerning their running costs for 2004–05. [157479]

**Margaret Hodge:** No specific guidance has been issued to Connexions Partnerships in relation to their running costs for 2004–05.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total budget is for the Connexions service for *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05. [157509]

**Margaret Hodge** *[holding answer 1 March 2004]:* The total Connexions service budget for 2003–04 and 2004–05 is:

£

| Budget | 2003–04 | 2004–05 |
|---|---|---|
| Field (grant to Connexions' Partnerships) | 437.5 | 446.3m |
| Central Programmes (including PA training, evaluation, Connexions Direct) | 18.6m | 14.6m |
| VAT | Not applicable | 11.8m |

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the benefits to young people of the Connexions card scheme. [159495]

**Margaret Hodge:** The Connexions card offers a range of benefits to young people who are in post-16 learning. The website www.connexionscard.com offers a range of rewards and information including:

Products and services, chances to try new experiences and "money can't buy" opportunities. Currently there are some 140 possibilities on offer, including study guides and free entry to leisure facilities.

Reduced cost of learning materials and public transport.

Information on courses and career opportunities including a CV builder.

The card also provides young people with an accredited proof of age card.

## Contact and Residence Disputes

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills on what research his decision that it is in the best interests of children to be brought up by both parents was based. [152999]

**Margaret Hodge:** There is a considerable amount of research over a number of years from the UK and overseas that indicates that contact with both parents is in the best interests of the child. This finding has been

endorsed by a number of leading family court judgments. Studies have also indicated that it is the quality of the contact the child maintains with both parents rather than merely its quantity that has the most beneficial effect.

A thorough literature review of research available in this area can be found in the publication 'Researching Contact' by Joan Hunt, a Senior Research Fellow at the Department of Social Policy and Social Work, Oxford University. This work, by a well-known academic in the field of child and family law, provides a comprehensive summary of the research evidence that supports the view that contact with both parents is in the best interests of the child.

### Early Years Education

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate he has made of the change in the number of private day nurseries in the nursery education grant scheme as a result of the removal of the ring-fencing of the grants to local authorities. [155827]

**Margaret Hodge:** The information is not available in the form requested. Day care figures for 2001 and earlier years for England and Government Office regions were published in DfES Statistical Bulletin 08/01 "Children's Day Care facilities at 31 March 2001", which is available in the Library and on the DfES website, www.dfes.gov.uk/statistics. Latest childcare statistics were published in a report by OfSTED 'Registered Childcare Providers and Places in England, 19 December 2003', which is available on the OfSTED web-site, www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications. The numbers of providers and places recorded by OfSTED are not directly comparable with the previous data made available by the DfES because they were collected differently.

The percentage of three and four year olds benefiting from free part-time early education in the private and voluntary sector has increased from 23 per cent. in January 2002 to 32 per cent. in January 2003. Growth in the full day care sector has been particularly strong over 2003–04. In March 387,000 places were available in the sector. By the end of December this had increased by 13 per cent. to 436,000.

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research he has conducted into the funding of private providers for the nursery education grant scheme for three and four year olds following removal of the ring-fencing of funds for local authorities; and if he will make a statement. [155830]

**Margaret Hodge:** There has been no specific research of private providers following the consolidation of resources in the under-fives sub-block of their Education Formula Spending Share (EFSS)—the main source of funding for education.

The percentage of three and four year olds benefiting from free part-time early education in the private and voluntary sector in January 2003 was 32 per cent., up from 23 per cent. in January 2002.

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations he has received from the National Day Nurseries Association on the financial viability of the operation by private providers of the nursery education grant scheme for three and four-year-olds; and if he will make a statement. [R] [155831]

**Margaret Hodge:** While we have not had a direct representation by the NDNA we do have dialogue with the NDNA and other national organisations, through the Large Providers Forum and the Voluntary Sector Forum, on a whole range of issues surrounding early education, including viability.

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what assessment he has made of the financial viability of the Government's nursery education grant scheme for three and four-year-olds; [R] [155832]

(2) what representations he has received from Essex county council regarding the payment per term passed on by them to private sector providers under the nursery education grant scheme; and if he will take powers to force county council's to pass on to private providers the grant level made available by the Government; [R] [155824]

(3) if the nursery education grant scheme payment per term will be index-linked to inflation; [R] [155825]

(4) if he will make it his policy to reinstate ring-fencing of nursery education grants funds for local authorities. [R] [155829]

**Margaret Hodge:** From April 2003, we have increased local flexibility and autonomy, in line with the Government's principles of reducing ring-fenced funding by consolidating the resources in the under-fives sub-block of Education Formula Spending Share (EFSS)—the main source of funding for education. We have not received representations from Essex regarding funding to private providers. As funding in EFSS is unhypothecated it is the responsibility of the local authority to set funding at a suitable level to reflect local circumstances and in order to meet their statutory obligations. In the financial year 2004–05, overall funding in the under fives sub-block is worth £2.66 billion; overall education funding having increased by 5.5 per cent.

Levels of funding increase every year, taking account of inflation and other pressures. All decisions on future funding will be considered as part of this year's Spending Review.

### Epinephrine

**Jon Cruddas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many children in schools have arrangements for delivering emergency injectable adrenaline (epinephrine) in case of an allergic reaction; [158817]

(2) how many *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools have arrangements for delivering emergency injectable adrenaline (epinephrine) in case of an allergic reaction. [158818]

**Margaret Hodge:** Schools are not required to provide this information to the Department. The arrangements for managing such issues in schools are determined at local level. However, the Department, jointly with the Department of Health, has produced 'Supporting pupils with medical needs—a good practice guide' and Circular 14/96 'Supporting pupils with medical needs in school', in 1996. The guide includes a section on anaphylaxis, with information about emergency adrenaline injection. These documents were written to help schools draw up policies on managing medication in schools and to put in place effective management systems to support individual pupils with medical needs, as well as to set out the legal background.

## Faith Schools

**Dr. Tonge:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which community schools have closed and re-opened as faith schools in the last 15 years; and which faith was involved in each case. [158948]

**Mr. Miliband:** The following tables show which community schools have closed to be replaced by schools designated with a religious character ("faith schools") since 1997, listed by LEA area. The first table shows single community schools that have closed and been replaced by single faith schools. The second table shows amalgamations or mergers where community and faith schools have closed, to be replaced by a single faith school. Reliable information is not available in relation to school re-organisations before 1997.

*Community Schools closed and replaced with schools with religious character since1997*

| *LEA* | *Closed Schools* | *New Schools* | *Date of Opening* | *Religious Character* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bexley | St. Augustine's Primary | St. Augustine's of Canterbury CofE VA Primary | 1 September 2003 | Church of England |
| Bexley | Lesney Park Primary | Christ Church, Erith, CE VA Primary | 1 September 2003 | Church of England |
| Blackpool | St. Georges High | St. Georges CofE VA | 1 September 2002 | Church of England |
| Darlington | Middleton St. George Primary | Middleton St. George CofE Aided Primary (VA) | 1 September 2003 | Church of England |
| Doncaster | Rossington High | Rossington All Saints Church of England (VA) | 1 September 2002 | Church of England |
| Dorset | Beechcroft Infant | Beechcroft St. Paul's CE VA Primary | 1 September 2003 | Church of England |
| Hampshire | Micheldever Primary | Micheldever CofE Primary (VC) | 1 September 2001 | Church of England |
| Hartlepool | Henry Smith (Secondary) | St. Hild's CofE VA | 1 September 2001 | Church of England |
| Lincolnshire | Quarrington St. Botolph's (primary) | St. Botolph's Church of England Primary (VC) | 1 September 2001 | Church of England |
| Milton Keynes | Bow Brickhill First | Bow Brickhill CE First (VA) | 1 January 2004 | Church of England |
| Newcastle Upon Tyne | West Denton High | All Saints College (VC) | 1 September 2002 | Church of England |
| Northumberland | Seaton Hirst Middle (middle deemed secondary) | Seaton Hirst Church of England Middle (VC middle deemed secondary) | 1 December 2003 | Church of England |
| Northumberland | Cramlington Cragside First | Cragside Church of England First (VC) | 1 December 2003 | Church of England |
| South Tyneside | Whitburn (secondary) | Whitburn Church of England (VA secondary) | 1 January 2004 | Church of England |
| Warrington | Sir Thomas Boteler High | Sir Thomas Boteler CofE High (VA) | 1 September 2002 | Church of England |
| Warrington | Hood Manor Primary | Sankey Valley St. James CofE Primary (VA) | 1 September 2002 | Church of England |
| Windsor and Maidenhead | Churchmead (secondary) | Churchmead CofE (VA) (VA secondary) | 1 September 2002 | Church of England |

*Community schools closed as part of mergers/amalgamations and replaced with a school with a religious character since 1997*

| *LEA* | *Closed Schools* | *New Schools* | *Date or opening* | *Religious Character* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Barnsley | Dodworth Junior (community) and Dodworth CofE (VA) Infant | Dodworth CofE (VA) Primary | 1 September 2001 | Church of England |
| Bury | Fishpool Infant (community) and St. Chad's Church of England Junior (VC) | St. Luke CofE Primary (VC) | 1 September 2003 | Church of England |
| Calderdale | Newlands Junior (community) and St. Peter's CE Aided Infant (VA) | Sowerby Village VC CE | 1 September 2002 | Church of England |
| Cambridgeshire | Gordon Fendick Community Junior and St. Augustine's CofE Controlled Infant (VC) | Orchards Church of England Primary (VC) | 1 September 2003 | Church of England |
| Derbyshire | Codnor CofE Primary (VC) and Codnor County Infant | Codnor CofE Primary (VC) | 1 September 1997 | Church of England |
| Derbyshire | Chapel-en-le-Frith CE Infant (VC) and Warmbrook Junior (community) | Chapel-en-le-Frith CofE Controlled (VC) | 1 April 2002 | Church of England |
| Durham | Lanchester Junior (VC), Lanchester County and Lanchester Nursery | Lanchester Endowed Parochial Primary (VC) | 2 September 1998 | Church of England |
| Gateshead | Derwent Infant (community) and St. Cuthbert's Church of England Aided Junior (VA) | St. Aidan's Church of England Primary (VA) | 1 September 2000 | Church of England |
| Gloucestershire | Winchcombe Infant (VA) and Winchcombe Junior (County) | Winchcombe VA Primary | 1 September 2000 | Church of England |
| Gloucestershire | Hopes Hill Community Primary and Longhope CE VC Primary | Hope Brook CE Primary (VC) | 1 September 2001 | Church of England |
| Hampshire | Fareham Park Infant (county) and Fareham Park Junior (VC) | Oak Meadow CE Primary (VC) | 1 September 1997 | Church of England |
| Hertfordshire | Haslewood Junior (community) and St. Paul's Voluntary Controlled Infant | St. Catherine's CE VC Primary | 1 January 2003 | Church of England |
| Isle of Scilly | Carn Gwaval CE Primary (VC), St. Agnes CE Primary (VC), St. Martin's Anglican Primary (VC), Tresco CE Primary (VC) and The Isles of Scilly Secondary (community) | The Five Islands CE (VC) Isle of Scilly (Middle deemed primary 4–16) | 1 September 2001 | Church of England |

*Community schools closed as part of mergers/amalgamations and replaced with a school with a religious character since 1997*

| *LEA* | *Closed Schools* | *New Schools* | *Date or opening* | *Religious Character* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kent | New Romney Infant (community) and New Romney CE (Controlled) Junior (VC) | St. Nicholas CofE (Controlled) Primary (VC) | 1 September 2001 | Church of England |
| Liverpool | St. Georges Junior and Infant (VC) and Everton Park Junior and Infant (County) | The Beacon CE VC Primary | 1 September 1997 | Church of England |
| Liverpool | Kirkdale Primary (community) and St. Lawrence's Primary VA) | Kirkdale St. Lawrence CofE Primary | 1 September 2000 | Church of England |
| North East Lincolnshire | Pelham Infant's (community) and Immingham St. Andrew's Church of England Junior (VC) | The Cannon Peter Hall CofE Primary (VC) | 1 September 2003 | Church of England |
| Nottinghamshire | Pilgrim Oak Infant (County) and Martin Roe Junior (VC) | Ravenshead CE VC Primary | 1 September 1999 | Church of England |
| Middlesbrough | Coulby Newham (community Secondary) and Brackenhoe (community Secondary) | Kings Academy (11 -18 Academy) | 1 September 2003 | Christian |
| Sandwell | Whiteheath Infant (County) and St. James Junior (VC) | St. James Primary (VC) | 1 September 1999 | Church of England |
| Sheffield | Pye Bank Community Infant and Pye Bank Trinity CE VA Junior | Pye Bank CofE Primary (VA) | 1 September 2001 | Church of England |
| South Tyneside | Cleadon Village Junior (community) and Cleadon CofE Infants (VA) | Cleadon Village Church of England VA Primary | 1 January 2004 | Church of England |
| Staffordshire | Knutton Infants (community) and St. Mary's Church of England (C) Junior (VC) | Knutton St. Mary's Primary (VC) | 1 January 2003 | Church of England |
| Stockton-on-Tees | Elm Tree Community Infant and St. Mark's CE VA Junior | St. Marks Elm Tree Primary (VA) | 1 September 2001 | Church of England |
| Stoke-on-Trent | Florence Primary (community) and Dresden CE Primary (VC) | Belgrave CofE (C) Primary | 1 September 2002 | Church of England |
| Tameside | Hurst Infant (community) and Hurst VC Methodist Junior | Rosehill Methodist Community Primary (VC) | 1 August 2003 | Methodist |
| Warwickshire | Baddesley Ensor Junior (community) and Baddesley Ensor CE VC Infant | Woodside CE VC Primary | 1 September 2001 | Church of England |

## Family Policy

**Mr. Goodman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many civil servants in his Department are assisting with the review of family policy; which *(a)* advisers from outside the Department and *(b)* other departments are assisting with the review; what body or committee within the Department is co-ordinating the review; when he expects to publish the review; and if he will make a statement. [158076]

**Margaret Hodge:** The review of family policy formed part of the work of two civil servants and a secondee from the voluntary sector. The views of a number of advisors from outside the Department and of local government have fed in to this work. The review of family policy is an internal DfES review by our Families Division. Its findings will not be published but they are contributing to relevant work in DfES and to the parenting strand of the Child Poverty Review currently being conducted by HM Treasury.

## Food Safety

**Jon Cruddas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what training in food safety for carers of babies and pre-school children has been made available since the death of Thomas Egan to ensure that they are equipped to protect those at risk from severe food allergy. [158819]

**Margaret Hodge:** The national standards for under eights day care and childminding indicate that registered childcare providers should request information from parents about food allergies the child may have, and take heed of such information when providing children with food and drink. The standards also require that there is at least one member of staff with a current first aid certificate on the premises or on outings at any one time, and that the first aid qualification includes training in first aid for infants and young children. First aid training has to be consistent with any guidance issued by the Secretary of State to local authorities, who are responsible for making training available to settings. Guidance was sent to all local authorities in January 2004 and this includes the requirement that training should cover the treatment of children suffering from allergic reactions.

**Alistair Burt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many food technologists are undergoing training at places of further and higher education [144821]

**Alan Johnson:** In 2001/02, 2,356 students were studying Food Science as their primary subject within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and 158,074 were studying food science related subjects within Further Education Institutions (FEIs).

## Grammar Schools

**Mr. Dhanda:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills under what circumstances a local education authority may close a grammar school under section 29 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 without *(a)* the consent of the governors and *(b)* a ballot of parents. [159791]

**Mr. Miliband:** Section 29 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 provides for a local education authority to propose the closure of any category of maintained school including a grammar school. The authority must first consult interested parties, including parents and governors. If, after considering the responses to consultation, they decide to proceed they must publish the proposals in the local newspaper, at the entrance to the school and in a local public place. Anyone may then submit comments or objections to the proposals. Where objections are submitted, the final decision on the closure will be taken by the local School Organisation Committee (SOC), or an independent

schools adjudicator if the SOC cannot reach a unanimous decision. Both the SOC and schools adjudicator must consider a range of factors in reaching a decision, including the views of interested parties.

There is no requirement for a ballot of parents or the consent of the governors before proposals are published to close a grammar school. Ballots provide for the removal of selective admission arrangements, if enough parents vote in favour, from a school that is remaining open.

### Higher Education

**Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the proportion was of families with an income under *(a)* £15,970 and *(b)* £33,500 with students going to higher education, broken down by local education authority, in the last academic year for which figures are available. [153132]

**Alan Johnson:** Data on the distribution of family incomes are not available at a Local Education Authority level.

The income levels £15,970 and £33,500—referred to in the paper: Moving towards a single combined grant for higher education—are estimates for 2006–07.

The figure of £15,970 is an estimate of the income threshold below which students will receive the full combined grant of £2,700 and above which the grant starts to be tapered away. Since the combined grant will be new in 2006–07, and its threshold is lower than that for the existing tuition fee relief scheme, there are no out-turn data for past years. However, it is estimated that around 30 per cent. of students will get the full grant. The figure of £33,500 is the estimated income level at which—in 2006–07—the combined grant will end and the means-tested element of the maintenance loan will begin to be tapered away. It is estimated that 50–55 per cent. of students will fall below this threshold and hence will receive some combined grant.

In 2001–02, 59 per cent. of students had a family income which resulted in them receiving part or full contribution to their fees i.e. an income below the threshold of £29,785 for dependent students and £25,440 for independent students. This is the latest year for which data are available.

Although the Department does not collect data on family income below various thresholds by LEA, we are aware that there are other organisations that do prepare figures of this nature. In particular, I understand that the House of Commons Library has access to some figures on family income by Parliamentary constituency, which hon. Members may be interested in. In addition, the Office of National Statistics has recently published some data on their website (www.statistics.gov.uk/neighbourhood) showing mean income at ward level, which hon. Members may also be interested in.

The distribution of all students entering full-time undergraduate courses by local authority, is shown in the table, copies of which have been place in the House Libraries.

### Homeless Young People

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether parents can be required to make a contribution to the care costs of a child under the age of 18 years, where they refuse to provide a home for that child. [155982]

**Margaret Hodge** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* Part III of Schedule 2 of the Children Act 1989 provides powers for local authorities to recover contributions towards the maintenance of children looked after by them if they consider it reasonable to do so.

The persons liable to contribute are, where the child is under sixteen, each of his parents and, where he has reached the age of sixteen, the child himself.

### Internet Safety Teaching

**Ms Shipley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to include internet safety teaching in the National Curriculum. [158996]

**Mr. Miliband:** Internet safety underpins the use of ICT to support the creative delivery of the National Curriculum and the teaching and learning of ICT core skills.

Within the ICT curriculum and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) there is sufficient flexibility to include teaching about internet safety to pupils of all ages and for discussion about potential dangers when using the World Wide Web. Teachers are able to reinforce safe practice in any class where pupils are using the internet.

The Department's Superhighway Safety guidance and website includes advice on all aspects of internet safety including key areas such as e-mails for students, filtering systems, school websites and chat rooms. Schools are advised to have an acceptable-use policy signed by students and their parents, guardians or carers, detailing the ways the internet can or cannot be used. School plans detail how they will implement internet safety measures such as filtering, monitoring and providing protected environments.

The Internet Proficiency Certificate for primary pupils is a specific way of developing safe and discriminatory behaviours on the internet. We also provide GridClub as a safe environment for 7 to 11-year-olds to learn online in safety. The Parents Online website helps parents to help their children use the internet effectively and safely.

### Litter and Waste Disposal Education

**Mr. Dhanda:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps his Department is taking to ensure that school pupils are taught the importance of a responsible approach to the disposal of litter and waste. [159727]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** The Citizenship curriculum includes teaching pupils about issues that impact on the society and the environment. Pupils learn about what improves and harms their local environment and about the importance of disposing of waste and litter responsibly. Citizenship education encourages pupils to play a helpful part in the life of their schools,

neighbourhoods, communities and the wider world. Such lessons may contribute to pupils understanding the consequences of dropping litter. An example can be found in the QCA Scheme of Work for Key Stage 3 which has a unit called 'Developing your schools grounds' in which pupils take responsibility for planning, devising and implementing ways of improving their school grounds.

### Looked-After Children

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many looked-after children have had special educational needs statements in England in each year since 1994. [158066]

**Margaret Hodge:** Statistics on looked-after children with statements of special education needs have been collected only since 1999–2000. The following table has been compiled from the statistical bulletin "Outcome Indicators for Looked After Children" and refers to children who have been looked after for at least one year at the year ending 30 September.

| *Year* | *Number of looked-after children (LAC)* | *Number of LAC of school age* | *Number of LAC of school age with statements of SEN* | *Percentage*[1] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2000 | 42,200 | 33,100 | 8,600 | 26.0 |
| 2001 | 43,400 | 33,800 | 8,900 | 26.5 |
| 2002 | 44,100 | 34,500 | 9,200 | 26.8 |

[1] Rounded.

### Mathematics/Physics A-levels

**Mr. Gibb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students sat the A-level examination in *(a)* mathematics and *(b)* physics in 1993; and what proportion were in private sector schools. [158608]

**Mr. Miliband:** The information requested is as follows:

(a) The total number of A-level entries in mathematics in England in 1993 was 62,616, 21.6 per cent. of which were in independent schools.

(b) The total number of A-level entries in physics in England in 1993 was 34,467, 21.3 per cent. of which were in independent schools.

### Minister for Children

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what additional responsibilities *(a)* the Minister for Children has assumed since October 2003 and *(b)* it has been decided the Minister for Children should assume but which she has not yet taken on. [157158]

**Margaret Hodge:** Since October 2003, I have assumed responsibility for the Children and Family Court Advice and Support Service (CAFCASS). Responsibility for CAFCASS transferred to my Department from the Department of Constitutional Affairs on 12 January 2004.

I am not aware of any plans to extend my responsibilities as the Minister for Children, Young People and Families.

### New Deal for Schools

**Phil Sawford:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money was received by Northamptonshire county council at each stage of the New Deal for Schools. [159312]

**Mr. Miliband:** The table shows the information requested for Northamptonshire local education authority.

*New Deal for Schools—Allocations to Northamptonshire local education authority*

£

| | *Allocation* |
|---|---|
| 1997–98 | 712,000 |
| 1998–99 | 2,309,000 |
| 1999–2000 | 2,590,000 |
| 2000–01 | 8,384,000 |

### New Schools (Greater London)

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list the new schools agreed to be built in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough. [158457]

**Mr. Miliband:** The majority of capital support is allocated to schools and local education authorities (LEAs) by formula, and they decide how to invest it in line with their asset management plans. The Department does not, therefore, have complete information about all the capital investments in each school; this should be held locally. Tables have been placed in the Libraries which set out the capital support made by this Government to each London LEA since 1997–98, in total and by programme, including devolved formula capital grants to each school.

In addition to the funding programmes indicated overleaf, the Department will also invest significantly in secondary education facilities through Building Schools for the Future (BSF). The aim of this new approach is to rebuild and renew secondary schools in every part of England within 10 to 15 years from 2005–06, subject to future spending decisions. During the course of BSF, we therefore expect London authorities to receive large-scale investment to transform their secondary school buildings. We have already approved funding in principle for BSF projects in Newham and Waltham Forest for 2005–06, and we are also working on a BSF pathfinder project involving Greenwich, Southwark and Lewisham.

### Popular Schools

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding has been allocated to the Expanding Successful and Popular Schools programme; how many applications have been made for funding under this programme; and how many applications have been successful. [159788]

**Mr. Miliband:** In August 2003, the Department announced that incentive and support funding for the expansion of successful and popular secondary schools would be available from 2004–05. To date, we have

received seven applications for funding under this programme, two from local education authorities (LEAs) and five directly from schools.

Provision of this funding is dependent on agreement to statutory proposals to expand a school by the local School Organisation Committee (SOC), or failing agreement by the SOC, by the Adjudicator. We are not aware that any of these seven proposals has yet been determined.

Where applications have the support of the LEA and are agreed, we will provide incentive funding of £500,000 (£400,000 if the school does not have a sixth form). Where applications are not supported by the LEA, we will provide the full funding required. We are currently working with the five schools in this position to determine the level of support needed to provide 21st century buildings for the additional pupils.

### Post-16 Education (Gloucestershire)

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions he has had with *(a)* Gloucestershire county council and *(b)* Gloucestershire Learning and Skills Council on the local education authority's post-16 review; and if he will publish the relevant correspondence. [159391]

**Mr. Miliband:** The Secretary of State has had no discussions with Gloucestershire county council or Gloucestershire Learning and Skills Council on the local education authority's post-16 review. Nor has the Secretary of State exchanged any correspondence with either of these bodies on the matter.

Any proposals to re-organise sixth form provision published by the local education authority as part of this review will be decided locally by the local School Organisation Committee, or the Schools Adjudicator if the Committee cannot agree unanimously. The Secretary of State will play no part in the decision-making process.

### Postgraduate Education

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students participated in postgraduate education in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* social class and *(b)* age. [157494]

**Alan Johnson:** Figures for postgraduate enrolments by social class are not held centrally. The available figures split by age are given below.

*Postgraduate enrolments to UK HE institutions by age, 1997/8 to 2002/3*

| *Age* | *1997/98* | *1998/99* | *1999/2000* | *2000/01* | *2001/02* | *2002/03* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 20 | 1,465 | 1,379 | 1,392 | 1,381 | 1,443 | 1,655 |
| 21–24 | 76,346 | 77,508 | 80,468 | 85,548 | 92,304 | 103,762 |
| 25+ | 269,196 | 285,071 | 287,277 | 293,821 | 298,104 | 308,833 |
| All | 347,007 | 363,958 | 369,137 | 380,750 | 391,851 | 414,250 |

*Source:*
Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

### Prince's Trust Report

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will meet the Prince's Trust to discuss the findings of its report, "Reaching the Hardest to Reach". [159496]

**Margaret Hodge:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State meets the Prince of Wales on an occasional basis. My right hon. Friend has received a copy of the report "Reaching the Hardest to Reach" and it is being considered by Ministers.Ministers and officials in the Department for Education and Skills are in regular contact with the trust to discuss areas of mutual interest and co-operation, including the trust's work on reaching disaffected young people.

### Private Schools (Expansion)

**Mr. Gibb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what criteria will be used in assessing whether to grant permission for a private school to expand. [158756]

**Mr. Miliband:** Section 162 of the Education Act 2002 requires independent schools to gain approval from the Secretary of State before increasing the maximum number of pupils within the school. The approval process takes into account the findings of recent inspections, or the school's plans for building work, which are subject to building regulation controls. Approval confirms that issues such as overcrowding or understaffing will not compromise the health, welfare and safety of pupils.

### School Cricket Facilities

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many state schools *(a)* have (i) cricket nets and (ii) cricket squares and *(b)* play inter-school cricket fixtures. [159330]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** This information is not held by the Department. Local education authorities and schools would need to expend additional resources were they to be asked to supply the information.

### School Federations

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many school federations have been established. [159786]

**Mr. Miliband:** The Department is currently providing pump-priming funding for 29 Federation pilots involving around 150 schools. However, schools can (and do) federate without applying to the Department and without pump-priming funding. We do not hold centralised records for these federations.

### School Kitchens

**Mr. Randall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what earmarked funds are available for refurbishment of school kitchens. [158495]

**Mr. Miliband:** The only funds specifically earmarked for projects including the refurbishment of school kitchens relate to Voluntary Aided (VA) schools. This results from the reform of liabilities and funding arrangements at VA schools in 2002, when their governing bodies took on responsibility for some buildings (including kitchens) which were previously the responsibility of local education authorities. No other capital funding is earmarked by the Department, most being provided formulaically to support local prioritisation of need.

## School Leavers (Greater London)

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of pupils in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough left school with no qualifications in each of the last five years. [158451]

**Mr. Miliband:** The following table shows the percentage of pupils in *(a)* the London Government Office Region and *(b)* each London local education authority who gained no passes at GCSE/GNVQ for the years 1999 to 2003.

*Percentage of pupils gaining no passes at GCSE/GNVQ*

| *Local education authority number/name* | *1999* | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* | *2003* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *National Average* | *6.0* | *5.6* | *5.5* | *5.4* | *5.2* |
| *London GOR* | *5.2* | *3.9* | *4.6* | *4.4* | *4.7* |
| 201 City of London | — | — | — | — | — |
| 202 Camden | 6.9 | 5.9 | 4.1 | 6.1 | 4.8 |
| 203 Greenwich | 9.7 | 6.9 | 7.4 | 6.8 | 6.5 |
| 204 Hackney | 7.3 | 6.8 | 6.9 | 8.7 | 5.1 |
| 205 Hammersmith and Fulham | 4.5 | 0.6 | 3.9 | 2.7 | 3.7 |
| 206 Islington | 9.1 | 8.3 | 11.4 | 11.6 | 5.2 |
| 207 Kensington and Chelsea | 6.8 | 6.7 | 3.8 | 4.7 | 5.6 |
| 208 Lambeth | 4.5 | 3.0 | 4.5 | 3.6 | 4.0 |
| 209 Lewisham | 5.3 | 6.0 | 7.1 | 4.3 | 5.3 |
| 210 Southwark | 5.3 | 2.0 | 4.7 | 4.4 | 5.4 |
| 211 Tower Hamlets | 4.2 | 2.4 | 3.5 | 1.9 | 3.9 |
| 212 Wandsworth | 5.0 | 3.0 | 4.8 | 4.2 | 7.2 |
| 213 Westminster | 8.4 | 5.3 | 6.1 | 5.9 | 4.9 |
| 301 Barking and Dagenham | 5.5 | 3.0 | 4.9 | 7.1 | 5.1 |
| 302 Barnet | 6.9 | 4.8 | 4.8 | 4.9 | 5.0 |
| 303 Bexley | 3.6 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 3.4 | 3.4 |
| 304 Brent | 5.1 | 1.5 | 3.8 | 3.8 | 4.1 |
| 305 Bromley | 4.1 | 3.4 | 3.7 | 3.7 | 3.5 |
| 306 Croydon | 4.6 | 3.2 | 4.0 | 3.9 | 4.7 |
| 307 Ealing | 4.4 | 1.5 | 1.8 | 0.8 | 3.4 |
| 308 Enfield | 3.5 | 2.9 | 3.2 | 4.2 | 4.5 |
| 309 Haringey | 7.4 | 7.0 | 7.9 | 8.1 | 10.0 |
| 310 Harrow | 4.3 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 2.6 | 4.3 |
| 311 Havering | 2.6 | 3.8 | 3.7 | 3.7 | 3.2 |
| 312 Hillingdon | 6.6 | 4.8 | 3.8 | 5.3 | 6.7 |
| 313 Hounslow | 5.4 | 4.2 | 4.3 | 4.5 | 4.9 |
| 314 Kingston upon Thames | 5.6 | 6.9 | 6.0 | 8.3 | 5.1 |
| 315 Merton | 8.1 | 7.4 | 6.3 | 8.7 | 7.8 |
| 316 Newham | 3.5 | 0.0 | 2.4 | 0.6 | 2.0 |
| 317 Redbridge | 1.4 | 0.8 | 2.1 | 1.4 | 2.2 |
| 318 Richmond upon Thames | 4.2 | 4.4 | 5.8 | 6.6 | 3.4 |
| 319 Sutton | 3.2 | 3.5 | 4.0 | 3.3 | 3.6 |
| 320 W[illegible] Forest | 6.7 | 6.5 | 6.4 | 4.8 | 6.4 |

## Schools (Funding)

**Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what impact his announcement in respect of financial settlements to local education authorities will have on per capita funding for *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools for (i) 2004–05 and for (ii) each local education authority. [159799]

**Mr. Miliband:** Our proposals to restore stability and certainty to school funding include a guaranteed minimum increase in every school's per pupil funding of 4 per cent. where pupil numbers remain unchanged. All authorities' School Formula Spending Shares are increasing by at least 5 per cent. per pupil in 2004–05. This gives headroom above the guarantee and flexibility to target funds towards schools facing difficulty. Information showing the increase per pupil for all local education authorities in England has been placed in the Libraries. It is for individual authorities to decide how funding above the guaranteed minimum increase should be distributed to primary and secondary schools, using their locally agreed funding formulae.

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what proportion of *(a)* leadership incentive, *(b)* national literacy and numeracy strategy, *(c)* Key Stage 3 Strategy, *(d)* ethnic minority achievements, *(e)* school support staff and *(f)* information communication technology in schools: infrastructure grants are allocated directly to schools; and on what basis; [159184]

(2) what proportion of Standards Funds grants are paid directly to schools. [159185]

**Mr. Miliband** *[holding answer 5 March 2004]:* Standards Fund grants are allocated to local education authorities, not directly to schools. For some grants a minimum proportion must be devolved by local education authorities to their schools. The total proportion of the Standards Fund required to be devolved to schools through the Standards Fund in 2003–04 is 83 per cent.

The proportions required to be devolved to schools in 2003–04 for the particular grants referred to are:

| *Grant* | *Proportion required to be devolved (percentage)* |
|---|---|
| Leadership Incentive Grant | 100 |
| National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies | 70 |
| Key Stage 3 Strategy | 66 |
| Ethnic Minority Achievement | 85 |
| School Support Staff | 100 |
| *Information Communication Technology in Schools:* | |
| Infrastructure | 96 |

These grants are devolved to schools on the following basis:

*Leadership Incentive Grant*

£125,000 to each secondary school in Excellence in Cities Areas, Education Action Zones and Excellence Clusters and secondary schools outside those areas where fewer than 30 per cent. of Year-11 pupils attain at least five A*-C grades at GCSE or where more than 35 per cent. of pupils are eligible for free school meals. All schools in receipt of the grant must agree a collaborative plan with their local education authority.

*National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies*

Grant is allocated to schools based on numbers of pupils and distance to the LEA's 2004 Key Stage 2 targets, KS1 reading and maths results, and the number of teachers attending five day maths courses, literacy priority training and training for Year 3 teachers.

*Key Stage 3 Strategy*

Allocated to schools to deliver core training and support to schools across the five strands of the Strategy, plus training for the behaviour and attendance programme. The grant also includes an allocation for training, support to schools identified for additional intensive support and schools with leading professionals

and teachers, and schools whose pupils face the greatest challenge in achieving the standards of learning expected of their age.

*Ethnic Minority Achievement*

Local education authorities can determine their own formula for allocating this grant to schools, after consultation with the local Schools Forum.

*School Support Staff*

Local education authorities can determine their own formula for allocating this grant to schools, after consultation with the local Schools Forum.

*Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Schools: Infrastructure*

Local education authorities allocate the grant to schools in line with their ICT Development Plan to deliver improved computer:pupil ratios as well as provide a range of equipment and support.

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the Answer of 26 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 519W, on funds/grants, if he will make a statement on the purpose of the Condition Funding grant. [159187]

**Mr. Miliband:** Condition funding was introduce in 2001–02 as a capital grant allocation to all local education authorities for the investment needs of their maintained school buildings as prioritised through the local asset management planning process. It is allocated according to relative need based on condition data provided by all authorities, from a full survey of all their school buildings. It is for capital investment in buildings as defined in the current CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in Great Britain: A Statement of Recommended Practice. Where authorities have satisfactory asset management plans, they have autonomy on how this grant is invested. Further details of this grant can be found in my Department's guidance on the programme which, along with guidance on other capital programmes, can be accessed through www.teachernet.gov.uk/schoolscapital. I am arranging for copies of this guidance to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Although Condition funding is allocated according to condition need, we urge all authorities to join up all capital funding streams locally to achieve the greatest impact in raising school standards, and to secure cross-cutting gains and best value for money investment.

From 2004–05, to simplify funding programmes, Condition funding allocation becomes part of the Modernisation formulaic capital funding programme for all authorities.

## Special Educational Needs

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what resources are available to assist children whose special educational needs are identified before the start of compulsory schooling. [157152]

**Mr. Miliband:** In all but exceptional cases, children below statutory school age will be supported through the resources and intervention arrangements that are normally available to schools and early years settings. Resources have also been made available to local authorities and their Early Years Development Childcare Partnerships (EYDCPs) to ensure that all early years settings have access to advice and support from Early Years Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators as well as specialist teachers and educational psychologists.

In September 2002, we launched the Early Support Pilot Programme (ESPP) to improve services for babies and very young disabled children and their families. This is a four-year, £13 million programme to develop more co-ordinated, multi-agency support for children and their families. Pathfinder programmes were launched in nine areas in 2003.

Local authorities are also able to provide access to a home-based learning programme, such as Portage, or the services of a peripatetic support teacher, to help children with SEN learn how to learn.

For those children with particularly severe and complex needs, local authorities are able to provide places in special schools or resourced provision within mainstream settings from their schools budget.

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many places there were in special schools in *(a)* the state sector and *(b)* the non-state sector in (i) 1997 and (ii) 2003. [157154]

**Margaret Hodge:** The figures are available for the numbers of pupils in special schools but we do not collect data for the numbers of places in special schools.

In January 1997, there were 93,018 pupils in maintained special schools, 5,810 pupils with statements of SEN in independent schools and 4,992 pupils with statements of SEN in non-maintained special schools.

In January 2003, there were 88,930 pupils in maintained special schools, 6,990 pupils with statements of SEN in independent schools and 4,840 pupils with statements of SEN in non-maintained special schools.

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of pupils with special educational needs *(a)* with a statement and *(b)* without a statement are educated in (i) special schools, (ii) specialist classes or units within mainstream schools and (iii) other classes within mainstream schools. [157750]

**Margaret Hodge** *[holding answer 1 March 2004]:* Information about the provision being made for pupils with statements of special educational need is collected from local authorities in January each year. In January 2003, the proportions were as follows:

| *Special educational needs* | *Percentage* |
|---|---|
| Special schools (including maintained, non-maintained and independent) | 37.5 |
| Resourced provision, specialist classes or units within mainstream | 7.5 |
| Maintained mainstream schools | 53.8 |
| Pupil referral units | 0.7 |
| Other independent schools | 0.5 |

Data about the provision for pupils with SEN but without a statement is not collected from local authorities but information is available from the Pupil

Level Annual Schools Census. Pupils in specialist classes or units within mainstream are not identified separately. In January 2003, the proportions were as follows:

| *Special educational needs* | *Percentage* |
|---|---|
| Special schools (including maintained, non-maintained and independent) | 0.2 |
| Maintained mainstream schools (including resourced provision, specialist classes or units within mainstream) | 95.7 |
| Pupil referral units | 0.5 |
| Independent and non-maintained schools | 3.6 |

**Sandra Gidley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the extent to which statemented needs are being met. [157284]

**Margaret Hodge:** The Education Act 1996 places duties on local education authorities (LEAs) and all LEA-maintained schools to identify, assess and make suitable provision to meet children's special educational needs (SEN). They may make and maintain statements on such children where appropriate, and section 324(5)(a) of the Act imposes a statutory duty on LEAs to arrange that the special educational provision specified in statements they maintain is made for the child, unless the child's parent has made suitable arrangements. We have no reason to believe that LEAs do not meet the needs of statemented children in the great majority of cases. However, it is open to parents and others to complain to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if they consider that an LEA is failing in its statutory duties in relation to implementing and maintaining statements, with a view to him exercising his powers under sections 497 and 497A of the 1996 Act. We consider any such complaints carefully. In addition, the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) monitors the performance of LEAs in meeting their statutory duties, including those relating to children with special educational needs.

The Government's new SEN "Strategy Removing Barriers to Achievement", launched on 11 February, will build on the improvements to the statutory framework brought about by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act and the SEN Code of Practice, both 2001. We believe that all children with SEN will benefit from the proposals in the Strategy, on which we consulted widely prior to publication.

### Student Finance

**Chris Grayling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the Student Loan Company's latest estimate is of the likely future level of bad debt from income contingent student loans. [155454]

**Alan Johnson:** There is no real concept of bad debt under the income-contingent loan repayment scheme. This is because repayments are in line with earnings, not in accordance with a credit agreement, and income-contingent loans repayments are collected through the tax system, apart from a few exceptions. Loans are written off only for policy reasons—due to death, becoming disabled and unfit for work, or at the age of 65—which are not considered as bad debt.

### Sure Start

**John Mann:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to extend Sure Start's Business Success for Childcare programme to more areas of England in 2004–05, with particular reference to Bassetlaw. [158591]

**Margaret Hodge:** The Business Success for Childcare Programme currently delivers free business support training to childcare providers through a series of workshops supported by workbooks. The programme covers all areas of England.

To date 11,481 providers have been trained. On evaluation feedback received so far, over 90 per cent. of childminders and group providers have said that they feel able to improve their business as a result of the training they have received.

### Teachers

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps the Government are taking to retain teachers. [146662]

**Mr. Miliband:** We have the highest number of teachers in schools for over twenty years, which is a reflection of our success not only in recruitment but also retention. We are encouraging teachers to remain in the profession by improving the environment and working conditions in which they are employed, through our key worker housing scheme, through ongoing and improved investment in behaviour management, through our radical school workforce reforms— supported by our union and other partners on the Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group—and through the significant increases in teachers' salaries since 1997. These policies have met the key concerns of teachers and are all designed to make the profession more attractive both to potential new recruits and those already in our schools. We are also funding recruitment strategy managers who are currently working in over 100 LEAs across the country helping to provide a co-ordinated local approach to recruitment and retention.

## CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

### Drugs Training

**John Mann:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many magistrates have received specialist drugs training. [159472]

**Mr. Leslie:** Statutory responsibility for the training of magistrates currently rests with the 42 independent Magistrates' Courts' Committees (MCCs). There is no central data collected on the information requested.

However, following a survey that was undertaken by the Justices' Clerks' Society (JCS) towards the end of last year, it is known that all magistrates have had access to basic training on Drug Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTO). The survey also revealed a general desire from magistrates for more information to be made available to them and as a consequence a working group was established and is currently producing guidance materials under the auspices of the Criminal Justice Intervention Programme (CJIP). In addition a specialist

training pack is being developed by the JCS with the approval of the Judicial Studies Board (JSB), for magistrates who deal with DTTO review hearings.

### Emergency Protection Orders

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for the Isle of Wight of 2 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 852–53W, on emergency protection orders, how many ex-parte applications were made and what proportion was granted in *(a)* Nottinghamshire and *(b)* Kent. [159697]

**Mr. Leslie:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 2 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 852W.

### Parliamentary Elections

**Dr. Whitehead:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what appraisal his Department has made of the adequacy of arrangements for registering electors for parliamentary elections. [158958]

**Mr. Leslie:** The Representation of the People Regulations 2001 introduced a number of changes to electoral registration arrangements, including a scheme of "rolling registration" that enables names to be added to the electoral register at any time of the year, and enabling persons without a conventional address to register to vote. The Government considers that the recent changes to registration procedures have both made it easier to register to vote and resulted in a more accurate and up to date register. The Government will keep under review the arrangements for registering electors and is currently considering recommendations on the subject made by the independent Electoral Commission.

### Protection from Harassment Act

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what the total number of applications alleging a breach of a section 42 of the Family Law Act 1996 non-molestation injunction was, broken down by *(a)* whether or not the breach was proved and *(b)* in the event the breach was proved whether there was (i) an immediate prison sentence, (ii) a suspended prison sentence, (iii) a fine and (iv) another noncustodial disposal in (A) 2001, (B) 2002 and (C) 2003; [159397]

(2) how many civil non-harassment injunction orders were made under section 3(1) of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002 and *(c)* 2003, broken down by sex of the respondent; [159401]

(3) how many orders for the payment of damages there were under section 3(2) of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002 and *(c)* 2003, broken down by sex of the respondent; and what extent of overlap with orders for section 3 non-harassment injunctions there was; [159402]

(4) how many applications alleging a breach of a section 3(1) of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 non-harassment injunction there were in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002 and *(c)* 2003, broken down by (i) sex of the respondent/defendant, (ii) whether the (A) civil contempt of court procedure by section 3(3)-(5) and (B) criminal procedure by section 3(6)-(7) was used and (iii) whether the breach was proved. [159403]

**Mr. Leslie:** The information requested is not held centrally and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many applications to civil courts included a claim for injunctive or financial relief under section 3 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002 and *(c)* 2003, broken down by sex of the respondent. [159400]

**Mr. Leslie:** Information held centrally relates only to applications made for an injunction under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997. During 2001 there were 392 such applications, in 2002 there were 499 and in 2003 the figure was 576. Information relating to the remainder of the question is not available centrally and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### Temporary Staff

**Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many staff the Department employs on a temporary basis through employment agencies; what percentage this is of total staff employed; and how much the Department or its predecessors paid employment agencies to supply temporary staff in *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2002–03 and *(c)* 2003–04 to the most recent date for which figures are available. [158254]

**Mr. Leslie:** My Department has a national contract for the provision of agency workers. Information regarding usage in the current financial year is only available for the period 1 April 2003 to 31 December 2003. During that period the estimated average number of agency staff employed was 255, which equates to 1.96 per cent. of the total staff employed.

Information regarding the expenditure under this contract is provided in the following table.

Information relating to workers employed through other agencies is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

My Department uses agency workers to meet short-term requirements and in areas where it is difficult to recruit and retain staff.

*Use of department's national contract for provision of agency workers*

| *Financial year* | *Expenditure* |
|---|---|
| *2001–02* | |
| Lord Chancellor's Department and Associated Offices | Not applicable—did not begin using contract until following year |
| Court Service—including the Immigration Appellate Authority | £2,360,000 |
| *2002–03* | |
| Lord Chancellor's Department and Associated Offices | £276,000 |
| Court Services—including the Immigration Appellate Authority | £4,692,000 |

*Use of department's national contract for provision of agency workers*

| *Financial year* | *Expenditure* |
|---|---|
| *2003–04*[1] | |
| Department for Constitutional Affairs and Associated Offices | £849,500 |
| Court Service—including the Immigration Appellate Authority | £2,939,000 |

[1] Information available 1 April 2003 to 31 December 2003 only

## DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

### Gloucestershire Emergency Services

**Mr. Nigel Jones:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the future of Gloucestershire's Emergency Services Tri-service headquarters in Gloucester. [159042]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The Government's response to the consultation exercise on regional fire and rescue control rooms was announced on 4 March. The options are open on the location of the fire and rescue control room for the south west region. The regional control centres will be able to communicate effectively with police and ambulance controls as well as with each other.

### Arm's Length Management Organisations

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the arm's length management organisations approved to date, broken down by local authority; and which have a specific regeneration remit. [159289]

**Keith Hill:** The local authorities which have received approval under section 27 of the Housing Act 1985 to delegate their housing management responsibilities to an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) are listed below. None of the ALMOs have a specific regeneration remit. The primary objective of all ALMOs is to bring the stock up to the Decent Homes standard and provide a high quality housing management service. The ALMOs work with their local authorities to ensure that the work to achieve Decent Homes is planned and implemented in parallel with other investment, including investment with wider regeneration objectives.

| *Local authority* | *ALMO* |
|---|---|
| Ashfield District Council | Ashfield Homes |
| London Borough of Barnet | Barnet Homes |
| Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council | Berneslai Homes |
| Blyth Valley Borough Council | Blyth Valley Housing |
| Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council | Bolton at Home |
| London Borough of Brent | Brent Housing Partnership |
| Carrick District Council | Carrick Homes |
| Cheltenham Borough Council | Cheltenham Borough Homes |
| Colchester Borough Council | Colchester Borough Homes |
| Derby City Council | Derby Homes |
| Gateshead Council | Gateshead Housing Company |
| High Peak Borough Council | High Peak Community Housing |
| London Borough of Hillingdon | Hillingdon Homes |
| London Borough of Hounslow | Hounslow Homes |
| Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea | Kensington and Chelsea TMO |
| Kirklees Metropolitan Council | Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing |
| Leeds City Council | Leeds West Homes, Leeds South Homes, Leeds South East Homes, Leeds North West Homes, Leeds North East Homes and Leeds East Homes |
| Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council | First Choice Homes |
| Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council | Rochdale Boroughwide Housing |
| Salford City Council | New Prospect Housing |
| Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council | Tristar Homes |
| London Borough of Waltham Forest | Ascham Homes |
| City of Westminster | CityWest Homes |
| Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council | Wigan and Leigh Housing |
| Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council | Solihull Community Housing |
| South Lakeland District Council | South Lakes Housing |
| Warrington Borough Council | Golden Gates Housing |

### Correspondence

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when a reply will be sent to the letter of 8 January from the Head of Planning at the Isle of Wight Council to the Government Office for the South East. [159535]

**Keith Hill:** The Government Office for the South East wrote to the Isle of Wight Council on 4 March, apologising for the delay and explaining that it had tried on several occasions to discuss the matter with Council officials, but without success. The Government Office remains ready to do all it can to help resolve any outstanding difficulties.

### Council Tax

**Mr. Lidington:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list for each local authority in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes the level of uncollected council tax for each year since 1996–97 *(a)* in cash terms and *(b)* as a percentage of total council tax revenue due. [158870]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The available information requested is tabled below.

*Uncollected council taxes*

*£000*

| *Amounts uncollected in-year* | *1996–97* | *1997–98* | *1998–99* | *1999–00* | *2000–01* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Milton Keynes | 3,189 | 3,196 | 1,998 | 2,144 | 3,097 | 3,860 | 3,223 |
| Districts in Buckinghamshire | | | | | | | |
| Aylesbury Vale | 1,231 | 1,168 | 1,773 | 1,744 | 1,466 | 1,004 | 1,007 |
| Chiltern | 331 | 337 | 470 | 496 | 442 | 398 | 403 |
| South Bucks | 233 | 125 | 386 | 450 | 886 | 484 | 293 |
| Wycombe | 1,361 | 1,212 | 1,308 | 1,372 | 1,116 | 1,712 | 1,769 |
| *Percentage uncollected in-year* | | | | | | | |
| Milton Keynes | 8.9 | 8.9 | 5.0 | 4.7 | 6.3 | 7.0 | 5.4 |
| Districts in Buckinghamshire | | | | | | | |
| Aylesbury Vale | 3.8 | 3.3 | 4.5 | 4.0 | 3.1 | 2.0 | 1.8 |
| Chiltern | 1.4 | 1.3 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 1.3 | 1.1 | 1.0 |
| South Bucks | 1.5 | 0.7 | 2.0 | 2.1 | 3.8 | 2.0 | 1.1 |
| Wycombe | 3.9 | 3.2 | 3.1 | 3.0 | 2.3 | 3.3 | 3.1 |

*Source:*
QRC4 returns

The figures relate only to amounts of council tax uncollected during the financial year to which they relate. This is because the figures reported to central government on amounts collected for previous years are not broken down by financial year. Council taxes nevertheless continue to be collected after the end of the financial year, and so the amounts and percentages that are ultimately uncollected for any financial year will be lower than those shown in the table.

### Disabled Employees

**Mr. Goodman:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will set out the number of employees in his Department who have a disability, broken down by disability type. [148990]

**Yvette Cooper:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (excluding Government Offices and its agencies) has 2,107.5 full time equivalent (FTE) staff, of which 52 staff have declared that they have a disability. The range of disabilities declared by these staff are:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Hearing | 8 |
| Hearing Impairment Plus | [1] |
| Learning | [1] |
| Learning Difficulties Plus | [1] |
| Mental Illness | [1] |
| Mental Illness Plus | [1] |
| Mobility | [1] |
| Mobility Plus | [1] |
| Other | [1] |
| Physical Co-ordination Difficulties Alone | [1] |
| Physical Co-ordination Difficulties Plus | [1] |
| Reduced Physical Capacity | 6 |
| Reduced Physical Capacity Plus | 9 |
| Speech | [1] |
| Vision | 11 |
| Visual Impairment Plus | [1] |

[1] For these disabilities the actual number is not published in order to protect the privacy of the individual in line with exemption 12 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

### Non-domestic Rates

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much money was collected in 2003–04 from businesses in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley in non-domestic rates; and how much was passed on to (i) Lancashire county council and (ii) Chorley council. [157733]

**Mr. Raynsford:** A total of £236,019,772 was collected in non-domestic rates from businesses in Lancashire in 2003–04 of which £16,592,430 was collected in Chorley.

The revenue collected from the national non-domestic rates is re-distributed to all local authorities on the basis of domestic population, rather than on the amount raised in the local authority area. In the case of Lancashire, £304,417,378 was passed on to Lancashire county council and Chorley council received £3,508,4937.

### Homelessness

**Ms Oona King:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of Tower Hamlets' decision to use its dedicated homelessness strategy funding to pay Cash Incentive Scheme grants to registered social landlords' tenants to relinquish their tenancy and buy a property on the open market. [158550]

**Yvette Cooper:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is aware that Tower Hamlets has been paying grants to social housing tenants to enable them to purchase a property in the private sector. Such grants can be an effective way of releasing social housing to provide accommodation for homeless households and so relieve pressures on temporary accommodation and help to meet the Government's target to end the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families with children. In 2003–04 Tower Hamlets plans to use £300,000 for such grants, out of a total allocation from the Homelessness Directorate of £876,000. Other plans for use of the homelessness grant included: increasing the supply of temporary accommodation in the private sector; employment of additional staff to increase the homelessness prevention service; and establishing a homelessness forum.

### Housing

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many intermediate housing properties were constructed in each London borough in each of the last six years. [159180]

**Keith Hill:** The term intermediate housing is relatively new and there is no generally agreed definition. The Housing Investment Programme Housing Strategy Statistical returns by London local authorities show the following numbers of completions for new build housing for shared ownership.

| | 1998–99 | 1999–2000 | Outturn 2000–01 | 2001–02 | 2002–03 | Projected 2003–04 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Barking and Dagenham | 54 | 38 | 90 | 87 | 78 | 106 | 453 |
| Barnet | 0 | 0 | 12 | 48 | 71 | 137 | 268 |
| Bexley | 7 | 0 | 11 | 5 | 43 | 5 | 71 |
| Brent | 65 | 97 | 42 | 0 | 58 | 100 | 362 |
| Bromley | 0 | 0 | 13 | 9 | 7 | 30 | 59 |
| Camden | 48 | 87 | 55 | 42 | 6 | 43 | 281 |
| City of London | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Croydon | 138 | 111 | 64 | 185 | 74 | 65 | 637 |
| Ealing | 66 | 13 | 2 | 41 | 74 | 116 | 312 |
| Enfield | 55 | 0 | 32 | 37 | 81 | 23 | 228 |
| Greenwich | 56 | 19 | 14 | 75 | 49 | 205 | 418 |
| Hackney | 0 | 0 | 147 | 193 | 254 | 356 | 950 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 63 | 26 | 62 | 25 | 26 | 111 | 313 |
| Haringey | 0 | 25 | 64 | 58 | 118 | 214 | 479 |
| Harrow | 3 | 16 | 0 | 7 | 24 | 0 | 50 |
| Havering | 0 | 0 | 19 | 10 | 0 | 20 | 49 |
| Hillingdon | 30 | 13 | 41 | 18 | 71 | 120 | 293 |
| Hounslow | 40 | 11 | 12 | 57 | 32 | 34 | 186 |
| Islington | 0 | 38 | 65 | 146 | 73 | 49 | 371 |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 74 | 61 | 25 | 0 | 17 | 48 | 225 |
| Kingston | 0 | 3 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| Lambeth | 0 | 44 | 10 | 20 | 21 | 65 | 160 |
| Lewisham | 114 | 137 | 150 | 53 | 100 | 32 | 586 |
| Merton | 0 | 4 | 1 | 23 | 9 | 29 | 66 |
| Newham | 51 | 97 | 73 | 113 | 160 | 565 | 1,059 |
| Redbridge | 0 | 0 | 41 | 6 | 46 | 88 | 181 |
| Richmond | 36 | 10 | 24 | 12 | 25 | 32 | 139 |
| Southwark | 5 | 28 | 19 | 52 | 67 | 117 | 288 |
| Sutton | 280 | 1084 | 313 | 15 | 58 | 44 | 1,794 |
| Tower Hamlets | 114 | 196 | 161 | 31 | 237 | 140 | 879 |
| Waltham Forest | 0 | 0 | 61 | 40 | 3 | 11 | 115 |
| Wandsworth | 75 | 76 | 36 | 20 | 60 | 256 | 523 |
| Westminster | 36 | 33 | 116 | 77 | 70 | 29 | 361 |
| Total | 1,410 | 2,267 | 1,792 | 1,505 | 2,012 | 3,190 | 12,176 |

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many local authority dwellings in Stroud District fail the Decent Home standard; and what estimate he has made of how much it will cost to bring them up to that standard. [159384]

**Keith Hill:** The latest figures that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has for Stroud date from 1 April 2003, when the local authority reported a total stock of 5,429 of which 1,357 (25 per cent.) were non-decent.

Stroud currently estimate the cost of making their stock decent at £3,070,000 in their 2003 HIP Business Plan statistical appendices. However, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister understands that the council is due to consider a report on financial and other implications next week, which means these figures may be subject to change.

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions he has had with Stroud District Council following the unsuccessful ballot on large-scale voluntary transfer. [159385]

**Keith Hill:** A meeting between officials of the Government Office for the South West, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Community Housing Task Force and Stroud District Council is due to take place on 8 March.

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much he estimates Stroud District Council spent on the large scale voluntary transfer ballot. [159386]

**Keith Hill:** Stroud District council spent £16,305 on the ballot.

### Local Government Finance

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much central Government funding was given to each local authority in each of the last 15 years, broken down by region. [156242]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The available information has been made available in the Library of the House.

### Planning

**Mr. Sanders:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of the budget of the Sustainable Communities Policy will be allocated to the implementation of the stand-alone self-sustaining three-dimensional spatial concept for a city along the Thames from the Docklands to the Estuary. [159252]

**Keith Hill:** In "Sustainable Communities, Building for the Future" we announced that funding of £446 million over 3 years would be made available to the Thames Gateway as part of a total budget of almost £22 billion (see annex A). This will be used to tackle the barriers to development which have deterred investment in the Gateway. It will help regenerate existing communities and open up new development opportunities for housing

and employment on major brownfield sites such as Ebbsfleet and Eastern Quarry in Kent and Barking Reach, which is the largest brownfield site in London.

### Regional Government

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he estimates that the running costs of the Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Assembly will be more than the running costs of the two-tier system. [159194]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister said in the White Paper, "Your Region, Your Choice" that an elected assembly would have running costs of around £25 million a year. The potential savings from restructuring of local government in the area of North Yorkshire county council will not be known until the Boundary Committee for England reports in May on its recommended options for local government restructuring in North Yorkshire, and voters have had their say in a local government referendum.

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will estimate the total cost of *(a)* holding the referendum for a Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Assembly, *(b)* setting up the Assembly and *(c)* holding the elections for the Assembly. [159195]

**Mr. Raynsford:** *(a)* The Government have recently consulted on The Regional Assembly and Local Government Referendums (Counting Officers' Charges) (England) Order 2004, that will establish the costs of conducting the referendums. Based on the figures in the draft order the cost of holding a referendum will be £1.47 per elector, if everyone eligible votes.

*(b)* Assemblies will cost around £30 million to set up.

*(c)* The set up costs include around £10 million for the first elections.

### Rodent Infestation

**Ms Walley:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to publish data on rodent infestations in domestic premises based on the rolling annual English House Condition Survey. [158098]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** I have been asked to reply.

The English house Condition Survey was re-organised as a continuous survey from financial year 2002–03. First results from the survey will be available for analysis from end 2004 with a view to reporting in mid 2005 and based on data from the period 2002–03 to 2003–04. In future years, annual results will be available based on rolling combinations of two year data sets (ie next results will be available for analysis by end 2005 based on the period 2003–04 and 2004–05). This approach will provide a robust base for analysis and monitoring of change.

ODPM expect to publish a core set of national results, not covering rodent information but focussed on decent homes, using the combined two-year data set (2002–03 to 2003–04) by early next year. These results will report the condition of the housing stock as a mid-point average over the two year period (ie as at 1 April 2003) as well as change over time (ie since 2001). For subsequent years, core results will be released annually based on overlapping data sets.

**Ms Walley:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects to publish the results of the 2001 English Home Conditions Survey relating to rodent infestations in domestic properties; and if he will make a statement. [158100]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** I have been asked to reply.

Central Science Laboratory's analyses of the 2001 English House Condition Survey data are nearing completion and Defra are expected to have the report by the end of March.

The report will subsequently be placed in the public domain following further consideration by the Department.

### Small Business Funding

**Mrs. Roche:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to ensure that *(a)* sufficient funding is available for small business start-ups in inner city areas and *(b)* sufficient information about that funding is relayed to local communities. [158083]

**Yvette Cooper:** To address the barriers to enterprise affecting the most disadvantaged communities in the country the Government has created 2000 Enterprise Areas, where businesses may benefit from one of several new or existing forms of Government assistance. These include help from the Phoenix Fund, which has been allocated £140 million to 2006 to provide finance for organisations providing funding for small businesses in disadvantaged communities, and encourages innovative ideas to promote and support enterprise in disadvantaged areas and in groups currently under-represented in terms of business ownership. Other measures designed to encourage enterprise include stamp duty exemptions, targeted support from the Inland Revenue and HM Customs, and neighbourhood renewal projects. Help is also available to community enterprises through the Adventure Capital Fund. Although it is not possible to put a monetary value on all these measures at this stage, they all provide real financial inducements for new businesses.

Regional Development Agencies, Local authorities, Business Link Operators and Local Strategic Partnerships play a significant role in boosting the awareness and uptake of relevant measures by local businesses and entrepreneurs.

### Waste

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of local authority expenditure was spent on *(a)* waste disposal and *(b)* waste recycling in each of the last five years. [158962]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The proportion of local authority net current expenditure spent on waste disposal in the last five years is in the following table. Waste recycling costs are not reported separately.

| | Percentage |
|---|---|
| 1999–00 | 1.45 |
| 2000–01 | 1.44 |
| 2001–02 | 1.47 |
| 2002–03 | 1.45 |
| 2003–04[1] | 1.51 |

[1] Budgeted figures
Source:
1999–2000 to 2002–03 R06 and RS forms and 2003–04 Budget Estimate Returns

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how local authority funding for *(a)* waste disposal and *(b)* recycling is calculated. [158963]

**Mr. Raynsford:** Central Government funding for waste disposal and recycling is provided mainly through formula grant (Revenue support grant plus redistributed business rates) to local authorities.

Recycling is the responsibility of both the waste disposal and waste collection authorities. It is therefore part of the group of services included in both the county-level and the district-level Environmental, Protective and Cultural Services (EPCS) Formula Spending Share (FSS). The formula used for both the county-level and District-Level EPCS FSS can be found in Chapter 4 of the Local Government Finance Report (England).

Formula Spending Shares are neither grant nor are they the Government's assessment of how much an authority should spend on a particular service. They are simply the formulae used in the calculation of formula grant. Formula grant is unhypothecated i.e. it may be spent by the authority for any purpose. It is up to each authority to decide how much should be spent on each service given its local priorities.

## PRIME MINISTER

### Butler Inquiry

**Mr. Mackay:** To ask the Prime Minister what the estimated costs of the Butler Inquiry are. [159990]

**The Prime Minister:** The Butler Review is currently under way. I have asked it to report before the summer recess. The costs of the review will be published once it has concluded.

### Dalai Lama

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Prime Minister what account he took of Anglo-Chinese relations before deciding not to meetthe Dalai Lama on his planned visit to the UK. [159797]

**The Prime Minister:** None. I am unfortunately unable to meet the Dalai Lama due to existing diary commitments. However, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary will be meeting the Dalai Lama during his visit.

### Departmental Communications

**Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Prime Minister (1) how many staff are employed in his Office to work in the communications fied, broken down by *(a)* Government Information and Communication Service staff and *(b)* other staff, broken down by (i) press officers, (ii) special advisers and (iii) others; [158155]

(2) what the total expenditure on communications for the Office has been in 2003–04, broken down by expenditure on *(a)* Government Information and Communication Service staff and *(b)* other staff, broken down by (i) press officers, (ii) special advisers and (iii) others. [158190]

**The Prime Minister:** At 1 March, there were 11 staff working as Press Officers of which 10 are members of the Government Information and Communication Service. There are two special advisers who are Press Officers, one special adviser who works in the Strategic Communications Unit and nine civil servants who either work in the Strategic Communications Unit or provide administrative support.

Final cost figures for 2003–04 are not yet available.

### Gibraltar

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Prime Minister whether a senior Cabinet Minister will visit Gibraltar during the tercentenary celebrations. [159320]

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Member to the answers the Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. MacShane) gave to the hon. Member for Poole (Mr. Syms) on 2 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 749.

Ministerial visits to Gibraltar in 2004 are currently under consideration and have not been finalised.

### Iraq

**Adam Price:** To ask the Prime Minister what representations he has received in relation to human rights violations alleged to have been committed by United Kingdom forces in Iraq. [158864]

**The Prime Minister:** The information is not held in the form requested. However, since 1 January 2003 I have received over 160,000 letters about Iraq including on human rights issues.

### Irish Historical Documents

**Mr. Paul Marsden:** To ask the Prime Minister which documents are held by his office written by *(a)* P. H. Pearse, *(b)* Thomas J Clarke, *(c)* Thomas Macdonagh, *(d)* Edward Daly, *(e)* William Pearse, *(f)* Michael O'Hanrahan, *(g)* Joseph Mary Plunkett, *(h)* John MacBride, *(i)* Sean Heuston, *(j)* Michael Mallin, *(k)* Eamonn Ceannt, *(l)* Con Colbert, *(m)* Thomas Kent, *(n)* Sean MacDiarmada, *(o)* James Connolly and *(p)* Sir Roger Casement. [156301]

**The Prime Minister:** As far as I am aware, none.

### Special Advisers

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Prime Minister what the total cost of special advisers was in 1996–97. [160052]

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer my right hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office gave to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 31 January 2003, *Official Report*, column 1056W.

**Minister for Men**

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Prime Minister what plans he has to introduce a post of Minister for Men. [159992]

**The Prime Minister:** I have no plans to do so.

# Written Answers to Questions

*Tuesday 9 March 2004*

## EDUCATION AND SKILLS

### "Building Schools for the Future"

**Mr. Doug Henderson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what brief the architects commissioned to produce designs for 21st century schools, as part of the Building Schools for the Future programme, were given with regard to sports and physical activity. [159864]

**Mr. Miliband:** The exemplar designs allowed for a variety of sites and school sizes for 4 to 11 primary schools, 11 to 18 secondary schools and 4 to 18 all-through school.

The design briefs for the exemplar designs included:

minimum indoor sports provision of a one-court sports hall and a small activity studio for primary pupils;

minimum indoor sports provision of a four-court sports hall, a main hall and an activity studio for secondary pupils;

minimum outdoor facilities (even in the most constrained sites) of a hard surfaced multi-use games area, as well as pitches for summer and winter games and an all weather pitch where the site demanded it.

Sports halls and multi-use games area were required to conform to the minimum dimensions and specifications required by Sports England for community use. All this provision and its ancillary accommodation was to be located appropriately to be available to the community outside the school day.

**Mr. Doug Henderson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what consultations have been made with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport regarding the Building Schools for the Future programme to ensure that schools have the capacity to increase sporting activity. [159865]

**Mr. Miliband:** There have been a number of positive discussions both at official and ministerial level, about how we can ensure synergy of our capital resources in order to maximise them and to deliver the national strategy to improve schools' PE and Sports facilities. Our aim is that following BSF investment all secondary schools will have sports facilities suitable for wider community use.

**Mr. Doug Henderson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what share of the £5.1 billion capital investment for Building Schools for the Future is allocated for sports and physical activity resources. [159868]

**Mr. Miliband:** This Government gives great priority to the physical and recreational needs of our children as well as their academic needs.

Central Government capital funding for school buildings in 2005–06 is over £5.1 billion, including over £2 billion allocated to the first wave of Building Schools for the Future (BSF). BSF aims to transform secondary schools so that they are fit for the teaching and learning needs of the 21st century, including for sports and physical activity. Decisions on investment will be made locally by the authorities which have been allocated funding as they develop their projects, in line with their priorities which will reflect local need and government policies. In time, all secondary schools in England will benefit from BSF.

The balance of capital funding, of about £3 billion in 2005–06, is mainly allocated to schools and authorities by formula, so that they can make investment decisions locally, in line with the priorities of their asset management plan.

**James Purnell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, which schools which have benefited from the Building Schools for the Future programme open up their sports facilities to the wider community out-of-hours. [159871]

**Mr. Miliband:** The Building Schools for the Future programme aims to transform secondary provision over a 10–15 year period starting in 2005–06, subject to future spending decisions. Therefore no schools have yet benefited from the programme. Local authorities to be included in the first wave of projects were announced on 12 February. Over the coming months they will be developing their plans in association with their schools and other local partners. Our aim is that following BSF investment all secondary schools will have sports facilities suitable for wider community use.

### Departmental Communications

**Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total expenditure on communications for the Department has been in 2003–04, broken down by expenditure on *(a)* Government Information and Communication Service staff and *(b)* other staff, broken down by (i) press officers, (ii) special advisers and (iii) others. [158157]

**Mr. Charles Clarke:** The DFES estimates that Strategy and Communications Directorate will, in 2003–04, expend around £4.9 million of its administrative budget on communications staff. £2 million of that will be on Government Information and Communication Service (GICs) staff. Press officers will make up approximately £0.7 million of the GICS cost. There are no press officer costs outside of this.

Additionally, policy directorates plan to spend £3.5 million on their communications staff in 2003–04. It would be of disproportionate cost to identify any further GICs costs within this.

The Special Advisers' Code of Conduct sets out the sort of work a special adviser may undertake on behalf of their Minister. This includes communications activity. Details of the costs of special advisers are given on an annual basis. Information for the financial year 2003–04 will be published in due course.

**Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many staff are employed in the Department to work in the communications field, broken down by *(a)* Government Information and Communication Service staff and *(b)* other staff, broken down by (i) press officers, (ii) special advisers and (iii) others. [158160]

**Mr. Charles Clarke:** The DFES Strategy and Communications Directorate (SCD) currently employ 159 staff on communication activities, 54 are members of the Government Information and Communication service (GICs), of whom 23 are press officers. There are no non-GICs press officers. In addition, policy directorates employ a further 121 'other' staff on communications activities.

There are two special advisers' to the Secretary of State. The Special Advisers' Code of Conduct sets out the sort of work a special adviser may undertake on behalf of their Minister. This includes communications activity. Details of the costs of special advisers are given on an annual basis. Information for the financial year 2003–04 will be published in due course.

### Departmental Relocation

**Ms Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many staff in his Department work in *(a)* the West Midlands and *(b)* North Staffordshire. [146917]

**Mr. Charles Clarke:** There are 56 members of staff in my Department who work in the West Midlands. There are no members of my staff employed in North Staffordshire.

### Recruitment Advertising

**Mr. Chaytor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate he has made of how much *(a)* schools, *(b)* colleges and *(c)* universities spent on recruitment advertising in each year since 1997. [159846]

**Mr. Miliband:** My right hon. Friend has made no such estimates.

### School Exclusions (Cannabis)

**Mr. Brady:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent estimate he has made of whether the number of *(a)* permanent and *(b)* fixed term pupil exclusions related to possession or use of cannabis has been affected by the reclassification of cannabis. [159995]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** My Department started to collect data on the reasons for exclusions, including drug-related incidents, from summer term 2003. The first term's data are not yet available.

### School Sports Facilities

**Mr. Doug Henderson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what his Department sets as *(a)* the ideal and *(b)* the minimum sports facilities for a secondary school. [159866]

**Mr. Miliband:** Advice on the requirements for accommodation in secondary schools, including sports provision, will be available on the web from 1 April 2004 in Building Bulletin 98: Briefing Framework for Secondary School Projects. This will supersede the current Area Guidelines for Schools and enhance the current area recommendations.

The guidance sets out minimum recommended provision and also allows sufficient overall area to allow for further facilities, both indoor and outdoor, appropriate to the priorities of individual schools. Hence:

*(a)* the ideal provision will depend on the priorities of the school and its extended role in providing facilities for the wider community. For instance, while all schools would be able to offer community use outside school hours, sports colleges and other schools could provide facilities more appropriate to the regional demands of specific sports.

*(b)* the minimum provision recommended for new secondary schools, in line with current guidance, is a minimum indoor sports provision of a four-court sports hall, to Sport England minimum specifications and other large spaces (including the main hall and activity studios) that would be used for Physical Education and should be appropriate and sufficient to ensure that examinations and assemblies need not take place in the sports hall. Minimum recommended outdoor facilities include pitches for summer and winter games and a hard surfaced multi-use games area, again to Sport England minimum specifications.

### School Year

**Mr. Tyrie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether he was consulted prior to the Government's announcement of support for proposals to change the school year; what assessment he has made of the overall impact on the economy of these proposals; and what assessment he has made of the impact on specific sectors of the economy, with particular reference to *(a)* tourism and *(b)* transport. [159874]

**Mr. Miliband:** Proposals for a standard six-term school year have been developed by an independent commission on the school year which was established by the Local Government Association. The Commission included representation from the tourism industry. My right hon. Friend sees merit in the argument in favour of standardising the length of school terms. Decisions on school term dates and holidays however continue to be the responsibility of individual local education authorities or school governing bodies, depending on the category of school.

### Specialist Schools

**Mr. Chaytor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* specialist schools and *(b)* non-specialist schools are designated under section 100 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998; and how many and what percentage of pupils they have selected in each of the last six years. [155621]

**Mr. Miliband:** Schools' admission arrangements are determined locally without central consultation or approval. The DfES therefore cannot provide figures on

the number of schools which fall into this category (i.e. whose selective admission arrangements pre-dated the 1998 Act).

The evidence suggests that just under 6 per cent. of the 685 schools that had specialist status in September 2001 used aptitude as part of their admission arrangements. The following table shows the latest collated information relating to partial selection by specialist schools. Most of these schools were selecting by aptitude prior to the 1998 Act, with some selecting more than 10 per cent. of their pupils. The next time specialist schools will be asked to provide aptitude selection data will be this autumn.

The admissions framework for specialist schools is the same as for all other maintained schools. Applicants must be considered against the school's published admission arrangements, including, where applicable, selection.

*Specialist schools selecting by aptitude as at September 2001*

| *Specialism* | *School* | *LEA* | *Start* | *Percentage*[1] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Technology | Archbishop Blanch School | Liverpool | 1996 | 5.6 |
| Technology | Archbishop Temple School | Lancashire | 1995 | 10.0 |
| Language | Bohunt School | Hampshire | 1996 | 10.0 |
| Arts | Brentwood Ursuline Convent School | Essex | 1999 | 10.0 |
| Technology | Budmouth Technology College | Dorset | 1995 | 10.0 |
| Technology | Central School (The) | Lincolnshire | 2001 | 10.0 |
| Technology | Chaucer Technology School | Kent | 1996 | 67.0 |
| Arts | Chestnut Grove School | Wandsworth | 1997 | 16.0 |
| Technology | Cornwallis School | Kent | 1994 | 10.0 |
| Technology | Deacon's School | Peterborough, city | 1994 | 15.0 |
| Technology | Denbigh School | Milton Keynes | 1997 | 10.0 |
| Arts | Eastwood School (The) | Southend on Sea | 2001 | 10.0 |
| Technology | George Spencer GM School | Nottinghamshire | 1994 | 10.0 |
| Technology | Glyn Technology School | Surrey | 1994 | 15.0 |
| Technology | Heathside School | Surrey | 1995 | 4.0 |
| Language | Hendon School | Barnet, LB of | 1995 | 10.0 |
| Language | Hockerill Anglo European School | Hertfordshire | 1998 | 10.0 |
| Arts | Intake High School | Leeds | 1998 | 10.0 |
| Arts | Latimer Community Arts College | Northamptonshire | 1997 | 10.0 |
| Technology | Lodge Park School | Northamptonshire | 1994 | 10.0 |
| Technology | Lynn Grove VA High School | Norfolk | 1994 | 15.0 |
| Technology | Mill Hill County High School | Barnet, LB of | 1994 | 10.0 |
| Technology | Monks' Dyke Technology College | Lincolnshire | 1995 | 10.0 |
| Technology | Moseley Park School | Wolverhampton | 1995 | 10.0 |
| Technology | Ninestiles School | Birmingham | 1997 | 10.0 |
| Arts | North Kesteven School | Lincolnshire | 2000 | 10.0 |
| Sports | Oakbank School | Bradford | 1997 | 10.0 |
| Sports | Oldfield School | Bath and NE Somerset | 1997 | 10.0 |
| Technology | Philip Morant School | Essex | 1994 | 10.0 |
| Technology | Princes Risborough School | Buckinghamshire | 2001 | 3.2 |
| Language | Robert Pattinson School | Lincolnshire | 2001 | 2.0 |
| Technology | Sandwich Technology School | Kent | 1996 | 10.0 |
| Technology | Small Heath School | Birmingham | 1994 | 10.0 |
| Technology | St. Margaret's C of E High School | Liverpool | 1997 | 15.0 |
| Technology | St. Martin's School | Essex | 1995 | 10.0 |
| Arts | St. Marylebone School (The) | Westminster | 1998 | 10.0 |
| Sports | Southfields Community College | Wandsworth, LB of | 2000 | 10.0 |
| Arts | Stantonbury Campus North | Milton Keynes | 1998 | 5.0 |
| Sports | Whitefield School | Barnet, LB of | 1999 | 10.0 |
| Sports | Wye Valley School (The) | Buckinghamshire | 1998 | 10.0 |

[1] Of the 685 specialist schools operational as at September 2001, the above 40 (that is, just under 6 per cent.) selected a percentage of their pupils on aptitude/ability in the chosen specialist subject.

*Notes:*

The percentages refer to aptitude selection relating to the schools' specialist school designations, some schools may also select for aptitude in other specialisms.

This information was taken from progress reports submitted by 685 specialist schools operational as at September 2001.

### Working Group on 14 to 19 Reform

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the *(a)* budget and *(b)* estimated cost to date is of the Working Group on 14 to 19 reform. [159638]

**Mr. Miliband:** The information requested is as follows:

*(a)* Budget: £724,000 in 2003–04, including £224,000 for running costs;

*(b)* Estimated cost to date: £518,000 as at 31 January, including £198,000 on running costs.

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills who has *(a)* been approached by and *(b)* responded to consultation by the Working Group on 14 to 19 Reform. [159639]

**Mr. Miliband:** Following the publication of its Progress Report in July 2003, the Working Group on 14–19 Reform consulted a wide variety of organisations and individuals, including schools, colleges, higher education

institutions, employers and their representative bodies. I understand that, following his appearance at a meeting of the Select Committee on Education and Skills on 3 March, Mike Tomlinson, Chair of the Working Group, will be sending the hon. Member and other Members of the Select Committee details of the 350 organisations and individuals who commented on the Progress Report. I will ensure that this information is also placed in the Library of the House of Commons.

The Working Group is currently inviting comments on the recommendations in its Interim Report, which was published on 17 February. It will therefore be in dialogue with key stakeholders to ensure that the concerns of employers; higher education; young people and their parents are carefully considered. It is also holding a series of regional events to make sure those in the front line of education and training delivery have opportunities to comment. The aim is to ensure direct engagement of all these parties in the development of the recommendations of the final report of the Working Group, due in the autumn.

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate has been made of the cost of implementing the proposals of the Working Group on 14 to 19 Reform. [159640]

**Mr. Miliband:** The Government welcomes the recent publication of the Interim Report of the Working Group on 14–19 Reform. The Working Group will be submitting its final report in the autumn. That final report will include recommendations for the timetable and the way in which proposals should be implemented; the costs and other resource and practical implications of reform; and the further policy and implementation work needed. The Government will decide on the way forward for the 14–19 phase of learning in the light of the recommendations in the final report, including the cost implications.

## CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### Foster Inquiry

**Mr. Don Foster:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the planned date is for the completion of the Foster inquiry into the funding of British athletics; when its report will be published; how soon after the publication of the report the remainder of the legacy money will be allocated to athletics in the UK; and if she will make a statement. [156891]

**Mr. Caborn:** The Foster inquiry is due to be completed around the middle of April, with the report to be published shortly afterwards. Legacy funds will be released as soon as is practicable based upon the report's recommendations.

### Reading and Libraries

**Mr. Don Foster:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what initiatives the Government have introduced to promote *(a)* reading and *(b)* library usage (i) in England and (ii) at a local level; at what cost; what promotional techniques and media were used; and if she will make a statement. [158966]

**Estelle Morris:** In February 2003, DCMS published Framework for the Future, the first-ever national public libraries strategy. "Framework" reflects a 10 year vision to improve public libraries, affirming that reading and learning are at the heart of libraries' modern mission. "Framework" identified many good practice examples in libraries and proposed a strategy to build on this excellence to improve services delivered by all libraries in England. DCMS and Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) are taking the strategy forward through a three-year action plan, which is on the MLA website: www.mla.gov.uk.

Considerable work has been done in this area. Examples of some of the specific schemes to promote reading include: Bookstart, which DCMS has funded with £500,000, over the last two financial years, which provides reading books and a libraries card for babies; a Quality Index fiction tool, that is being developed in conjunction with the Audit Commission and Arts Council England to help authorities identify the quality of their stock and a joint DCMS/Wolfson Foundation Fund to which DCMS has contributed £4 million, over two years, for reader development projects. Arts Council England also support a number of reader development programmes through public libraries.

Very nearly all of England's over 3,000 libraries have been connected to the internet through the £100 million lottery funded People's Network programme. The early indications are that the People's Network has increased the number and types of people that use our public libraries.

### School Sports Grounds

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many school sports grounds have been sold in each London borough since 1997. [159169]

**Mr. Miliband:** I have been asked to reply.

There are no figures available until October 1998 when we introduced new legislation to stop the indiscriminate sell off of school playing fields. Before October 1998, there was nothing to prevent a local authority selling a school playing field if it wanted to. Local authorities and schools now must obtain the written consent of the Secretary of State before disposing, or changing the use, of school playing fields. Applications to sell school playing fields are approved only where it is clear that any proceeds will be used to improve school sports provision or education facilities.

The following table shows the number of approved applications from London boroughs to sell areas of school playing field capable of forming at least a small sports pitch.

| *London boroughs* | *1998* | *1999* | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* | *2003* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Barking and Dagenham | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Barnet | — | — | 1 | — | — | — |
| Bexley | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Brent | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Bromley | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Camden | — | — | 1 | — | 1 | — |
| City of London | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Croydon | — | 1 | — | — | — | — |
| Ealing | — | — | 1 | — | — | — |
| Enfield | — | 1 | — | — | — | — |

| London boroughs | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Greenwich | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Hackney | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | — | 1 | — | — | 1 | — |
| Haringey | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Harrow | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Havering | — | — | 1 | — | — | — |
| Hillingdon | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Hounslow | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Islington | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Kensington and Chelsea | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Kingston upon Thames | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Lambeth | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Lewisham | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Merton | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Newham | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Redbridge | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Richmond upon Thames | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Southwark | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Sutton | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Tower Hamlets | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Waltham Forest | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Wandsworth | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Westminster | — | — | — | — | — | — |

*Notes:*
1. A 'school sports pitch' is an area of playing field that has the shape and topography to form at least a sports pitch of 2,000m$^2$.
2. The table includes playing fields that have been used as school sports pitches within the 10 years before the application was made.
3. There were no figures collected before October 1998.
4. The table reflects applications made by each authority. The playing field that was the subject of the application need not be in the same borough as that making the application.

### Television Licences

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many television licences have been bought online in each year since the service became available. [158043]

**Estelle Morris:** Facilities for paying the television licence fee online have been available since December 1999. The BBC has provided the following information on the number of television licences paid for online in each calendar year since then:

| | *Number of licences paid for online* |
|---|---|
| 1999 (December only) | 59 |
| 2000 | 4,628 |
| 2001 | 59,137 |
| 2002 | 127,201 |
| 2003 | 178,642 |

### Workplace Exercise

**Mr. Reed:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what action her Department is taking to encourage employers to give their workers the opportunity to take exercise *(a)* at or close to the workplace and *(b)* in or around the work-day; [159948]

(2) what her Department's policy is on encouraging employers to allow employees longer lunch breaks to spend time engaged in active recreational activities. [159953]

**Mr. Caborn:** The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has an active Sports and Social Club that encourages staff to take part in a range of sporting, fitness and leisure activities: *(a)* cricket and softball teams practice and compete at various locations at or close to the workplace and staff can exercise at the on-site fitness facility; *(b)* a flexible working policy operates that allows staff the flexibility to take exercise at times to suit them, either during an extended lunch-break or at the start or end of the working day.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### Common Agricultural Policy

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the benefit to small farms in Lancashire of the revised Common Agricultural Policy. [153888]

**Alun Michael:** The link between the subsidy paid to farmers and the level of production has been broken. This is known as "decoupling". This means that activities of farmers in the UK will no longer be dictated by subsidy regimes and frees them to farm for what the market wants.

By removing incentives for intensification and over-production, and by linking compliance to a range of environmental standards, decoupling will help to reduce damaging environmental impacts.

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, outlined in her statement to the House, on 12 February, that in England we have now set out a fair basis for calculating the single payment that will be sustainable in the longer term.

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much money from the Common Agricultural Policy has gone into the North-West Region in each of the last five years. [156504]

**Alun Michael:** The figures in the following table represent the amount of money that has gone into the North-West Region from the Common Agricultural Policy in each of the last five years.

These are based on the European Agriculture Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) year which runs from 16 October to 15 October.

| *EAGGF year* | *Amount* |
|---|---|
| 1999[1] | 114,947,199.98 |
| 2000 | 190,337,294.44 |
| 2001 | 221,572,202.49 |
| 2002 | 178,075,721.05 |
| 2003 | 214,156,549.44 |
| Total | 919,088,967.40 |

[1] Figures available from August 1999 only, due to implementation of current data management system. Data prior to that time could be accessed only at disproportionate cost in time and resources.

### Branding

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will assess the benefits for English farmers of an English brand to compete with the Welsh and Scottish brands for beef and lamb. [157705]

**Alun Michael:** The branding of lamb and beef is a matter for the industry under the auspices of the English Beef and Lamb Executive (EBLEX). Defra strongly support the steps being taken by EBLEX to launch a marketing strategy for English beef and lamb.

### Departmental Buildings

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list London buildings leased by her Department; what the total cost of such leases was in the latest year for which information is available; how many staff work in each building; and what the nature of their employment is. [156599]

**Alun Michael:** The Department leases the following London buildings for use by its civil servants and Ministers, where we are the sole occupier:

| | *Staff* |
|---|---|
| 10 Whitehall Place, SW1 | 326 |
| Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, SW1 | 550 |
| Ergon House, 17 Smith Square, SW1 | 568 |
| 1A Page St, SW1 | 682 |
| Eastbury House, 30–34 Albert Embankment, SE1 | 105 |
| Cromwell House, Dean Stanley Street, SW1 | 183 |
| 55 Whitehall, SW1[1] | [1]Currently vacant |
| 3–8 Whitehall Place, SW1[2] | [2]Currently being redeveloped |

[1] Although currently vacant, 55 Whitehall is being prepared for occupation by all of Defra's family of organisations moving from another central London location. It should be ready by September 2004.

The total cost of the leases for these buildings for 2002–03 was £12,174,290.

The Department also has agreements with other Government Departments to occupy space in their buildings:

| | *Staff* |
|---|---|
| Ashdown House | 646 |
| 9 Millbank | 255 |
| Woburn Place | 132 |

*Note:*
Staff numbers quoted include part time staff, agency temps and consultants.

### Farmers' Markets

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what help her Department gives to the setting-up of farmers' markets in England. [156110]

**Alun Michael:** Defra makes provision under the England Rural Development Programme for grants for projects promoting farmers' markets. Within the last year we awarded £100,256 to the National Association of Farmers' Markets (NAFM—now known as the National Farmers' Retail and Markets Association) to raise the profile of farmers' markets across England and to increase public awareness of them. NAFM also received funding from Defra under the Agriculture Development Scheme for the publication of information booklets and to help producers develop their knowledge of sales and marketing; and to help NAFM develop its certification programme for accrediting farmers' markets. The Countryside Agency, which we grant aid, also provided start-up funding to NAFM. In addition, in November 2002, my noble Friend, the Lord Whitty wrote to all Local Authorities outlining the benefits farmers' markets bring and the role they play in bringing urban and rural communities together. They offer an excellent outlet for farmers to sell their produce direct to consumers and the Department is keen to encourage their development.

### Grazing Land

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much land in *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* Europe is used for (i) grazing and (ii) growing food for animals; and what the figures were 10 years ago. [156835]

**Alun Michael:** The information is as follows:

*(a) UK*

*(i) Area of land (hectares) used for grazing in the United Kingdom*

| | *1993* | *2003* |
|---|---|---|
| Permanent grass | 5,274,280 | 5,683,469 |
| Temporary grass | 1,582,160 | 1,200,550 |
| Sole rights rough grazing | 4,878,598 | 4,329,287 |
| Common rough grazing | 1,228,901 | 1,236,392 |

(ii) As some crops are grown for human as well as animal consultation, it is not possible to provide a complete total of the crops grown for animals but the June agricultural census indicates that the totals of crops grown specifically for stock feeding are:

| | *Total fodder crops*[1] |
|---|---|
| 1993 | 388,081 |
| 2003 | 414,877 |

[1] Includes Turnips and Swedes, Fodder, beet and mangolds, Kale, Cabbage, savoy, kohlrabi and rape, all others for stock feeding.
*Source:*
June Agricultural Census

*(b) Europe*

Comparable figures are published from the EU Farm Structure Survey (Farm Structure Survey 1999/2000 ISBN 92–894—5618—3). The latest estimates for the Survey in 1999–2000 indicate that the area of permanent grassland and meadow was 45 m hectares for the EU 15 and 9 m hectares for the UK.

Separate figures are not available for stock feeding crops.

Fuller information on the surveys and results can be obtained from the Eurostat website.

### Rights of Way

**Mr. Goodman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to ban electric shopping scooters from rights of way; and if she will make a statement. [159258]

**Alun Michael:** We have no plans to ban electric shopping scooters. Section 34 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 provides that anyone driving a mechanically

propelled vehicle off-road or on a road that is a footpath, bridleway or restricted byway without lawful authority is guilty of an offence. However, where an invalid carriage is being used in accordance with the Use of Invalid Carriages on Highways Regulations 1988, section 20(1)(b) of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Person Act 1970 provides an exemption for such vehicles. It specifically excludes the section 34 offences from applying to invalid carriages.

### Temporary Staff

**Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many staff the Department employs on a temporary basis through employment agencies; what percentage this is of total staff employed; and how much the Department paid employment agencies to supply temporary staff in *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2002–03 and *(c)* 2003–04 to the most recent date for which figures are available. [158247]

**Alun Michael:** There are no central records of the number of staff employed on a temporary basis through employment agencies. Departmental accounts show payments to employment agencies for the supply of temporary staff and consultants as follows: 2001–02—£27.03 million; 2002–03—£19.6 million; 2003/end of February 2004—£14.7 million.

## INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Afghanistan

**Mr. Ancram:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assistance the Government are giving to the Afghan Government in reforming the civil service in Afghanistan. [159890]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** DFID has provided technical assistance to the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission, Office of the President, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Rural Reconstruction and Development and the Ministry of Health. We also provided support last year for ministerial expenses.

We have also committed funds to the Second Emergency Public Administration Programme, which is to be managed and co-funded by the World Bank. This programme will provide further support to the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission; it will also provide technical assistance to a number of key Ministries for the preparation and implementation of the Priority Reform and Restructuring process. We also plan to support the establishment of an effective Cabinet Secretariat.

All of these initiatives aim to help the Afghan Government work towards a merit-based, effective, well-structured civil service that can deliver the services the Afghan people need.

### Burma

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much money his Department has provided in *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04 to tackle HIV/AIDS in Burma. [157475]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** DFID's funding to tackle HIV/AIDS in Burma totalled £2.86 million in 2002–03 and is expected to total £2.84 million in 2003–04. The money is given to a UN Administered fund supported by DFID and three other donors for work on HIV/AIDS in Burma. Operational management is by a Technical Working Group chaired by UNAIDS. The Fund supports the work of international and national non-government organisations, UN agencies, and the Government's National Aids Programme.

Our work to tackle HIV/AIDS is essential to preventing the humanitarian situation in Burma worsening considerably and it is in line with the EU Common Position.

### EU Development Policy

**Helen Jackson:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what response the Government has made to the document "Human Security: Placing Development at the Heart of the EU's External Relations" produced by the Irish EU Presidency Project. [158951]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** The Government have not made any formal response to the "Placing Development at the Heart of the European Union's External Relations" document, produced by the Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations. However we welcome many of the ideas in the report, such as the focus on multilateralism and on HIV/AIDS.

**Helen Jackson:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what consultations the Government has had with the Irish Government about their proposals for international development in the recent Irish EU Presidency project document "Human Security: Placing Development at the Heart of the EU's External Relations". [158952]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** The Government have not had any specific consultations with the Irish Presidency about the "Placing Development at the Heart of the European Union's External Relations" produced by the Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations. We welcome many of the ideas in the report, such as the focus on multilateralism and on HIV/AIDS.

### Haiti

**Ms Abbott:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much money has been provided to Haiti in the last two years as part of multilateral programmes including those funded by *(a)* the European Union and *(b)* the World Bank. [159144]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** The data on how much British money has been provided to Haiti in the last two years as part of multilateral programmes is not available.

The last available data is for 2001, where the UK's imputed multilateral share was £4.0 million, of which £1.8 million was through the European Union, and £0.1 million was through the World Bank.

**Ms Abbott:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether his Department plans to reassess its policy on the provision of bilateral aid to Haiti. [159160]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** DFID has no immediate plans to reassess its present policy on bilateral development assistance to Haiti. DFID will continue to provide direct funds to Haiti through the Small Grants Scheme and the Civil Society Challenge Fund. It will also continue to provide support to Haiti through contributions to international agencies working there.

Given the current crisis, DFID has sent a two person team to Haiti to assess the humanitarian situation and discuss needs with humanitarian agencies, including the United Nations agencies that will shortly be launching a consolidated Flash Appeal.

**Ms Abbott:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much direct British Government aid has gone to *(a)* non-government organisations and *(b)* other civil society groups working in Haiti in the past three years; what other sums have been provided to Haiti; and to whom. [159161]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** In Financial Years 2000–01, 2001–02 and 2002–03, DFID has provided a total of £409,375 in direct British aid to Haiti. This amount includes all disbursements to non-government organisations and civil society groups through the Small Grants Scheme and the Civil Society Challenge Fund. The organisations which have made use of these funds are:

Fraternité Notre Dame
Plan International
Concern
Save the Children
Catholic Relief Services
Action Aid
Oxfam
CARE
Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)
Médecins du Monde

### Nepal

**Mr. Rendel:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what advice his Department gives to British aid workers in Nepal on the Government's policy towards *(a)* the Government of Nepal and *(b)* Maoist rebels against the Government of Nepal. [160175]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** DFID seeks to ensure that our assistance does not undermine the Nepal Government's capacity and, where possible, helps to develop it. DFID's new Country Assistance Plan to Nepal will be launched in country in April. It provides support to the Nepal Government with economic and social reform, particularly to improve delivery of basic services to poor people and to address discrimination on grounds of gender and caste. The programme also seeks to deliver development benefits to poor people in rural areas through a variety of channels.

Many DFID funded programmes work directly or indirectly with the Nepal Government. It is important that they are run in the field with operational neutrality including the areas that have a strong Maoist presence. Programmes seek to ensure that developmental benefits reach the poor, and to ensure that our assistance is not used for any military, political or sectarian purposes. Our programmes are run transparently and are open to inspection by all.

DFID has had a leading role in creating a multi-donor set of Basic Operating Guidelines, which reflect this advice.

**Mr. Rendel:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on the safety of British aid workers in Nepal. [160176]

**Hilary Benn:** Both the Foreign Secretary and I attach high priority to the safety of British aid workers in Nepal and this issue has been the subject of regular discussions and correspondence on the government's policy towards the conflict.

**Mr. Rendel:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he has taken to ensure the safety of British aid workers in Nepal. [160177]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** DFID gives the issue of staff safety in Nepal the highest priority. In 2002 we established a Risk Management Office (RMO) to provide risk assessment and crisis management expertise, as well as to provide training, support and advice to all staff associated with our programmes and projects. Since then the RMO has delivered training to over 300 field staff to help them to continue to work in remote and conflict affected parts of the country. The RMO undertakes risk assessments on a regular basis, the results of which are fed back to field managers. Field staff have also received assurances that DFID will support their decisions at any time to withdraw from an area because of concerns about their personal safety.

### North Korea

**Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the levels of food shortages in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. [159225]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** The Food and Agriculture Organisation estimates that the North Korean food output falls short of need by 944,000 tonnes, but due to the environment of secrecy and restrictions on agencies operating there, it is difficult to be certain of figures regarding the situation in North Korea. It is the case that around a quarter of the population of 22 million require food aid to meet the recommended daily calorie intake. This leaves many recipients, particularly children, the elderly and the sick, vulnerable to breaks in the supply of assistance.

The World Food Programme has recently re-started cereal distributions following a stall in February brought about by a lack of contributions. It estimates however, that 1.5 million vulnerable people are still likely to go without assistance until the end of March when further contributions are expected. Beyond March, 600,000 core beneficiaries may still not receive cereal rations at least until June.

It is important to tackle the problem of malnutrition through a balanced approach to its causes. Both my Department and the European Commission Humanitarian Office, are concerned that food aid currently accounts for

90 per cent. to 95 per cent. of requested assistance, while poor water and sanitation increases the prevalence of water-born diseases and diarrhoea, which in turn worsens malnutrition. A significant proportion of the population of 22 million have poor quality water and sanitation and only 52 per cent. have access to safe drinking water. DFID has recently agreed to provide £1.023 million in support of the United Nations Children's Fund for its work in water, sanitation and primary health care (e.g. vaccinations and other essential medical supplies) in North Korea.

The European Commission is funding targeted food aid through the World Food Programme and other organisations. In January it agreed to give €5 million. The United Kingdom's share of European Community assistance is approximately £680,000.

### Somalia

**Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the levels of food shortages in Somalia. [159227]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** According to a recent report from the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), cereals availability across Somalia from the most recent harvest is higher than average, totalling 287,000 tonnes; total food aid requirements are lower than average at 70,000 tonnes (of which 18,000 tonnes have been pledged).

The Somalia Food Security Assessment Unit is highlighting serious drought-related food insecurity in the north (in the Sool Plateau, Lower Nugaal, and Togdheer), and in central Somali regions. Most of southern Somalia is free from major food shortages, although some groups remain vulnerable, as indicated by high rates of malnutrition.

In response to nutritional difficulties in Somalia, the UK is providing £480,000 to International Medical Corps for health and nutritional services, and has also given £300,000 to UNICEF for a nutrition project.

### Sudan

**Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the requirement for aid supplies for the Darfur region of Sudan. [159226]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** Access for humanitarian workers is now beginning to open up in Darfur. Some assessments of needs are now possible, in limited areas. We know from initial reports that immediate needs include shelter, water, health and food assistance.

We have contributed over £6 million to the crisis in Darfur, through United Nations (UN) agencies and international non-governmental organisations. We have also provided four humanitarian affairs officers to assist the UN response for three months. Three of these will be based in Darfur and will, among other things, undertake assessments of humanitarian needs.

We are urging all the parties involved to re-establish a ceasefire, preferably with international monitoring, permit humanitarian access to all those in need, and resume talks to find a peaceful solution to Darfur's problems.

**Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the influx of Sudanese refugees into Chad. [159228]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** A DFID Humanitarian Adviser visited Chad between 7 and 12 February. He visited refugees at the border with Sudan, who have fled from the fighting in Darfur in Western Sudan. The present location of refugees along the border is unsafe. New camps are being set up away from the border, where refugees will be safe from attack. Our Adviser visited one of these new relocation camps at Forchana. Other relocation camps are at Touloum and Kounoungu. Eight thousand refugees have been moved to the new camps to date.

The general condition of the approximately 110,000 refugees is poor. Around Tine, Medecins Sans Frontieres established that 27 per cent. of children were malnourished, whereas around Adre only quite low levels of malnutrition were detected. Lack of food, shelter, safe drinking water and sanitation facilities are the main risks.

There is an effective humanitarian response in place led by United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), with significant contributions from non-governmental emergency relief organisations. The UK is one of the major contributors to this effort with an early £1 million contribution to UNHCR in October last year.

## CABINET OFFICE

### Civil Service

26. **Kevin Brennan:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will make a statement on the relocation of civil service posts to the regions and nations of the UK. [159456]

**Mr. Alexander:** Sir Michael Lyons is currently leading an independent review of the scope to relocate civil servants and other public sector workers. Sir Michael will make recommendations to the Deputy Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I understand that this will be shortly.

### Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office when the Strategy Unit expects to publish its alcohol harm reduction strategy. [159808]

**Mr. Alexander:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave my hon. Friend the Member for North-West Leicestershire (David Taylor) on 3 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 619.

### Better Regulation Task Force

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what assessment he has made of the progress made by the Better Regulation Task Force; and if he will make a statement. [159575]

**Mr. Alexander:** The Better Regulation Task Force provides an important contribution to the Government's work on better regulation.

Since its creation in 1997 it has produced 30 substantive reports with around 400 recommendations. The Government have accepted all but 10 of its recommendations.

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the cost was of *(a)* the establishment and *(b)* the maintenance since its establishment of the Better Regulation Task Force. [159573]

**Mr. Alexander:** The Better Regulation Task Force was established in 1997. Before July 1999, the cost of the Task Force was met from within the budget of the Regulatory Impact Unit in the Cabinet Office. It is not possible to identify specific costs for the Task Force within this overall budget.

Since July 1999, the Task Force has been supported by a dedicated support team. The costs of this, and the expenses of Task Force members, now amount to around £0.5 million per annum.

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what recent representations he has received on the Better Regulation Task Force; and if he will make a statement. [159580]

**Mr. Alexander:** The Better Regulation Task Force makes an important contribution to the Government's work on better regulation. I have discussed the work of the Task Force at a number of recent meetings including the seminar for MPs on better regulation held in January and the conference for independent regulators hosted by the NAO in October 2003.

### Civil Service Recruitment

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what recent representations he has received regarding Civil Service recruitment; and if he will make a statement. [160036]

**Mr. Alexander:** Under the Civil Service Order in Council 1995, individual government departments and agencies have delegated authority for the recruitment of staff to the Home Civil Service.

The Cabinet Office has responsibility for the central framework of conditions, as set out in the Civil Service Management Code. As such, the Cabinet Office continues to receive representations from stakeholders and interested parties regarding recruitment to the Civil Service.

### Computer Purchasing (Working Practices)

**Helen Jones:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what steps the Cabinet Office is taking to ensure that Government Departments purchase computers from firms which ensure that their sub-contractors in developing countries respect workers' rights and provide decent working conditions; and if he will make a statement. [157355]

**Mr. Boateng:** I have been asked to reply.

Each Government Department is responsible for its own procurement decisions, within the framework of the Government's procurement policy, based on value for money, and the EU procurement rules. The information required from, or obligations placed on, suppliers should be relevant to the subject matter and performance of the particular contract and consistent with the requirements of the EU procurement directives, where applicable, and the EU Treaty. This applies to social, employment and ethical issues whether it is in relation to the supplier itself or to any potential sub-contractors.

### Crown Employment (Nationality Restrictions)

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what plans he has to review the nationality restrictions on Crown employment; and if he will make a statement. [160021]

**Mr. Alexander:** The Government supports Andrew Dismore's Crown Employment (Nationality) Bill which is currently listed for Second Reading on 14 May.

### Government Information and Communication Service

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what plans he has to change the level of expenditure on the Government Information and Communication Service. [159334]

**Mr. Alexander:** Members of the GICS work across government.

Individual departments are responsible for their own expenditure on Communications.

Within the Cabinet Office, funding for existing GICS central functions will be maintained at current levels, pending the transfer of responsibilities to the new Permanent Secretary of Government Communications, whose appointment was recommended by the independent Phillis Review of Government Communications.

### Regulatory Impact Assessments/Unit

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what resources have been allocated for the Regulatory Impact Assessment process for each year between 1998 and 2006. [160134]

**Mr. Alexander:** Information on the total resources allocated to the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) process across Government are not held centrally. Each department is responsible for producing robust RIAs to assess the impact of proposals that are likely to have an effect on business, charities and the voluntary sector which consider all available options including non-regulatory alternatives.

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office now many people are employed in the Regulatory Impact Unit. [160035]

**Mr. Alexander:** As at the 1 March 2004, 63 staff were working in the Regulatory Impact Unit.

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what assessment he has made of the impact of the Regulatory Impact Unit; and if he will make a statement. [160038]

**Mr. Alexander:** The Regulatory Impact Unit works with other Government Departments, agencies and regulators to promote the better regulation agenda. The work of the Unit covers the private and public sectors, domestic and European issues.

In its assessments of the UK's performance in the area of regulatory reform the OECD has said that the UK is "at the forefront of regulatory reform" and "has almost the lowest administration cost and fewer regulations for entrepreneurs than any other EU country".

### Websites

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office by what means his Department judges the cost-effectiveness of Government websites as an information tool. [159522]

**Mr. Alexander:** The provision and ongoing delivery of Government websites, is the responsibility of individual Government Departments and authorities.

The Cabinet Office has published the Guidelines for UK Government websites, containing a substantial range of best practice on the building of websites, their management, their content, effective procurement and the evaluation of their reliability in delivering information to the citizen.

## DEFENCE

### Advertising

**Mr. Llwyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what amount has been spent on Ministry of Defence advertising in the *(a)* UK, *(b)* Wales and *(c)* England since the beginning of hostilities in Iraq. [158890]

**Mr. Ingram:** This information is not held centrally in the form requested and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### Afghanistan

**Mr. Ancram:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will list the plans *(a)* agreed to by his Department and *(b)* being discussed by his Department with regard to the use of British armed forces and personnel during expansion of NATO operations in Afghanistan; [158834]

(2) what assessment he has made of the impact of the expansion of NATO operations in Afghanistan on the number of *(a)* international forces and *(b)* British armed forces based in Kabul. [158835]

**Mr. Ingram** *[holding answer 8 March 2004]*: The expansion of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) will be carried out under a comprehensive NATO operational plan currently being prepared by the Alliance. This will assess troop requirements both in Kabul and elsewhere in Afghanistan. Decisions on the United Kingdom's military contribution to the international forces there will depend on the requirements of the operational plan and upon our determination to build on the success of the ISAF by offering to lead its expansion in Northern Afghanistan.

### Aircraft Costs

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost is of each *(a)* Typhoon, *(b)* joint strike fighter, *(c)* A200M and *(d)* advanced jet trainer. [156132]

**Mr. Ingram:** Unit production costs (UPC) for major equipment programmes, such as Typhoon, where these are practical to construct, can be found within the information given in the Ministry of Defence Major Projects Report (MPR). Those figures are estimated in accordance to methodology agreed with the National Audit Office (NAO). The NAO published their report on MPR 2003 on 23 January 2004 and copies are available in the Library of the House.

The cost per unit of Typhoon as stated in MPR 2003 is £56.8 million.

The unit production cost for the Joint Strike Fighter will not be agreed until after the completion of the current negotiations on the Production and Sustainment Phase Memorandum of Understanding. However, the estimated UPC of the Joint Strike Fighter aircraft is around $50 million on current planning assumptions.

At part *(c)* of his question I assume that my hon. Friend is referring to A400M. The current forecast cost of the UK programme is £2356 million. I am withholding the unit price information in accordance with Exemption 13 of the Code of Practice access to Government Information, which relates to third party commercial confidences.

The cost of each Advanced Jet Trainer will not be known until contractual negotiations with BAE Systems have been concluded. It should be noted that unit production costs are on a resource account basis and exclude development costs.

### Birth Defects (Iraq)

**Mr. Tyler:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has examined evidence of birth defects among babies born to service families whose members were deployed in Iraq in 2003 and who were inoculated for anthrax, with particular reference to those serving in the 33 Field Hospital; and if he will make a statement. [159420]

**Mr. Caplin** *[holding answer 8 March 2004]*: The Health Protection Agency, which is a Special Health Authority accountable to the Secretary of State for Health, has confirmed that the anthrax vaccine has been used for many years and there has never been any indication that it could lead to congenital problems.

### Civilian Jobs (Scotland)

**Angus Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many of his Department's civilian jobs are in Scotland, broken down by location. [159305]

**Mr. Caplin:** Information about the number of jobs is not available, only staff numbers. There were 6,510 civilian staff employed in Scotland as at 1 January 2004 (rounded to the nearest 10). This figure is for full-time equivalent, permanent, industrial and non-industrial staff, excluding Trading Funds, Royal Fleet Auxiliaries

and those on career breaks, long term sick leave, secondments etc. Reliable data are not available below Government Office Region level.

### Defence Contractors

**Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence with reference to the evidence of the Permanent Secretary to the Committee of Public Accounts on 21 January, which foreign contractor, after winning a defence contract, refused to supply the goods; for what reasons; and whether others have done so in the last two years. [159085]

**Mr. Ingram** *[holding answer 5 March 2004]*: In respect of the evidence given by the Permanent Secretary to the Committee of Public Accounts on 21 January, I presume my hon. Friend refers to the contract for the supply of ammunition for Underslung Grenade Launchers. In this case, there was no known instance of the contractor (RUAG) refusing to meet the contract, though deliveries of ammunition were suspended by the Swiss Government during the major hostilities in Iraq.

As regards identifying any other foreign contractors who have refused to meet defence contracts in the last two years, the information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### WWI Executed Soldiers

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what representations and discussions he has had on the Irish Government's recent support for a pardon for those soldiers wrongly executed during the First World War as part of the 90th anniversary of the outbreak of the war; [157168]

(2) if he will make it his policy to consult the Irish Government prior to the anniversary of the start of the First World War on the possible pardon of soldiers who were wrongly executed during the First World War; [157169]

(3) what plans he has to grant pardons to the soldiers in the British Army who were executed in the First World War to mark the 90th anniversary of the outbreak of the war. [157442]

**Mr. Caplin:** This matter was fully examined during the detailed review led by my right hon. Friend the Member for Hamilton, North and Bellshill (Dr. John Reid), which was completed in 1998, and reported to the House, 24 July 1998, *Official Report*, columns 1372–86. As a result, those who were executed have been recognised as victims of the War.

An initial meeting at official level has been held at the request of the Irish Government on the subject of a possible pardon for Irish soldiers executed during the First World War and further contact is expected.

### Iraq

**Adam Price:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether members of the Royal Military Police were involved in the *(a)* arrest and *(b)* detention of the six Iraqis who have died in British custody in Iraq. [147707]

**Mr. Ingram:** We do not release details of units who are involved in any incident that the SIB have investigated, unless the case is referred for court martial.

**Mr. Keetch:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many casualties witnessed by UK forces in Iraq have been reported; and if he will make a statement. [148003]

**Mr. Ingram** *[holding answer 19 January 2004]*: If United Kingdom forces witness an incident in which they are not directly involved and civilian or military personnel are injured they assist medically if necessary and endeavour to report it to the appropriate authority. We do not record the number of casualties witnessed in such incidents centrally.

**Adam Price:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many UK troops have been evacuated from Iraq for treatment of medical problems not related to wounds or injuries. [148293]

**Mr. Ingram:** There have been 1,109 medical evacuations of British military personnel from Iraq between May 2003 and February 2004. Of these some 460 were evacuated for treatment of medical problems not related to wounds or injuries.

**Mr. Keetch:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will make a statement on the signing of liability waivers by Iraqi civilians who receive compensation payments from the UK for UK actions in Iraq; [151618]

(2) if he will place in the Library a copy of the text of the liability waivers presented to Iraqi families receiving compensation from the UK for harm caused by UK forces; and if he will make a statement. [154675]

**Mr. Ingram** *[holding answers 30 January 2004 and 12 February 2004]*: Iraqi civilians who receive compensation payments from the United Kingdom do not sign liability waivers.

**Mr. Keetch:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many UK *(a)* military and *(b)* civilian personnel have been (i) killed and (ii) injured in Iraq since 19 March 2003. [151619]

**Mr. Ingram** *[holding answer 30 January 2004]*: Since 19 March 2003, 58 United Kingdom service personnel have died while deployed on operations in Iraq. One civilian, a member of the Defence Fire Service, has died in the same period.

During major combat operations, from 19 March to 1 May 2003, UK forces suffered 155 battle casualties. Since then we have recorded centrally only those ill or injured personnel who have required medical evacuation to the UK. There have been 1,109 medical evacuations of British military personnel to date.

**Harry Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what contamination has occurred from depleted uranium ordnance in Iraq; whether this has arisen from *(a)* toxicity, *(b)* ionising radiation and *(c)* other aspects associated with the ordnance; whether human safety measures in this connection have been put in place; and if he will make a statement. [157137]

**Mr. Ingram:** DU is a "weakly radioactive substance" and its chemical toxicity is similar to that posed by other heavy metals such as lead.

The overall responsibility for dealing with depleted uranium (DU) contamination in Iraq lies with the Coalition Provision Authority (CPA), unless it has adverse effects on Ministry of Defence service personnel or civilians in theatre.

The MOD issues specific safety instructions to all personnel who may come into contact with Depleted Uranium (DU) in operational situations. These instructions have been publicly available on the MOD's website http://www.mod.uk/issues/depleted_uranium/gulf_safety_instructions.htm since February 2003. In addition to these, the MOD is carrying out activities to reassure civilians that the risk posed to them by DU is as minimal as practically possible. Surface-lying DU fragments are being removed from the battlefield as they are discovered, and Iraqi locals have been warned through leaflets and signs that they should not go near or touch any debris they find on the battlefield.

**Mr. Keetch:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the conclusions of each of the boards of inquiry from operations in Iraq which were outstanding on 31 October 2003 but which have since reported. [157151]

**Mr. Ingram** *[holding answer 5 March 2004]*: Further to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for New Forest, West (Mr. Swayne) on 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 3W, I can confirm that the only Board of Inquiry to report since 31 October 2003, is that concerning the death of Marine Maddison on 30 March 2003. The Board of Inquiry concluded that Marine Maddison's death was as a result of a tragic friendly fire incident.

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when DU information cards Ref F Med 1018 were first issued to troops in Iraq; on what advice it was deemed necessary to issue such warnings, and from whom; and if he will make a statement. [159691]

**Mr. Caplin:** The depleted uranium (DU) information card F MED 1018 was introduced on 26 March 2003. It is issued as a standard administrative procedure to those returning from Operation Telic in Iraq to confirm that they have been deployed in a theatre where DU munitions have been used and to remind them of their eligibility for a voluntary biological monitoring test to measure uranium in the urine. It is therefore not a warning card, but is intended to inform personnel about one of the tests available in line with the Ministry of Defence operational health policies.

## Missile Defence

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects his Department's research into theatre ballistic missile defence to be able to report interim results and conclusions to *(a)* him and *(b)* Parliament; and what theatre ballistic missile defence is available to UK forces now. [157052]

**Mr. Hoon:** I expect to receive a report on the Ministry of Defence's three-year research programme into Theatre Ballistic Missile Defence this summer, but due to its classification, there are no plans to publish the report. I shall keep Parliament informed in the usual way, once I have had a chance to consider the report. Defence against theatre ballistic missiles comprises a number of components, including steps to prevent and counter proliferation, diplomatic measures, deterrence and passive and active defence. Passive defence may involve the dispersal of forces and the provision of protective equipment against nuclear, biological or chemical weapons. Within a coalition force, allied partners provide the active defence.

## Parliamentary Questions

**Mr. Brady:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many days on average his Department took in Session 2002–03 to give a substantive answer to a parliamentary question for ordinary written answer; and what the greatest number of days taken to answer such a question was. [155920]

**Mr. Caplin:** The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Defence Ministers aim to answer ordinary written questions within five sitting days whenever possible.

## Stonehenge

**Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has *(a)* received and *(b)* made about the Stonehenge Project Land Train route and dispersed visitor centre access scheme; whether the Larkhill Garrison Commander has made representations about the planned route; and if he will make a statement. [156724]

**Mr. Ingram** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]*: The Ministry of Defence has received a very small number of representations about the scheme, from local Councillors and from residents living close by. No formal representations have been made by MOD as the proposals are currently being discussed by officials from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, English Heritage, the National Trust and Ministry of Defence.

## Suez Canal Zone Medal

**Mr. Nigel Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether *(a)* HMS Roebuck, *(b)* HMS Whirlwind and *(c)* HMS Wakeful served in the Suez Canal Zone for four months in each year from 1953 to 1955; whether veterans who served on those ships have an entitlement to the Suez Canal Zone Clasp; and how many veterans of the three ships have received the Canal Zone Clasps. [157477]

**Mr. Caplin:** Although records indicate that the ships were present in the Mediterranean and/or Gulf of Suez areas at intervals between October 1951 and October 1954, it has yet to be established whether they meet the qualifying criteria of 30 days continuous service in the Canal Zone area that is necessary to qualify for the award of the Naval General Service Medal with 'Canal Zone' clasp. Only once a ship's eligibility has been established will it be possible to assess each veteran's application to ascertain their individual eligibility. No medals or clasps have yet been issued to veterans of HMS Roebuck, HMS Whirlwind or HMS Wakeful.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Suez Canal Zone medals have been awarded to date in each Lancashire constituency. [157563]

**Mr. Caplin:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave on 5 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 634W. Over 4,400 medals and Canal Zone clasps have now been despatched to eligible veterans and their families throughout the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Gerald Howarth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many campaign medals for those who served in the Suez Canal Zone between 1951 and 1954 have been issued since the decision was made to make this award. [156832]

**Mr. Caplin:** As at 20 February 2004 a total of 4,086 Naval General Service Medals 1915–62 and General Service Medals 1918–62 with the clasp Canal Zone, plus a further 321 clasps without medals, where the claimants had already received the medal with an appropriate clasp for other military campaign service had been despatched.

**Mr. Gerald Howarth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many complaints his Department has received from ex-service personnel and their families who have applied for the campaign medal for those ex-service personnel who served in the Suez Canal Zone between 1951 and 1954 about delays in the processing of their claims. [156928]

**Mr. Caplin:** In recent months the Ministry of Defence has received over 34,000 applications for the new Canal Zone medal. In addition, the medal offices and secretariat branches which deal with this subject have received several hundred letters and an unquantifiable number of telephone calls from veterans or their families asking for some indication of the progress of their claim. Fewer than 50 letters or calls could be described as 'complaints' and once the situation has been explained to them the majority of correspondents have been satisfied with the response.

### Tomahawk Cruise Missiles

**Dr. Julian Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) for what reason it is not proposed to arm the new Type 45 destroyers with Tomahawk cruise missiles; [158139]

(2) how many Tomahawk cruise missiles he estimates could be mounted on a Type 45 destroyer. [158140]

**Mr. Ingram** *[holding answer 4 March 2004]*: The principal role of the Type 45 destroyer will be Anti-Air Warfare. There is currently no requirement for the Type 45 to be fitted with Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles (TLAM). If a requirement for TLAM arises in future, the Type 45 has been designed with substantial space and weight margins to enable its capability to be upgraded through life. We currently estimate that up to 16 TLAM missiles could be mounted on a Type 45 Destroyer.

**Dr. Julian Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make it his policy to include *(a)* Tomahawk cruise missiles and *(b)* a larger-calibre turret gun in the armament of the Type 45 destroyer fleet. [158142]

**Mr. Ingram** *[holding answer 4 March 2004]*: There is currently no requirement to fit Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles or a larger calibre gun to Type 45 destroyers. Should such a requirement arise, these modifications could be made.

### War Graves

**Mr. Laurence Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to allow old war graves to be relocated; and if he will make a statement. [157317]

**Mr. Caplin:** Only in exceptional circumstances, where the long-term security of a war grave is at risk and all other measures to ensure non-disturbance have been exhausted, will the Commonwealth War Graves Commission apply to the Home Office for an exhumation order. Once granted, the grave is transferred to the nearest Commission maintained war grave plot or cemetery.

This position is confirmed in the recent Government Consultation Paper on Burial Law and Policy in the 21st Century which clearly stated that

> "war graves constitute a particular class of grave which, at least in municipal cemeteries enjoy special protection by virtue of certain powers and exceptions granted to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. It is not proposed that war cemeteries, or individual war graves, should be subject to a re-use regime."

## SOLICITOR-GENERAL

### Attorney-General (Legal Advice)

**Ian Lucas:** To ask the Solicitor-General if she will list the occasions between November 1990 and May 1997 when legal advice given by the Attorney-General to the Government was made public. [158713]

**The Solicitor-General:** I am aware of two occasions on which Law Officers' advice was disclosed between November 1990 and May 1997. In both cases disclosure was made for the purposes of judicial proceedings. In 1993, Law Officers' advice relevant to the subject matter of the Scott Inquiry was disclosed to it. The advice was published in an annex to the inquiry report. Law Officers' advice on the 1988 Merchant Shipping Act was disclosed to the other parties in the course of the Factortame litigation in which Spanish fisherman were seeking damages from the Government for a breach of Community law.

On 15 February 1993 the views of the Law Officers were disclosed in the debate on the Maastricht Treaty. However, the Government of the day refused to disclose the full advice.

### Iraq

**Sir Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Solicitor-General if she will publish the factual evidence on which the Attorney-General's view on the legal basis for the use of force in Iraq, expressed in his answer of 17 March 2003, *Official Report* [*Lords*], columns WA2–3, was based; and if she will make a statement. [156108]

**The Solicitor-General** *[holding answer 25 February 2004]*: No. This information is covered by legal professional privilege and the convention against

disclosure of Law Officers' advice outside Government, mentioned in paragraph 24 of the Ministerial Code. This is consistent with paragraphs 2 and 4d of Part II of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

The Attorney-General made a statement in Parliament on 17 March 2003 setting out his view of the legal basis for the use of force against Iraq. On the same date, the Foreign Secretary submitted a memorandum to the Foreign Affairs Committee which gave further detail of the legal position.

**Sir Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Solicitor-General if she will list the occasions on which the Attorney-General formally submitted an opinion on the legality of the use of force against Iraq prior to 18 March 2003; and if she will make a statement. [156250]

The **Solicitor-General** *[holding answer 25 February 2004]:* No. There is a long-standing convention, observed by successive Governments, that whether the Law Officers have advised on a particular matter, and the substance of any advice, is not disclosed outside Government. This is consistent with paragraphs 2 and 4d of Part II of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

The Attorney-General made a statement in Parliament on 17 March 2003 setting out his view of the legal basis for the use of force against Iraq. On the same date, the Foreign Secretary submitted a memorandum to the Foreign Affairs Committee which gave further detail of the legal position.

### Professor Sir Roy Meadow

**Ms Oona King:** To ask the Solicitor-General if the Attorney-General will review the cases of children separated from their parents following evidence from Professor Sir Roy Meadow used in family court judgments. [144467]

**Mr. Lammy** *[holding answer 16 December 2003]:* I have been asked to reply.

I refer my hon. Friend to the statement made by my right hon. Friend the Minister for Children on 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 38–39, which sets out our plans for the review of cases. Further, on 25 February, a Local Authority Circular (2004 (5)) was issued to councils with social services responsibilities, setting out the steps that they should take. A copy of this circular has been placed in the House of Commons Library.

## TRANSPORT

### Railways

9. **Mr. Gordon Prentice:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has for a new high speed rail link to the north of England and Scotland from London. [159438]

14. **Mr. Hopkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the Commission for Integrated Transport report on high-speed rail. [159443]

**Dr. Howells:** Consideration of the case for a North South High Speed Line must be for the longer term. The current priority for the Strategic Rail Authority and the rail industry is to improve the performance of the existing railway network.

### Buses

15. **Mr. Truswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to facilitate the introduction of bus quality contracts outside London. [159444]

**Mr. McNulty:** As I announced on 4 February, we are taking steps to improve the potential effectiveness of the bus quality contract provisions in the Transport Act 2000. We are about to consult stakeholders on the proposal to reduce the 21-month implementation period to a shorter minimum period in the range 6–15 months.

### Airports

16. **Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his policy is on expansion of small airports in South East England. [159445]

**Mr. McNulty:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the White Paper "The Future of Air Transport", which makes it clear that smaller airports have an important role to play in relieving pressure on the main South East airports, particularly in the period before a new runway is built in the South East. We support their further development in principle, subject to consideration of relevant environmental, surface access and airspace constraints. Any development proposals will need to be decided locally through the planning system.

### Speed Cameras

17. **Bob Russell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will estimate how many *(a)* lives have been saved and *(b)* serious injuries have been prevented in the last 12 months as a result of the installation of speed safety cameras. [159446]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The evaluation of the 2-year pilot of the safety camera programme covering 2000–01 and 2001–02 concluded that in those participating areas there had been a 35 per cent. reduction in those killed or seriously injured at camera sites. This equated to 280 fewer killed and seriously injured casualties. Information for 2002–03 will be contained in the 3-year evaluation report which will be published shortly.

### Transport (Nottingham, North)

18. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will visit Nottingham, North to discuss local transport. [159447]

**Mr. McNulty:** My right hon. Friend visited Nottingham on 8 March 2004 to open the Nottingham Express Transit Line 1, where he had the opportunity to meet with local authority officials to discuss local transport issues.

### HGV Drivers

19. **Mr. Denham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the future need for heavy goods vehicle drivers. [159448]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The key change in the need for HGV drivers will result from the introduction of EU working time legislation for road transport. We have estimated that this will require around 12,000 extra drivers.

### Aviation

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will make a statement on the UK's commitment to a fully liberalised aviation treaty between the EU and the US; [R] [159204]

(2) what progress has been made at the recent talks in Washington between the EU and the US on an open aviation area; [R] [159205]

(3) what steps he is taking to promote the interests of *(a)* the UK and *(b)* UK aviation during the open aviation talks between the EU and the US; [R] [159206]

(4) if he will make representations for restrictions on *(a)* ownership, *(b)* cabotage rights, *(c)* wet lease and *(d)* the Fly America policy to be removed as part of any agreement on an open aviation area between the EU and the US; [R] [159207]

(5) what further progress is expected at the next meeting between the EU and US on an open aviation area. [R] [159208]

**Mr. McNulty:** The Government have supported a mandate for the European Commission to negotiate an open aviation area with the US on the basis that this will be an area where air carriers of both sides will be able to establish themselves and freely provide services according to commercial principles, competing on a fair and equal basis. The offer made by the US at the recent talks falls far short of this objective. We will continue to take every opportunity, including meetings of the Transport Council and our participation in the Special Committee of Member State representatives, to make the case for a fully liberalised EU/US aviation agreement, including the removal of restrictions in areas such as airline ownership, market access and aircraft leasing.

### Crossrail

**John Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the importance of Crossrail *(a)* to those who work in London and *(b)* to London businesses. [157321]

**Mr. McNulty:** These issues were covered in Cross London Rail Link Limited's Crossrail Business Case. They have been considered in the context of the review of the proposals undertaken under the chairmanship of Adrian Montague, whose work has also been informed by meetings with key London stakeholders. My right hon. Friend has now received advice from Adrian Montague which he is studying closely and whose findings will be published in due course.

### Cycling

**Mr. Laurence Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress he has made towards introducing and extending *(a)* a cycle-friendly road network, *(b)* cycle training, *(c)* a network of bus lanes, *(d)* minimum quality standards for bus services, *(e)* minimum standards for rail services, *(f)* safe routes to schools, *(g)* lower speed limits, *(h)* a discount network rail card, *(i)* greater purchase incentives for smaller cleaner vehicles, *(j)* grants for rail freight projects, *(k)* increased funding for public transport and *(l)* pay-as-you-go road user charging; and what steps he has taken to improve streets, lanes and paths for walking. [160055]

**Mr. McNulty:** "Delivering Better Transport: Progress Report" published in December 2002 set out the progress made in Delivering the 10 Year Plan for Transport in the first 18 months of its life. As promised in that report we are now reviewing the Plan, taking account of events and achievements since its implementation. We expect to set out in the Summer how the strategy will be rolled forward to 2015 and beyond.

### Departmental Communications

**Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many staff are employed in the Department to work in the communications field, broken down by *(a)* Government Information and Communication Service staff and *(b)* other staff, broken down by (i) press officers, (ii) special advisers and (iii) others; [158168]

(2) what the total expenditure on communications for the Department has been in 2003–04, broken down by expenditure on *(a)* Government Information and Communications Service staff and *(b)* other staff, broken down by (i) press officers.(ii) special advisers and (iii) others. [158200]

**Mr. McNulty:** The average number of full-time equivalent staff employed in DfT (central)'s Communication Directorate and the related forecast expenditure for 2003–04 is:

*Staff*

| | *Press officers* | *Others* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|
| GICS staff | 13.0 | 29.8 | 42.8 |
| Other staff | 0.8 | 28.3 | 29.1 |
| Total | 13.8 | 58.0 | 7.1.8 |

*£ million*

| | *Press officers* | *Others* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|
| GICS staff | 0.62 | 1.33 | 1.95 |
| Other staff | 0.06 | 0.97 | 1.03 |
| Total | 0.68 | 2.30 | 2.98 |

The Special Advisers' Code of Conduct sets out the sort of work a special adviser may undertake on behalf of their Minister. This includes communications activity. Details of the costs of Special Advisers are given on an annual basis. Information for the financial year 2003–04 will be published in due course.

### Departmental Staff

**John McDonnell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on future staffing levels for the Department; and what plans the Department has for *(a)* staff cuts, *(b)* voluntary retirements and *(c)* voluntary redundancies. [158294]

**Mr. McNulty:** The Department for Transport was formed in May 2002. The functions the Department needs to undertake has been clarified and a Corporate Business Plan has been drafted to provide direction and enable the Department to meet its PSA targets.

The staffing level required to deliver the Department's priorities is being considered along with piloting new ways of working flexibly. The intention is to reduce the number of posts overall and create a smaller more strategic centre. There are no concrete plans at the moment and the Department is unable to predict the number of staff that may be surplus. Wherever possible and practicable the exit of staff from the Department will be on a voluntary basis using redundancy and retirements to facilitate the process. The Department will, however, ensure that staff with the appropriate skills to take forward its agenda, remain within the Department.

### Eurotunnel

**Mr. Paul Marsden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the cost of the minimum usage charge paid to Eurotunnel was in each year since its inception. [154911]

**Mr. McNulty:** The total annual payment by the railways is published annually in Eurotunnel's accounts, which are available from the company. The figures include a contribution towards operating expenditure, variable toll elements, and the additional contribution needed to achieve the Minimum Usage Charge. The precise composition of the payments is a commercial matter for the companies concerned.

### Integrated Transport

**Mr. Laurence Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress he has made towards introducing an integrated transport system; and if he will make a statement. [160056]

**Mr. McNulty:** "Delivering Better Transport: Progress Report" published in December 2002 set out the progress made in Delivering the 10 Year Plan for Transport in the first 18 months of its life. As promised in that report we are now reviewing the Plan, taking account of events and achievements since its implementation. We expect to set out in the Summer how the strategy will be rolled forward to 2015 and beyond.

### Radio and Television Advertising

**Mr. Greg Knight:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how much his Department is spending on radio advertising in the current financial year; and how much is planned for next year; [159410]

(2) how much his Department has spent on *(a)* radio and *(b)* television advertising in each of the last five years. [159411]

**Dr. Howells:** The Department for Transport was formed in May 2002. Our current forecast expenditure outturn for 2003–04, is £2.62 million on radio advertising. The estimated figure for 2004–05 is £3.3 million, the majority of which will be devoted to the THINK! road safety campaign.

Media expenditure covering road safety in 2002–03 was £5.6 million on TV and £2.6 million on radio.

### Rail Regulator

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to extend the remit of the Rail Regulator to include the train leasing companies. [158509]

**Mr. McNulty:** The review of the structure and organisation of the rail industry announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on 19 January will consider whether there should be any extension to the remit of the Rail Regulator. We will publish our proposals for change in the summer.

### Rail Services

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) which bodies he is suggesting to consultees may be responsible for regulating the *(a)* ticket costs, *(b)* service levels and timetables and *(c)* access issues for community railways; [158553]

(2) which organisation he is suggesting to consultees may be responsible for *(a)* setting and *(b)* monitoring and regulating (i) maintenance, (ii) operational standards and (iii) safety for community railways; [158555]

(3) what the suggested structures for *(a)* ownership, *(b)* management and *(c)* operational responsibilities are for community railways; [158557]

(4) on which lines he is consulting about whether they should become community railways; and if he will make a statement. [158559]

**Mr. McNulty:** The Strategic Rail Authority published its consultation paper on a strategy for Community Railways on 26 February. The Authority is consulting on proposals to offer much greater community involvement in determining issues for Community Railways. The strategy is aimed at simplifying and structuring their regulation and it outlines options to strengthen local management and to simplify and improve the effectiveness of operational responsibilities on Community Railways. No change is proposed in the current ownership of railway infrastructure by Network Rail, or in the primary responsibilities of the duty holder in respect of safe operation of these railways.

The lines to be consulted upon are listed in the consultation paper. The paper has been sent to MPs with constituencies covering these lines and has been placed in the Library of the House.

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what sources of *(a)* public and *(b)* private funding he plans will be available to Community Railways. [158556]

**Mr. McNulty:** Community Railways lines form part of larger franchises which already make use of public and private funding. Whatever the source of funding, it is remunerated by the user through fares and freight charges and by the taxpayer through franchise support payments or grants. This will continue to be the case. Community Rail Partnerships currently seek further

local funding support to improve services and facilities, recognising the benefit of such improvements to the local economy and environment.

### Recruitment

**Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the cost of recruitment of civil servants for the Department was in each financial year since 1996–97, broken down by *(a)* delegated or contracted out recruitment procedures and *(b)* recruitment procedures carried out by the Department. [158177]

**Mr. McNulty:** The Department for Transport was formed in May 2002. For open competitions for permanent positions below the Senior Civil Service (SCS), the Department uses two contracted out recruitment consultants. For open competitions for SCS positions, the Department uses specialist recruitment consultants taken from the Cabinet Office Central Call-Off Contract for recruitment into the SCS.

Following are details of the costs incurred by DfT (Central) for contracted out recruitment procedures:

| | (£) |
|---|---|
| *2002–03* | |
| Senior Civil Service | 309,237.08 |
| Below SCS | 211,626.55 |
| *2003–04 to date* | |
| Senior Civil Service | 781,378.64 |
| Below SCS | 582,084.33 |

The 'Below SCS' details do not include costs incurred by the Department's Executive Agencies as they have responsibility for their own recruitment for below SCS. We are unable to provide costs for recruitment procedures carried out by the Department itself as these costs could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

### Senior Civil Service

**John McDonnell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what basic pay and bonuses were awarded in relation to the 2003 pay round for *(a)* the Permanent Secretary, *(b)* each of the chief executives of the Department's agencies and *(c)* each Grade 2 in the Department. [158295]

**Mr. McNulty:** It is not our policy to provide information on pay and bonus that are identifiable to particular individuals. The base pay awards for Directors General (formerly Grade 2s) ranged between 4 and 8 per cent. Non consolidated bonus awards ranged from zero to £9,000. Base pay awards for agency Chief Executives ranged from 2.25 to 4.0 per cent. with non consolidated bonus awards ranging from zero to £15,800.

**John McDonnell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the total cost of the senior civil service in the Department is. [158296]

**Mr. McNulty:** The total cost of the salaries as at 1 March 2004 of the senior civil service in DfT central and the agencies is £10.5 million. This figure includes the costs of the Permanent Secretary and chief executives of the agencies.

**John McDonnell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the total cost of the pay increases in the Department awarded to the senior civil service as a result of the 2003 pay round. [158297]

**Mr. McNulty:** The total cost of the increase to basic pay awarded to the senior civil service in DfT central and the agencies, as a result of the 2003 pay round, was £0.4 million. This amount also includes those awards given to senior civil servants on fixed term contracts that received the revalorisation rate of 2.25 per cent.

### Sick Leave

**John McDonnell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the average number of sick days taken by each grade in 2003 in *(a)* the Department and *(b)* its agencies. [158298]

**Mr. McNulty:** In 2003 the total number of days sick absence recorded for the Department for Transport and its Agencies was 164,364 days. This is monitored on an overall average days per staff year basis, and the 2003 figures were:

| | *Days* |
|---|---|
| Department for Transport (Central) (DfT(C)) | 5.7 |
| Driving Standards Agency (DSA) | 12.7 |
| Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) | 12.7 |
| Highways Agency (HA) | 8.3 |
| Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) | 8.4 |
| Vehicle Certification Agency (VGA) | 5.9 |
| Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) | 9.0 |
| Total Department for Transport | 10.4 |

The average number of sick days taken by each grade in DfT(C) was recorded as:

| | *Days* |
|---|---|
| Pay Band 1/Secretarial | 5.5 |
| Pay Band 2 | 6.9 |
| Pay Band 3 | 6.6 |
| Pay Band 4 | 4.9 |
| Pay Band 5 | 3.9 |
| Pay Band 6 | 2.0 |
| Pay Band 7 | 2.1 |
| Senior Civil Service | 0.6 |
| Average DfT(C) | 5.7 |

The Agencies are responsible for their own staffing arrangements and have their own grading structures. Similar breakdowns of average days by grade levels for the Agencies are not readily available.

The Department and its Agencies are committed to managing sickness absence effectively. This includes actively reviewing statistics and trends and gaining a clearer understanding of the reasons for non-attendance.

### South Hampshire Rapid Transit

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to announce a decision on the Government's funding of the South Hampshire Rapid Transit system. [159880]

**Mr. McNulty:** The Secretary of State recently received further information on this scheme following a significant increase in the proposed level of central Government funding. A decision will be made in due course.

### Thames Gateway

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the cost of the integrated transport infrastructure requirement for the Thames Gateway. [159648]

**Mr. McNulty:** The Government have already committed more that £600 million to transport projects within the Thames Gateway. These include DLR extensions to City airport and improvements to the A2/A282 near Dartford.

In his statement on 30 July 2003, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister identified some of the transport infrastructure projects that could potentially help to support housing growth including domestic services on the channel tunnel rail link, extensions to the Docklands light rail (DLR) network and bus transit systems for east and south east London and Kent Thameside.

In relation to local transport schemes, it is for local authorities in the Thames Gateway area to bring forward major schemes through the Local Transport Plan process for consideration by Ministers.

### Westminster Hall

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make it his policy to have senior Ministers reply to debates in Westminster Hall. [159618]

**Mr. McNulty:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by the Leader of the House on 8 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1234W.

## CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

### Legal Aid

**Mr. Keetch:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs under what circumstances legal aid is available to those contesting legal cases involving children; and if he will make a statement. [158956]

**Mr. Lammy:** Legal aid is available for parties involved in contested proceedings involving children. In certain special cases under the Children Act 1989 funding is available free to people who have parental responsibility, without any means or merits tests. These cases are mostly to do with public authorities intervening in the relationship between parents (or those with parental responsibility) and children, such as care proceedings. All other grants of funding are subject to means and merits criteria. The means criteria are set out in the Community Legal Service Financial Regulations 2000 (as amended) and considered against the relevant merits criteria set out in the Funding Code determining income and capital thresholds above which legal aid is not available. The merits criteria are also set out in the Funding Code and aim to ensure that funding is only available in circumstances where a reasonable private paying client would be prepared to proceed.

Legal aid must also take into account the Legal Services Commission's (LSCs) published guidance which further encourages cost effective dispute resolution. All grants of legal aid are subject to limitations as to what steps can be undertaken and what level of costs may be incurred.

The LSC also funds family mediation services with a view to resolving cases amicably without contested proceedings. With certain exceptions, funding for court proceedings will be refused unless the client has seen a mediator to assess the suitability of the case for mediation.

**Mr. Keetch:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what restrictions are placed on the availability of legal aid for use in cases where costs orders cannot be made; and if he will make a statement. [158957]

**Mr. Lammy:** Each application for legal aid is subject to the statutory tests of the applicant's means as set out in the Community Legal Service Financial Regulations 2000 (as amended) and considered against the relevant merits criteria set out in the Funding Code.

A funded client's liability for costs is limited to the amount, if any, which is reasonable for him to pay, having regard to all the circumstances of the case, including the means and conduct of both parties. The awarding of costs is a matter for the court, whether a party is publicly funded or not. Whether a cost order can be made is not taken into account in determining eligibility for legal aid.

Cost protection has always been a feature of the legal aid scheme; it provides that costs orders cannot be enforced against a funded client except to the extent that the court considers it reasonable. In limited circumstances a successful opponent may be entitled to costs from the Community Legal Service fund.

### Parliamentary Elections

**Dr. Whitehead:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will list the 20 constituencies in which the highest number of electors have been lost from the parliamentary register between 2000 and 2004. [158959]

**Ruth Kelly:** I have been asked to reply.

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Dr. Alan Whitehead, dated 9 March 2004:*

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning the 20 constituencies with the highest loss of electorate between 2000 and 2004. (158959)

A table showing the total and percentage change of the 20 parliamentary constituencies with the greatest fall in number of registered electors over the period 16 February 2001 to 1 December 2003 (or to 2 February 2004 for Northern Ireland) is shown. The Office for National Statistics did not publish electoral data for parliamentary constituencies for 2000 and therefore the

2001 figures have been used. 2004 data are not available (except for Northern Ireland) therefore the most recent data available, 1 December 2003, have been used.

It should be noted that these figures represent the number of 'registered' electors. In many cases, especially in Northern Ireland, large decreases may be due to 'cleaning' of the registers rather than actual falls in the number of electors. In the case of Northern Ireland, the Electoral Commission carried out a review of the workings of the Electoral Fraud (Northern Ireland) Act 2002. This act introduced a new system for registering electors in Northern Ireland. The Electoral Commission's review report[1] on the Act's first year of operation stated that the number of registered electors in Northern Ireland fell by 10 per cent. in the first register published under this new system.

[1] "The Electoral Fraud (Northern Ireland) Act 2002, an Assessment of its First Year in Operation, Research Report December 2003"

*Parliamentary constituencies with the 20 largest falls in the numbers of registered electors between 2001 and 2003 [1], ranked by size of absolute change*

| *Constituency* | | *Electors 1 February 2001* | *Electors 1 December 2003* | *Absolute change* | *Percentage change* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Brentford and Isleworth | 83,420 | 67,934 | -15,486 | -18.6 |
| 2 | Belfast West | 60,377 | 47,139 | -13,238 | -21.9 |
| 3 | Belfast North | 61,646 | 49,054 | -12,592 | -20.4 |
| 4 | Portsmouth South | 77,372 | 66,162 | -11,210 | -14.5 |
| 5 | Belfast South | 59,937 | 49,207 | -10,730 | -17.9 |
| 6 | Edinburgh Central | 66,296 | 55,714 | -10,582 | -16.0 |
| 7 | Foyle | 71,835 | 62,321 | -9,514 | -13.2 |
| 8 | Belfast East | 59,044 | 49,930 | -9,114 | -15.4 |
| 9 | South Antrim | 71,316 | 62,906 | -8,410 | -11.8 |
| 10 | Strangford | 72,948 | 64,718 | -8,230 | -11.3 |
| 11 | Lagan Valley | 73,494 | 65,545 | -7,949 | -10.8 |
| 12 | North Down | 63,944 | 56,030 | -7,914 | -12.4 |
| 13 | Rhondda | 56,096 | 48,332 | -7,764 | -13.8 |
| 14 | Glasgow Maryhill | 55,087 | 47,525 | -7,562 | -13.7 |
| 15 | Bradford West | 72,193 | 64,663 | -7,530 | -10.4 |
| 16 | Edinburgh South | 64,437 | 57,274 | -7,163 | -11.1 |
| 17 | Brent East | 58,082 | 51,114 | -6,968 | -12.0 |
| 18 | East Antrim | 61,597 | 54,644 | -6,953 | -11.3 |
| 19 | Bolton South East | 68,080 | 61,198 | -6,882 | -10.1 |
| 20 | Dulwich and West Norwood | 70,301 | 63,489 | -6,812 | -9.7 |

[1] 2 February 2004 for Northern Ireland

*Source:*
Office for National Statistics

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Asbestos

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the buildings occupied by her departmental staff and agency staff, which require *(a)* remedial work on and *(b)* the removal of asbestos; what that work will cost; what budgets are available for this work for (i) 2004 and (ii) 2005; and what budget is available for future asbestos surveys. [159367]

**Ms Hewitt:** The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has no buildings which currently require remedial work or removal of asbestos. There is no specific budget for asbestos surveys or any resulting remedial work and such costs are included as part of the normal operating costs associated with the DTI estate. For those agencies where the Department holds budgetary information, the position is similar.

### Broadband

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the benefits that could accrue from the process of local loop unbundling. [157244]

**Mr. Timms:** Local loop unbundling is increasingly widely used in the UK.

The Government believe the key benefit to accrue from the process of local loop unbundling is the promotion of competition.

Ofcom has proposed a local loop unbundling market review in its Annual Plan for 2004–05.

### Cast Metal Industry

**Mr. Bailey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the impact of the change in scrap metal prices on the British cast metal industry. [159027]

**Jacqui Smith:** I am aware of the difficulties that are being faced by UK cast metal producers as a result of rises in the world price of scrap metal and industry's concerns about the implications for competitiveness. It is widely accepted that the cause is soaring demand for steel in China and the knock-on effect on raw materials costs. We are monitoring developments and I will be meeting my hon. Friend the representatives of the cast metals industry later this month to discuss the situation further.

### Combined Heat and Power

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what her Department's responsibilities are for meeting the Energy White Paper target of achieving 10GW of combined heat and power by 2010. [159209]

**Mr. Timms:** Defra take the lead on delivery of the combined heat and power (CHP) target, working closely with DTI and other departments and agencies as part of the Sustainable Energy Policy Network.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has recently issued guidance to the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority on social and environmental issues, under the terms of the Utilities Act 2000, drawing attention to the importance of Energy White Paper goals, including the 10GW CHP target.

Further information on how the Government are working towards the Energy White Paper target will be available in the CHP Strategy, due to be published after the Easter recess.

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions her Department has had with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs concerning combined heat and power; and if she will make a statement. [159210]

**Mr. Timms:** The Department has regular discussions with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs about combined heat and power both in the context of implementing the Energy White Paper and preparing for debates on the Energy Bill.

### Company Voluntary Agreements

**Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the effectiveness of company voluntary agreements. [159165]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** The company voluntary arrangement procedure was introduced in 1986 and allows a financially troubled company to reach a binding agreement with its creditors to pay them in full or in part over a period of time. However, the recession of the early 1990s showed it was not particularly effective for the small financially troubled company because there was no stay on creditors' actions in the period before an arrangement could be agreed. Therefore, in 2000, this Government introduced the option of a short stay on creditors' rights, into that procedure, to give the company's management a breathing space in which to put a rescue plan to creditors. Other technical amendments were also made to improve the procedure's efficiency and effectiveness.

**Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in how many company voluntary agreements creditors received monies owed in each year since 2000. [159166]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** We do not record statistical data which would provide this information.

**Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many company voluntary agreements were entered into in each year since 2000. [159167]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** In the years 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003 respectively 557, 597, 651 and 726 company voluntary arrangements were entered into.

**Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many companies have entered into company voluntary agreements and have continued trading in each year since 2000. [159168]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** In the years 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003 respectively 557, 597, 651 and 726 companies entered into voluntary arrangements but we do not record statistical data, which would reveal how many of them continued trading once the arrangements had been agreed.

### Copyright Directive

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made with ensuring compliance with the EU Copyright Directive; and if she will make a statement. [159008]

**Ms Hewitt:** The Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003 (SI 2003 No. 2498) bringing UK law into full compliance with the EU copyright Directive came into force on 31 October 2003.

### Data Protection

**John Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment her Department has made of the data protection implications of the offshoring of the processing of financial details. [159125]

**Ms Hewitt:** Under the Data Protection Act, companies who control data remain responsible for how data are processed overseas on their behalf. They remain bound by the requirements of the Act, in particular its requirement for data to be kept secure. The method of transfer must include measures to ensure the security of the processing and security against breaches of the Act. Companies must also be open with individuals about how information they collect on them is intended to be used.

### Democratic Republic of the Congo

**Jeremy Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much coltan was imported by the United Kingdom from the Democratic Republic of the Congo in each of the last two years; and if she will make a statement. [159242]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** According to information published by HM Customs and Excise, there were no imports of coltan from the Democratic Republic of Congo into the United Kingdom in 2002 or 2003.

### Elexon Ltd.

**Mr. Hopkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of whether Elexon Ltd.'s remit should be extended to electricity trading arrangements in Scotland. [159089]

**Mr. Timms** *[holding answer 8 March 2004]:* Ofgem and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), as part of the second consultation on the legal text of a Great Britain (GB) Balancing and Settlement Code (BSC) (June 2003), consulted on whether Elexon's remit, as the Balancing and Settlement Code Company (BSCCo), should be extended to electricity trading arrangements in Scotland. After considering responses to this consultation Ofgem and DTI concluded that Elexon should undertake the role of the GB BSCCo and that a competitive tender exercise was not necessary.

**Mr. Hopkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what her role is in *(a)* the appointment of the (i) Chairman and (ii) Board of Elexon Ltd. and *(b)* determining the terms and conditions of appointment of the (i) Chairman and (ii) Board. [159090]

**Mr. Timms** *[holding answer 8 March 2004]:* My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has no role in the appointment of the Chairman and/or Board of Elexon Ltd. The Elexon Chairman and Board are appointed in accordance with the arrangements set out in the Balancing and Settlement Code (BSC) in Section C4.1. The Chairman of the Board is the Chairman of the BSC Panel. The Chairman of the BSC Panel is appointed by the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority. Other Directors are appointed by the BSC Panel and by the Chairman.

Any change to these arrangements would require a modification proposal to be progressed through the BSC modification procedures as outlined in Section F of the BSC. This process is designed to be transparent and inclusive. Modification proposals are subjected to a series of industry consultations, and are usually assessed in detail by a group of industry experts, and then considered by the BSC Panel (which comprises five members elected by parties to the BSC, a potential 6th member drawn from licence exempt suppliers or generators, two members nominated by energywatch, two independent members, one member nominated by NGT, one representative of distribution system operators and is attended by Ofgem) before being approved or rejected by the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority.

**Mr. Hopkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the shareholders of Elexon Ltd.; and what assessment she has made of the board's corporate governance arrangements. [159091]

**Mr. Timms** *[holding answer 8 March 2004]:* Elexon Ltd. is the Balancing and Settlement Code Company (BSCCo) established under the provisions of the Balancing and Settlement Code (BSC). The BSC is given effect through Section C3 of National Grid Transco's (NGT) Transmission Licence.

Elexon is a wholly owned subsidiary of National Grid Transco (NGT). However, Elexon is independently governed and has a separate Board of Directors. Elexon operates outside the commercial and operational interests and control of NGT. Shareholder control by NGT can only be exerted within the limited circumstances outlined in the BSC.

Elexon's corporate governance arrangements were carefully considered and consulted on, by Ofgem and the DTI before the implementation of the New Electricity Trading Arrangements (NETA) when the BSC was designated by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State through the authority provided in the Utilities Act 2000.

**Mr. Hopkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the role of Elexon Ltd. is in the operation of the electricity market in England and Wales; if she will undertake a review of this role; and if she will make a statement. [159092]

**Mr. Timms** *[holding answer 8 March 2004]:* Elexon Ltd. is the Balancing and Settlement Code Company (BSCCo) established under the provisions of the Balancing and Settlement Code (BSC). The principal role of the BSCCo is to provide and procure facilities, resources and services (including providing or procuring resources required by the BSC Panel and BSC Panel Committees, and procuring services under BSC service descriptions) required for the proper, effective and efficient implementation of the BSC. The powers of the BSCCo are subject to the restrictions and limits set out in the BSC.

The systems and processes outlined in the BSC have operated effectively since the introduction of the New Electricity Trading Arrangements (NETA) on 27 March 2001. These include arrangements for the use of meter readings to allocate energy between participants, to register energy trades, to aggregate balance positions and to calculate and apply imbalance prices for each half an hour, twenty four hours a day. They underpin competition in generation and in the supply of electricity.

Extensive consultations were carried out by the DTI and Ofgem on the role of Elexon prior to the inception of the New Electricity Trading Arrangements in March 2001. Ofgem and the DTI, as part of the second consultation on the legal text of a Great Britain Balancing and Settlement Code (June 2003), also consulted on whether Elexon's remit, as the Balancing and Settlement Code Company, should be extended to electricity trading arrangements in Scotland. In addition, Ofgem keeps the operation of the BSC under constant review and considers the annual business strategy and budget documents carefully.

**Mr. Hopkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the application of the statutory Environmental and Social guidelines of the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority to Elexon Ltd. [159093]

**Mr. Timms** *[holding answer 8 March 2004]:* The statutory Environmental and Social guidelines to the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority do not apply to Elexon. As the Balancing and Settlement Code Company (BSCCo), Elexon has the powers and functions and responsibilities set out and assigned to it in the Balancing and Settlement Code (BSC) and, in accordance with BSC Section C 1.2.2, may not conduct business or activities not provided for in the BSC.

It should be noted, however, that the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority (the Authority) has the role of determining whether a modification to the BSC should or should not be made. In making its decision, the Authority is obliged to take into consideration its wider statutory obligations. The Authority is also obliged to carry out a Regulatory Impact Assessment in relation to any important Modification Proposal.

### Employment (Offshoring)

**John Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the types of jobs that have been offshored in the past 12 months. [159126]

**Ms Hewitt:** The principal areas where services work has been transferred offshore include call centres, data and business processing and analysis ("back office") operations, and IT services such as software development.

My Department has commissioned research on the key factors contributing to the relative competitiveness of UK call centre operations to help identify any appropriate actions which need to be taken by industry or Government in response to the increasingly global market for call centre services. This will include an examination of the main product areas in the UK call and contact centre industry that are vulnerable to growing competition from lower-wage economies; which types of call and contract centre activity and which regions have been most affected or are most likely to be affected in the near future.

### Export Credits Guarantee Department

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what rate of remuneration will be paid to the Chair of the Export Credits Guarantee Department. [158304]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** £500 gross per day.

The Chair of ECGD is a part-time role involving an initial commitment of 1–2 days per week eventually reducing to 1–2 days per month.

### Export Licences

**Mr. Rendel:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list export licences granted for the sale of defence *(a)* equipment and *(b)* equipment components to Nepal for each year since and including 2001. [158915]

**Nigel Griffiths** *[holding answer 5 March 2004]:* Details of all export licences approved for Nepal in 2001 and 2002 are published in the Government's Annual Reports on Strategic Export Controls, copies of which are available from the Libraries of the House. Details of export licences approved in 2003 will be published later this year in the 2003 Annual Report, and details for 2004, similarly in the 2004 Annual Report.

### Financial Services and Markets Act 2002

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations she has received from business on the *(a)* registration costs and *(b)* authorisation process for companies offering customer insurance under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2002. [160132]

**Ruth Kelly:** I have been asked to reply.

The Government are giving the Financial Services Authority (FSA) responsibility for regulating general insurance mediation as from 14 January 2005. This implements the European Union's Insurance Mediation Directive. On 5 June 2003, the Government published a regulatory impact assessment (RIA) to accompany the implementing legislation. This is available from the Treasury website www.hm-treasury.gov.uk. The RIA took into account comments from business and others made during the public consultation on the draft legislation. Under its statutory responsibilities, the FSA is obliged to consult on and to carry out a cost benefit analysis on its regulatory activities and others made during the public consultation on the draft legislation.

Under its statutory responsibilities, the FSA is obliged to consult on and to carry out a cost benefit analysis on its regulatory activities .

### Information Technology

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what her Department's information technology budget was for each year since 1997. [153543]

**Ms Hewitt:** Total spending by Department of Trade and Industry, (excluding agencies), on Information Technology was £12.1 million in 1998–99. Subsequent to this the Department entered into a PFI partnership agreement with UNITAS, (a consortium of Fujitsu and Logical/CMG), for the provision of the majority of its IT services and support. Total spending by the Department on IT in the following years was £15 million in 1999–2000, £30 million in 2000–01, £32 million in 2001–02 and £41 million in 2002–03. Spend for 2003–04 is forecast at £45 million. The equivalent figure is not readily available for 1997–98.

These figures do not include payments made to suppliers of IT services not covered by the PFI contract referred to since they are not available from a central source.

### Local Government Finance (Dorset)

**Jim Knight:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what grants were awarded to local authorities in Dorset by her Department in financial year 2003–04 that fall outside the revenue support grant. [156205]

**Jacqui Smith:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Member for Greenwich and Woolwich (Mr. Raynsford) on 1 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 750W.

### Miners' Compensation Claims

**Ms Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many examiners who worked for both the Coal Board or the Coal Authority and small private mines have valid chronic bronchitis and emphysema claims outstanding; how many claims have received part payments; and if she will make a statement on progress of negotiations with small mine insurers in respect of the Court Handling Agreement. [158537]

**Jacqui Smith:** The number of outstanding COPD claimants who have worked for both BCC and a small mine is 2,164. The number of outstanding COPD claimants who have worked for BCC and a small mine and have received an interim payment is 453.

Following a three-way mediation exercise held in January, at which much progress was made, a further day of negotiation between the parties was organised on 23 February. This meeting proved successful and an agreement was reached which allowed the small mines to join the claims handling agreement.

Steps are now being taken with the Department's claims handlers to make arrangements for full and final offers to be made to this group of claimants.

### Nigerian Contracts

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 30 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 591W, on Nigeria, if she will provide a breakdown of Nigeria's debt to the Export Credits Guarantee Department, broken down by sector; and if she will list the top five contracts by value on which these debts are based. [158287]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** I refer the hon. Member to my official reply to his question on 30 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 591W. For the reasons stated earlier in that answer and the way in which records were kept in the 1980s, it is not possible to provide a breakdown of Nigerian debt according to trade sector without incurring disproportionate cost.

### Nirex

**Mark Tami:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations her Department has made to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on the future structure of Nirex. [159047]

**Mr. Timms:** There have been a number of discussions between departments and with others affected on this subject, and these discussions are continuing.

**Mark Tami:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions her Department has had with the Environment Agency on the possibility of their responsibility for the Letter of Comfort process operated by Nirex. [159048]

**Mr. Timms:** Disclosure of this information—internal advice and discussion—is covered by exemption 2 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information between Government departments and it has not been the practice of successive Governments to disclose exchanges of this nature.

Discussions are continuing to resolve a number of issues about the future of Nirex.

### Nuclear Fuel

**Paul Farrelly:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the Government's policy is on the commercial reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel in the UK. [159624]

**Mr. Timms:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for South Down (Mr. McGrady) on 11 September 2003, *Official Report*, column 385W.

### Renewable Energy

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the outcome of the renewables innovation review. [159034]

**Mr. Timms:** The Renewables Innovation Review, which was conducted jointly by the DTI and the Carbon Trust, considers the way ahead for the renewables industry if the UK's renewable energy targets, carbon reduction aspirations and desired economic benefits are to be met.

The key conclusions of the Review, and the series of reports commissioned as part of the Review, are available on the DTI website at: http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/renewables/policy/renewables_innovation_review.shtl

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she is undertaking to reinforce the National Grid in *(a)* the UK and *(b)* London to meet the Government's target of 10 per cent. renewable generation by 2010. [159171]

**Mr. Timms:** The Transmission Issues Working Group works with the Transmission Owners, the Scottish Executive, the Welsh Assembly Government, and Ofgem to progress this important issue. An initial plan was published last year and the Transmission Companies are currently revising their technical and financial plans. *(a)* The first upgrade required in the UK is the Beauly to Denny line that Scottish and Southern intends to submit into the consents process this autumn. *(b)* It is unlikely that significant transmission grid upgrades will be required in London as most renewables will be connected to the distribution network but a full report which will include this issue is due to be presented to the Transmission Issues Working Group by the end of July.

### Sakhalin II

**Mr. Simon Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what account she will take of the potential impact on *(a)* saffron cod and *(b)* herring populations when assessing the Sakhalin II phase 2 oil and gas project under consideration for support by the Export Credits and Guarantee Department. [157904]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** Both saffron cod and herring will be considered as part of the overall assessment of potential impacts on fishing resulting from the Sakhalin II project.

**Mr. Simon Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions have been undertaken with other Departments on the Sakhalin II phase 2 oil and gas project which the Export Credit Guarantee Department is considering. [158073]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** ECGD has consulted officials in DEFRA, DFID and FCO with regard to Sakhalin II.

I have also consulted the Minister for Environment.

### Scottish Electricity Generators

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on her Department's assessment of the overall cost of the British Electricity Transmission and Trading Arrangements for Scottish electricity generators. [158534]

**Mr. Timms:** BETTA is a package of reforms, elements of which are likely to result in higher costs for Scottish generators, whilst others are likely to reduce costs. In aggregate, however, Ofgem estimates that the net impact of BETTA on Scottish generators will be broadly neutral.

This is because any increase in transmission charges will be offset by the removal of the current interconnector charges and charges for access to the England-Wales market. There will also be lower connection charges for Scottish generation.

The DTI has carried out an analysis of the possible impact of BETTA as part of the Energy Bill Regulatory Impact Assessment www.dti.gov.uk/energy/leg_and_reg/acts/ria.pdf. This found that the relevant market participants—principally British Energy and the two vertically integrated incumbents, Scottish Power and SSE—would be exposed to initial costs of around £7.5 million and on-going costs of some £0.5 million per year, although this excludes the redistributive effects brought about by a Great Britain-wide transmission charging regime.

### Westminster Hall

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make it her policy to have senior Ministers reply to debates in Westminster Hall. [159613]

**Ms Hewitt:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to him by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House on 8 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1234W.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### Housing Benefit

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his latest estimate is of the annual cost of *(a)* administering Housing Benefit and *(b)* Housing Benefit fraud; and if he will make a statement. [156596]

**Mr. Pond:** The most recent available estimate of the annual cost of administering Housing Benefit is in the table:

*Housing Benefit administration costs in Great Britain 2001–02*

| | £ million |
|---|---|
| England | 360 |
| Scotland | 32 |
| Wales | 15 |
| Total | 407 |

*Notes:*
1. Figures are Net Current Expenditure.
2. Amounts are rounded to the nearest million

*Source:*
Figures for England provided by Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
Scotland figures provided by the Scottish Executive.
Wales figures provided by the Welsh Assembly.

For Housing Benefit Fraud, we published "Fraud and Error in Housing Benefit, April 2002 to March 2003" on 11 December 2003. This report represents the first national headline estimates, for the level of fraud and error in Housing Benefit, derived via the statistical analysis of data collected by the Housing Benefit Review (HBR) continuous measurement exercise. Copies of the reports are available in the Library.

**John Mann:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the proposal to give local authorities the ability to withhold payment of housing benefits to tenants as a method of controlling anti-social behaviour. [159457]

**Mr. Pond:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave the hon. Member for New Forest, West (Mr. Swayne) on 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1105.

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what progress has been made since the formal consultation about ground rents and the referral of rent to local rent officers under the proposed changes to housing benefit. [157489]

**Mr. Pond:** The first step in our reform of Housing Benefit has been the introduction from November 2003 of a flat rate Local Housing Allowance in the private rented sector in nine pathfinder local authorities; with flat rate allowances for same size properties in the same area. Early indications are that the shift away from making payments direct to landlords is going well.

In the pathfinders, Housing Benefit is no longer linked to individual rents, so there is no need for individual rents to be referred to the local rent officer. The local rent service will however continue to support the local authorities by calculating monthly Local Housing Allowance rates and setting the Broad Rental Market Areas.

We have also put a comprehensive evaluation strategy in place. This will include interviews with claimants, landlords, local authority staff and stakeholder organisations, as well as an analysis of administrative data.

**Mr. Goodman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of landlords in pathfinder areas who have stopped taking on housing benefit tenants. [158079]

**Mr. Pond:** We are making good progress in applying our ground-breaking Local Housing Allowance to tenants with mainstream tenancies in the private rented sector. All the nine pathfinder local authorities, who are taking this forward for us, have begun to implement the reforms. We have made an encouraging start: implementation has been smooth and early indications are that the shift away from making payments direct to landlords is going well. Initial concerns from landlords have now been addressed to a large extent and we are not aware of any landlords withdrawing from the market.

The reforms are intended to help landlords, as well as tenants, by creating a more transparent system that will be simpler for local authorities to administer, thereby speeding up overall processing times. Also, the safeguards we have built in regarding direct payment to landlords in particular circumstances are designed to protect the interests of both landlord and tenant.

It is too early to fully assess the response of tenants and landlords, but we have put a comprehensive evaluation strategy in place.

### Child Support Agency

**Mr. Lidington:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has to bring older Child Support Agency cases into the new system for assessment. [158880]

**Mr. Pond:** I refer the hon. Member to the written answer I gave the hon. Member for Castle Point (Bob Spink) on 18 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 1092W.

**Mr. Bill O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many payments of maintenance to parents with care have been delayed in the last six months because of the failure of the system in the issuing of maintenance payments; and if he will make a statement. [157984]

**Mr. Pond:** The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

*Letter from Doug Smith to Mr Bill O'Brien dated 9 March 2004:*

In reply to your recent Parliamentary question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many payments of maintenance to parents with care have been delayed in the last six months because of the failure of the system in the issuing of maintenance payments; and if he will make a statement.

Between August 2003 and February 2004 the new computer system generated over 346,000 payments. In the same period 1,741 payments were issued manually. I do not have a record of how many of these payments represent a delay in the issue of maintenance

## Departmental Estate

**Mr. Burns:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether his Department plans to sell its premises in Beeches Road, Chelmsford; and if he will make a statement. [159994]

**Maria Eagle:** The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

*Letter from David Anderson to Mr. Simon Burns, dated 9 March 2004:*

As Jobcentre Plus is an Executive Agency, the Secretary of State has asked me to reply direct to your question concerning plans to sell off the Jobcentre Plus premises at Beeches Road, Chelmsford. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of the Agency.

In Essex, Jobcentre Plus consulted with partners and stakeholders during 2001 and 2002 and their views were taken into account in the final delivery plan that has now been put into place across this District.

Jobcentre Plus has now been introduced to all the offices in Essex District, including Beeches Road, to deliver a radical change in the way that benefits and employment services are provided to people of working age. We have no current plans to vacate that office.

Through the development of these new modern offices, we are providing an integrated, work-focused service to all people of working age. The introduction of work-focused interviews is extending the opportunity to more people who are taking advantage of the help, guidance and support we can provide to assist them to move into sustainable employment.

In all our plans we have focused on the needs of our customers. The new offices offer customers a seamless service, where they are able to make enquires about their benefit entitlement, and the training and employment opportunities available to them, under one roof.

In addition to these services Jobcentre Plus provides access to a telephone contact centre network where our customers are able to make enquiries without having to come into one of our offices. Our Beeches Road site offers both face to face and contact centre services.

Jobcentre Plus keeps under constant review our Estates and operational delivery to customers. I hope it will reassure you to know that, at the present time, there are no plans to vacate the Beeches Road premises.

## Skilled Migrants

**Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many skilled migrants were working in *(a)* the NHS and *(b)* the education sector on the last date for which figures are available. [157584]

**Ruth Kelly:** I have been asked to reply.

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Mark Simmonds, dated 9 March 2004:*

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about skilled migrant workers in the NHS and in the Education sector. (157584)

The attached table gives the available information from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) for the three month period ending in November 2003. "Migrant" workers have been identified from the survey as those people working in the UK whose nationality is not British. The surveys does not analyse data specifically according to "skills", but for this purpose "skills" have been represented in terms of a person's highest qualification.

As with any statistical sample survey, estimates for the LFS are subject to sampling variability.

*Non-British nationals of working age[1] working in the NHS and the Education sector, by highest qualification held 3 month period ending November 2003*

*Thousand*

| | *Health authority or NHS trust* | *Education Sector[2]* |
|---|---|---|
| *Highest qualification* | | |
| Degree or equivalent | 41 | 23 |
| Higher education | 35 | * |
| GCE A Level or equivalent | * | * |
| GCSE grades A-C or equivalent | * | * |
| Other qualifications | 36 | 10 |
| No qualification | * | * |

[1] Applies to all men aged 16–64 and women 16–59.
[2] This includes University, Polytechnic or other grant funded educational establishments.
* Sample size too small for reliable estimate.
*Source:*
ONS—Labour Force Survey.

## Social Fund

**Mr. Love:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will provide additional assistance to those families on low incomes who receive a Social Fund *(a)* grant and *(b)* loan where the amount awarded is insufficient to cover basic household goods. [154205]

**Mr. Pond** *[pursuant to his reply, 11 February 2004, Official Report, c. 1492W]:* Community Care Grants, Crisis Loans and Budgeting Loans are part of the Discretionary Social Fund. They are designed to provide extra help for the most vulnerable people in society, helping them meet unexpected and more routine needs. The Discretionary Social Fund net budget will be increased by 6 per cent. in April 2004 and by a further 6 per cent. in April 2005.

As the Discretionary Social Fund is cash limited and decision makers may not always be able to award the full amount that a person has asked for; however they will always consider individual circumstances when making an award.

If a person believes that the grant or loan is not sufficient to meet their needs they have the right to ask for the decision to be reviewed, first by their local office and, if they disagree with the outcome, the Independent Review Service. There are no current plans to change this procedure.

## PRIME MINISTER

### Correspondence

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Prime Minister whether he authorised the letter faxed to the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Clare Short) on 28 February by the Cabinet Secretary. [158946]

**The Prime Minister:** As the Cabinet Secretary, Sir Andrew Turnbull, informed the Public Administration Select Committee on Thursday 4 March, the letter was initiated by him. I was aware of it and approved of it being sent.

### Intelligence Services

**Peter Bradley:** To ask the Prime Minister whether he received representations *(a)* in the run-up to and *(b)* during the war in Iraq from the then Secretary of State for International Development in which she raised concerns about the alleged activities of the United Kingdom's intelligence services at the UN. [158523]

**The Prime Minister:** It has been the practice of successive Governments not to comment on intelligence matters.

### Iraq

**Mr. Gordon Prentice:** To ask the Prime Minister if he will release to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration the full advice of the Attorney General on the legality of the war with Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [159588]

**The Prime Minister:** In evidence to the Public Administration Select Committee on 4 March, the Cabinet Secretary made clear that discussions with the Parliamentary Ombudsman are continuing as part of the normal process of handling these cases. The Government believe that the Attorney-General's advice on the legality of the military action against Iraq is covered by exemptions 2 and 4 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Prime Minister which members of the Cabinet were provided with a copy of the Attorney-General's full opinion on the legality of military action against Iraq in March 2003. [159937]

**The Prime Minister:** It is established practice not to disclose details of internal discussion and advice or details of the circulation of papers to the Cabinet in line with exemption 2 of Part 2 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Prime Minister what representations were made by UK Government *(a)* ministers, *(b)* agencies and *(c)* Departments to (i) Dr. David Kay and (ii) the Iraq Survey Group (A) before and (B) during the preparation of its first draft report. [159943]

**The Prime Minister:** The UK has a number of civilian and military personnel attached to the Iraq Survey Group who are part of the process in investigating Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programmes. As part of this process, some would have contributed to the drafting of Dr. Kay's interim report on the work of the Iraq Survey Group.

### Nuclear Weapons

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Prime Minister, pursuant to the reply to the hon. Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Glenda Jackson) of 10 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1346W, what provisions of international law cover the use of nuclear weapons. [159934]

**The Prime Minister:** The legality of the use of nuclear weapons depends upon the application of the general rules of international law, including those regulating the inherent right of self-defence and the conduct of hostilities.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Afghanistan

**Mr. Ancram:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps his Department is taking to improve access to human intelligence for *(a)* British and *(b)* NATO forces operating in Afghanistan; and when he expects a human intelligence capacity to be available to British armed forces in Afghanistan. [159017]

**Mr. Straw:** It is the well-established and long-standing practice of successive Governments not to comment on operations of the Intelligence Services. The security and intelligence agencies are outside the scope of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information (Paragraph 6, Part 1).

**Mr. Ancram:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the *(a)* Afghans and *(b)* foreign nationals being held by the Coalition at Bagram airbase; and how long he expects they will be held. [158836]

**Mr. Straw** *[holding answer 8 March 2004]:* The British Government do not have detailed information about non-British detainees at Bagram. No British citizens are currently being held at Bagram and none of the detainees held there was captured by British forces. The International Committee of the Red Cross has been able to assess conditions at Bagram since 22 January 2002.

### Burma

**Vera Baird:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the value is of

Burmese assets frozen by the UK under EU sanctions; what the nature of those assets is; and where they are held. [159884]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** The value of Burmese assets currently frozen by the UK under the EU Common Position is £3,573.57. The assets frozen are personal bank accounts of three individuals listed in the Annex to the Common Position, which is available on the website of the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma: http://www.ncgub.net/Int'l%20Action/EU/EU%20Commission%20regulation%2023%20December%202003.pdf.

### Democratic Republic of Congo

**Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of militia violence in the Katanga province of the Democratic Republic of Congo. [159254]

**Mr. Mullin:** Recent reports of militia violence in the Katanga province of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) relate to a number of attacks by a renegade militia group since the beginning of this year. The UN Mission in the DRC is in the process of investigating. We deplore all violence against innocent civilians.

### Departmental Communications

**Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many staff are employed in the Department to work in the communications field, broken down by *(a)* Government Information and Communication Service staff and *(b)* other staff, broken down by (i) press officers, (ii) special advisers and (iii) others. [158171]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** External communications is the responsibility of the Press Office in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). There are 28 staff in the Press Office, comprising of six General Information and Communication Service (GICS) press officers, 11 non-GICS press officers and 11 support staff.

Each of our overseas Posts also has a capacity to deal with local press and communications issues, commensurate with the size of the post and media interest.

There are seven GICS officers working outside the Press Office.

For details of the special advisers employed by the FCO, I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 23 January 2003, *Official Report*, column 469W.

**Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the total expenditure on communications for the Department has been in 2003–04, broken down by expenditure on *(a)* Government Information and Communications Service staff and *(b)* other staff, broken down by (i) press officers.(ii) special advisers and (iii) others. [158203]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** External communications is the responsibility of the Press Office of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). We anticipate the staff costs for 2003/04 will be as follows: GICS Press Officers £259,573, non GICS Press Officers £478,780, support staff £331,453, giving a total cost for the year of £1,069,806. There are further UK based, GICS staff, working outside of the Press Office and their cost for 2003–04 is anticipated to be £278,343. The total pay of special advisers for the year 2003–04 is anticipated to be £188,324. Costs comprise salary, employer's national insurance contributions and employers pension contributions.

Our overseas posts have a capacity to deal with local press and communications issues, commensurate with the size of the post and media interest, however these costs could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

The FCO is also the sponsoring Department for the BBC World Service, whose costs for the 10 months to 31 January 2004 are £177,859,730.

### Iraq

**Lynne Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 26 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 482W, on Iraq, when the British embassy received the Note Verbale from the Mexican Government; and whether the UK Government has replied. [158354]

**Mr. Rammell:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Walthamstow (Mr. Gerrard) on 2 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 743.

**Mr. Chidgey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many contracts, of what total financial value, have been awarded for reconstruction projects in Iraq, broken down by nationality of company awarded a contract. [159002]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** The US administration has allocated $18.6 billion for the reconstruction process in Iraq. Because of the large number of different organisations involved and the fact that many are involved in partnerships with American, Iraqi and other companies, it has not been possible to maintain an overall picture of the total volume of contracts awarded on the basis of nationality, and the cumulative value of these contracts. There is no central organisation that collects, collates and publishes such information. However, British companies are active in the power, water, banking, ports, construction, telecoms, security, legal services and consultancy sectors.

**Mr. Swayne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the circumstances surrounding the recent replacement of the Coalition Provisional Authority Governorate Co-ordinator for Dhi Qar province in Iraq. [159191]

**Mr. Rammell** *[holding answer 8 March 2004]:* John Bourne served as the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) Governorate Co-ordinator for Dhi Qar province from early September 2003 to 27 February 2004. It was never intended that he should remain until the dissolution of the CPA. He served with distinction in the face of considerable difficulties, particularly after the attack on the Italian Carabinieri in Nassariya. His Italian replacement, Barbara Contini, has already been working in the CPA's Regional Office in Basra, and comes with strong experience of post-conflict reconstruction in the Balkans.

**Joan Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the effect of the interim constitution adopted by the Interim Governing Council in Iraq on the rights of women. [159501]

**Mr. Rammell:** The Transitional Administrative Law (TAL) signed on 8 March 2004 includes clear provisions for the protection of women's rights. It enshrines the fundamental rights of all Iraqis. It strictly prohibits discrimination based upon gender. The TAL also stipulates an electoral system designed to ensure that no less than one-quarter of representatives in the National Assembly are women.

**Joan Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the current status is of the decision taken by the governing council in Iraq to repeal existing family laws and make family law subject to Sharia. [159502]

**Mr. Rammell:** Governing Council Resolution 137 on family law has been withdrawn by the Governing Council. It has no legal status.

### Kolay

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what inquiries he has made about the *(a)* fate and *(b)* whereabouts of the 500 villagers from Kolay and two nearby villages who were in hiding following clashes between forces from the State Peace and Development Council and the Karen National Union on 17 and 18 January; [157624]

(2) what representations he has made to the Government of Burma about the action of the State Peace and Development Council in forcibly relocating all Karenni villagers north and south of the Mawchi-Taungoo road to Mahutahlayu near Pasaungi in December 2003. [157626]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** We have made no direct inquiries or representations on these issues. I do not have access to information to make accurate and reliable assessments of these matters. Travel restrictions imposed by the State Peace and Development Council on diplomats prevent local investigation or inquiries and make it difficult to independently verify such allegations.

### Nepal

**Mr. Rendel:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what advice his Department gives to British travellers to Nepal on the Government's policy towards *(a)* the Government of Nepal and *(b)* Maoist rebels against the Government of Nepal. [160178]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) travel advice does not contain statements of Government policy towards a particular country. FCO Travel Advice is available on the FCO website www.fco.gov.uk or it can be obtained by calling 0870 606 0290.

The FCO produces Travel Advice on 217 countries, including Nepal, which aims to ensure that British travellers are well prepared before their departure. This travel advice takes account of the on-going conflict between the government of Nepal and the Maoist insurgents.

**Mr. Rendel:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what statements have been made by his Department on the Government's policy on the Maoist rebellion in Nepal in the last two years. [160179]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** I refer the hon. Member to my statement in the House on Nepal on 19 June 2002, *Official Report,* columns 114–17WH, and to the statement I made at the Nepal International Support meeting in Nepal on 11 October 2002, a copy of which I will place in the Library of the House. On 22 October 2003 I released a press statement in relation to the British Gurkha Nepal team temporarily abducted by Maoist forces. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary released a press statement on 28 August 2003 about the breakdown of the cease-fire in Nepal. Copies of both press statements are available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website: www.fco.gov.uk/policy/news/press-releases.

### Overseas Bribery and Corruption

**Mr. Simon Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what procedures his Department employs for validation of reports on bribery and corruption overseas were received from involved in this procedure; and what criteria are employed for such validation. [151386]

**Mr. MacShane:** Reports on bribery and corruption overseas, received from diplomatic posts, are usually handled by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Economic Policy Department. These reports are examined to see if any further information is necessary on the nature of the allegation and supporting evidence.

Provided there is sufficient detail for an initial analysis, a report is sent to the National Criminal Intelligence Service.

Other Government Departments may also be made aware of these reports.

### Sierra Leone

**Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the progress of repatriation of Sierra Leone refugees from Liberia. [159217]

**Mr. Mullin:** On 2 March the UN High Commission for Refugees restarted its repatriation programme for Sierra Leone refugees in Liberia. The first repatriations are proceeding smoothly. The programme is scheduled to last 17 weeks and aims to repatriate 14,000 of the 38,000 remaining refugees, 13,000 of whom are in refugee camps.

### Sudan

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the situation in Darfur in Sudan. [158977]

**Mr. Mullin:** The situation in Darfur remains very serious. We are particularly concerned by reported attacks on civilians and are appealing to all parties to ensure protection of the civilian population. Although access to some areas is improving, the ability of humanitarian agencies to assist vulnerable populations remains limited. The Department for International Development has contributed over £6 million in response to the crisis in Darfur and is seconding three humanitarian affairs officers to the UN to work in Darfur for three months.

We are urging all parties to re-establish a ceasefire, permit humanitarian access to those in need, and resume talks. To this end we have lobbied at the highest levels in Khartoum, and are in almost daily contact with the Government of Sudan and the Darfur groups. The EU issued a statement expressing its serious concern on 25 February.

### UK Mission (Bugging)

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the bugging of the UK Mission in the Justus Lipsius Council of Ministers building in 2003. [158527]

**Mr. MacShane:** Since 14 April 2003, *Official Report*, column 530W, when I replied to the hon. Member for Sutton and Cheam (Mr. Burstow), the Belgian authorities, on the approval of the Council of Ministers, have taken over the Council Secretariat's investigation into the discovery of a number of devices in the Justus Lipsius Council of Ministers building last year. We are co-operating closely with the authorities. The bugging operation remains a matter of serious concern.

## DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

### ACAS

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether each agency in the Department has disciplinary procedures which comply with *(a)* the ACAS handbook on discipline and grievances at work and *(b)* the ACAS Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures. [159413]

**Yvette Cooper:** Yes. In common with practice throughout the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, each agency has disciplinary procedures that comply with the ACAS Handbook and the ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure.

### Arms-Length Management Organisations

**John Mann:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the legal liability is of the shareholders of arms-length management organisations if their ALMO goes bankrupt. [159460]

**Keith Hill:** The normal principles of company and company insolvency law apply to Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs). ALMOs are normally set up by local authorities as companies limited by guarantee. The local authority would not normally have any legal liability if an ALMO became insolvent, but each case will turn on its own facts. The authority would, however, remain statutorily responsible for providing and managing the housing stock.

### Departmental Minutes

**Mr. Lilley:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether it is the Department's policy to make notes of *(a)* meetings and *(b)* telephone conversations involving Ministers; and under what circumstances no notes would be taken. [149528]

**Yvette Cooper:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister follows the central "Guidance on the Management of Private Office Papers" which makes clear that good record management procedures are necessary not least to ensure accountability and provide an audit trail. Among the records covered by the guidance are Ministers' meetings and telephone conversations.

### Employment Tribunals

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much money has been spent on *(a)* settling and *(b)* contesting claims in the Department registered at employment tribunals for (i) race discrimination, (ii) sex discrimination, (iii) disability discrimination, (iv) unfair dismissal and (v) equal pay since 1 January 2003. [159412]

**Yvette Cooper:** During the period in question, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has settled one Employment Tribunal case on terms that involved the payment of financial compensation. All other cases brought against the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister were either withdrawn by the applicants, or settled on terms that did not involve payment.

The exception was one case in category (i)—race relations—in which damages of £6,324.16 were paid.

The amounts expended in contesting applications made to Employment Tribunals are as set out as follows. The figures represent the costs of instructing Treasury Solicitor and of disbursements on fees to Counsel and other expenses. They include the case referred to above, as well as cases where The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has settled without payment of compensation, cases that have been successfully defended, cases that have been withdrawn and on-going expenses of cases that are still being contested.

Since 1 January 2003 the amount of money spent on contesting claims at employment tribunals in the categories listed are as follows:

(i) race discrimination—£15,655.64

(ii) sex discrimination—£634

(iii) disability discrimination—£23,856.85

(iv) unfair dismissal—£14,004.96

(v) equal pay—£138,566.94.

### Homelessness

**Ms Oona King:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of Best Value Performance Indicator 183 as an indicator of the quality of service offered by local authority homeless services in areas of high demand; and whether BVPI 183 reflects *(a)* a local authority's current and historic performance and *(b)* the length of time homeless families with children in areas of high demand are required to spend in bed and breakfast or hostel accommodation; [158551]

(2) if he will list the respondents to the consultation on Best Value Performance Indicator *(a)* X8, the number of individuals sleeping rough and *(b)* X9, the number of homeless families with children placed in temporary accommodation; if he will place copies of the responses in the Library; and when he expects to make a decision on their introduction. [158552]

**Yvette Cooper:** While no assessment has been made which focuses specifically on Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) 183's effectiveness in areas of high demand, the BVPI does form part of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's monitoring of all local authorities' provision of homelessness services. The BVPI provides useful information on the average length of time families with children spend in temporary accommodation with shared facilities. BVPI 183 was introduced in 2002–03. From 2004–05, it is proposed that this BVPI will be complemented by two other homelessness indicators, which will record the number of individuals sleeping rough (BVX8) and the number of homeless families with children placed in temporary accommodation (BVX9).

Consultation on the introduction of the two additional Homelessness Best Value Performance Indicators closed on 6 February. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister received 75 responses. A list of the respondents is as follows.

An Order was laid before Parliament on 4 March which will enable the two additional Homelessness Best Value Performance Indicators to come into force from

1 April. I will arrange for copies of the responses to the consultation paper to be made available in the Libraries of the House in due course.

*Respondents to the consultation on BVX8 and BVX9:*

Association of London Government
Barnardo's
Barnsley metropolitan borough council
Basingstoke and Deane borough council
Bassettlaw district council
Bradford metropolitan district council
Breckland district council
Brentwood borough council
Brighton and Hove city council
Bristol city council
Broadway
Burnley borough council
Bury metropolitan borough council
Chartered Institute of Housing
Cherwell district council
Chester city council
Corporation of London
Cotswold district council
Darlington borough council
Doncaster metropolitan borough council
Dudley metropolitan borough council
East Dorset district council
East Northamptonshire district council
Eastbourne borough council
Gateshead metropolitan borough council
Gedling borough council
Greater London Association
Groundswell UK
Halton borough council
Hambleton district council
Hastings borough council
Homeless Link
Horsham district council
Local Government Association
London borough of Hammersmith and Fulham
London borough of Haringey
London borough of Harrow
London borough of Hillingdon
London borough of Lambeth
London borough of Merton
London borough of Newham
London borough of Redbridge (Officer Response)
London borough of Walthamstow
London borough of Wandsworth
London borough of Westminster
Lincoln city council
Liverpool city council
Manchester city council
Mid Beds district council
National Audit Office
Mid Sussex district council
North Hertfordshire district council
Penwith district council
Portsmouth city council
Royal borough of Kensington and Chelsea
Redcar and Cleveland borough council
Restormel borough council
Rochdale metropolitan borough council
Rotherham metropolitan borough council
Rushmoor borough council
Ryedale district council
Salford city council
Sandwell metropolitan borough council
Selby district council
Sheffield city council
Shelter
Shepway district council
South Bedfordshire district council
South Holland district council
South Oxfordshire district council
Stratford on Avon district council
Stroud district council
Sunderland city council
Tonbridge and Mailing borough council
Uttlesford district council
Warwick district council
West Somerset district council
Wychavon district council

## Local Authorities (Members' Allowances)

**Mr. Laurence Robertson:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will amend the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 to allow co-opted councillors to claim allowances; and if he will make a statement. [157315]

**Mr. Raynsford:** Co-opted members of principal councils are already entitled to receive a co-optees allowance and a travel and subsistence allowance.

Co-opted members of parishes are not currently entitled to receive allowances. However, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister intends to amend the regulations governing councillors' allowances shortly so that all parish councillors are eligible to receive an allowance for travel and subsistence.

At present, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not plan to allow un-elected parish councillors to receive a basic allowance and will reassess this position, as part of the wider review of councillors' allowances, later this year.

**Mr. Swayne:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received on the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) Regulations (England) 2003; what plans he has to alter the regulations in respect of non-elected councillors; and if he will make a statement. [158822]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has received a number of letters from MPs in recent weeks on behalf of their parish councils in respect of non-elected parish councillors.

Co-opted members of parishes are not currently entitled to receive allowances. However, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister intends to amend the

regulations governing councillors' allowances shortly so that all parish councillors are eligible to receive an allowance for travel and subsistence.

At present, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not plan to allow un-elected parish councillors to receive a basic allowance and will reassess this position, as part of the wider review of councillors' allowances, later this year.

**Mr. Clifton-Brown:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to change the regulations whereby co-opted parish councillors are not entitled to the same pay and allowances as elected parish councillors. [158110]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister intends to amend the regulations governing councillors' allowances shortly so that all parish councillors are eligible to receive an allowance for travel and subsistence.

At present, however, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not plan to allow un-elected parish councillors to receive a basic allowance. We will reassess this position, as part of the wider review of councillors' allowances, later this year.

### Local Government

**Sir John Stanley:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what figure for the rate of inflation was used by the Minister for Local Government in his statement on 16 January that each local authority would receive at least an above inflation increase in grant for 2004–05. [159801]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The latest estimate of inflation available on 16 January was the Retail Price Index—all items excluding Mortgage Interest Payments (RPIX) for November 2003 at 2.5 per cent.

Every local authority in England with responsibility for education and social services received at least a 4 per cent. increase in formula grant on a like-for-like basis in 2004–05; every shire district received at least a 3 per cent. increase; every fire authority received at least a $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. increase; and every police authority received at least a $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. increase.

### Local Government Pension Scheme

**Mr. Todd:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what progress has been made on the reform of the Local Government Pension Scheme; and if he will make a statement. [159465]

**Phil Hope:** A phased programme of regulatory and policy reform of the Local Government Pension Scheme was announced on 23 July 2003. This takes forward the Government's proposals on the future of occupational pension schemes set out in the White Paper "Simplicity security and choice (CMS835)" and some initial findings from the on-going Stocktake of the Scheme. Following consultation, new regulations will take effect on 1 April. These will be followed by a statutory consultation exercise on further scheme amendments, which in part deal with proposals to increase the normal retirement age. These amendments are intended to take effect from April 2005. For the longer term, proposals to ensure the sustainability of the Scheme will be circulated to stakeholders in England and Wales later in the year.

### Planning Guidance

**Mr. Clifton-Brown:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which planning guidance notes are to be replaced with Planning Policy Statements; and what the timetable is. [159962]

**Keith Hill:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has gone out to public consultation on revisions to PPG1 (General Policies and Principles), PPG3 (Housing), PPG6 (Town Centres), PPG7 (Countryside), PPG 11 (Regional Planning), PPG12 (Development Plans), PPG 22 (Renewable Energy) and PPG23 (Planning and Pollution) with a view to re-issuing these during 2004 as Planning Policy Statements (PPS). It is anticipated that consultation will begin in the first half of 2004 on revisions to PPG4 (Economic Development), PPG9 (Nature Conservation/ Biodiversity) and PPG10 (Planning and Waste Management).

The timetable for the review of other PPGs is being considered in the light of the recommendation in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Select Committee's report on the Annual Report 2003 that we should withdraw our stated intention to revise the less controversial PPGs. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister aims to make an announcement on this by the end of March.

### Roma

**Mr. Paice:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what estimate he has made of the impact on Cambridgeshire of migration by the Roma Community of Eastern Europe after enlargement of the EU on 1 May; [150822]

(2) what guidance he is issuing to local authorities regarding inward migration of the Roma community of Eastern Europe after enlargement of the EU on 1 May. [150823]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answers 26 January 2004]:* I have been asked to reply.

It is not possible to produce a reliable estimate of numbers of people from the accession countries, whether or not they are members of the Roma community, who may travel to Cambridgeshire. There is no information available upon which such an estimate could be based. However guidance will be made available to local housing authorities regarding proposed changes to the rules on eligibility for benefits that they administer, and on eligibility for social housing and homelessness assistance, to which my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary referred in his Statement to the House on EU Accession on 23 February.

### Severe Weather

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidelines he has issued to local authorities on dealing with the effects of severe weather. [159237]

**Mr. Alexander:** I have been asked to reply.

Cabinet Office has produced guidance—Dealing with Disaster—on the principles of emergency planning to assist local authorities in their preparation for, and response to, a range of major incidents, including those resulting from the effects of severe weather.

Within this framework, local authorities work closely with relevant Government Departments and organisations to ensure that robust and effective plans are in place. For example, local authorities, where necessary, will liaise regularly with flood defence managers at the Environment Agency to maintain flood defence plans.

The guidance is available in the Libraries of the House and at www.ukresilience.gov.uk.

### Statutory Sick Pay

**Mr. Goodman:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many people employed in his Department have claimed statutory sick pay for *(a)* less than one week, *(b)* one to three weeks, *(c)* four to six weeks, *(d)* seven to 12 weeks, *(e)* 13 to 20 weeks and *(f)* 21 to 28 weeks in each year since 1997. [148626]

**Yvette Cooper:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was established following Machinery of Government changes in May 2002. The first complete year for which we have data on staff sick absence rates for staff in our HQ is January-December 2003. During this period the number of people taking sick leave was as follows:

| *Number of days* | *Number taking sick leave* |
|---|---|
| *(a)* 4–7 | 411 |
| *(b)* 8–21 | 204 |
| *(c)* 22–42 | 53 |
| *(d)* 43–72 | 31 |
| *(e)* 73–140 | 22 |
| *(f)* 141–196 | 4 |

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is committed to managing sick absence effectively.

## HEALTH

### B Streptococcal Screening

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research his Department has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the costs and benefits of group B Streptococcal screening. [158783]

**Dr. Ladyman:** The National Institute for Clinical Excellence recently published a Clinical Guideline on Routine Antenatal Care, which recommends that pregnant women should not be offered routine antenatal screening for group B streptococcus (GBS), because evidence that it will do more good than harm is uncertain.

The UK National Screening Committee is currently reviewing the prevention of GBS infection in newborn babies. As part of its work programme, it has asked the National Co-ordinating Centre for Health Technology Assessment to commission research in this area and detailed proposals are being developed.

### Dentistry

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS dental practices have gone private in the last year; and if he will make a statement. [154434]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The number of dental practices going totally private is very small as most dentists continue with some national health service work. The Office of Fair Trading report "The private dentistry market in the UK", published in March 2003, states that only 210 practices are totally private in the UK out of 11,000 practices in total.

Between August 2002 and August 2003 the total number of dental practices in the General Dental Service, Personal Dental Service or Salaried Dental Services increased by 44.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS orthodontists accepted new NHS patients in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [154437]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Information is not available in the form requested. Information on which dentists currently accept new national health service patients is continually updated and available on the NHS website at www.nhs.uk. However, this does not identify those dentists who do orthodontic work within the general dental service.

The number of dentists making 100 or more appliance claims for payments for orthodontic appliances, together with dentists in personal dental service orthodontic pilots, is available from the Dental Practice Board. These data are shown in the table for the period since 1997–98.

*Number of dentists with 100 or more appliance claims or in orthodontic pilots in England*

| | *Number*[1] |
|---|---|
| 1997–98 | 448 |
| 1998–99 | 482 |
| 1999–2000 | 490 |
| 2000–01 | 532 |
| 2001–02 | 565 |
| 2002–03 | 591 |

[1] General dental service dentists with 100 or more appliance claims during the year and personal dental service dentists in orthodontic pilots at September.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of NHS dentists were *(a)* male and *(b)* female in (i) each NHS region, (ii) each strategic health authority and (iii) England in each year since 1990. [156294]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The available information is shown in the tables. This is for the proportion of male and female national health service dentists for each NHS region, each strategic health authority and England at September in each of the years 1996 to 2002 in table 1. For the years 1991 to 1995, information is available for England only and is in table 2.

NHS dentists cover dentists working in the general dental service (GDS), hospital dental service (HDS),

community dental service (CDS), and personal dental service (PDS). Excluded are the small numbers of salaried dentists. Dentists are counted on a headcount basis and so no account is taken for part-time working in the NHS.

Dentists working in more than one dental service are included in each service, apart from dentists working in both PDS and GDS who are counted in the GDS only.

Information for 2003 is not yet available.

*Table 1: National health service: Proportion of dentists in England by sex in each region and strategic health authority at September each year*

| | 1996 | | 1997 | | 1998 | | 1999 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Male* | *Female* | *Male* | *Female* | *Male* | *Female* | *Male* | *Female* |
| *England* | 0.70 | 0.30 | 0.69 | 0.31 | 0.69 | 0.31 | 0.68 | 0.32 |
| *NHS Region* | | | | | | | | |
| Northern and Yorkshire | 0.70 | 0.30 | 0.69 | 0.31 | 0.69 | 0.31 | 0.67 | 0.33 |
| Trent | 0.73 | 0.27 | 0.72 | 0.28 | 0.71 | 0.29 | 0.70 | 0.30 |
| West Midlands | 0.71 | 0.29 | 0.71 | 0.29 | 0.70 | 0.30 | 0.70 | 0.30 |
| North West | 0.70 | 0.30 | 0.70 | 0.30 | 0.68 | 0.32 | 0.68 | 0.32 |
| Eastern | 0.72 | 0.28 | 0.70 | 0.30 | 0.70 | 0.30 | 0.70 | 0.30 |
| London | 0.69 | 0.31 | 0.68 | 0.32 | 0.65 | 0.35 | 0.66 | 0.34 |
| South East | 0.68 | 0.32 | 0.67 | 0.33 | 0.67 | 0.33 | 0.66 | 0.34 |
| South and West | 0.72 | 0.28 | 0.71 | 0.29 | 0.71 | 0.29 | 0.70 | 0.30 |
| *Strategic Health Authority* | | | | | | | | |
| Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire | 0.70 | 0.30 | 0.68 | 0.32 | 0.67 | 0.33 | 0.67 | 0.33 |
| Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire | 0.72 | 0.28 | 0.72 | 0.28 | 0.71 | 0.29 | 0.71 | 0.29 |
| Birmingham and The Black Country | 0.71 | 0.29 | 0.72 | 0.28 | 0.72 | 0.28 | 0.71 | 0.29 |
| Cheshire and Merseyside | 0.69 | 0.31 | 0.68 | 0.32 | 0.66 | 0.34 | 0.67 | 0.33 |
| County Durham and Tees Valley | 0.68 | 0.32 | 0.67 | 0.33 | 0.66 | 0.34 | 0.65 | 0.35 |
| Cov., Warks, Herefordshire and Worcs | 0.68 | 0.32 | 0.67 | 0.33 | 0.68 | 0.32 | 0.68 | 0.32 |
| Cumbria and Lancashire | 0.69 | 0.31 | 0.68 | 0.32 | 0.66 | 0.34 | 0.65 | 0.35 |
| Dorset and Somerset | 0.77 | 0.23 | 0.75 | 0.25 | 0.75 | 0.25 | 0.74 | 0.26 |
| Essex | 0.74 | 0.26 | 0.72 | 0.28 | 0.70 | 0.30 | 0.71 | 0.29 |
| Greater Manchester | 0.72 | 0.28 | 0.72 | 0.28 | 0.70 | 0.30 | 0.70 | 0.30 |
| Hampshire and Isle of Wight | 0.68 | 0.32 | 0.67 | 0.33 | 0.67 | 0.33 | 0.66 | 0.34 |
| Kent and Medway | 0.67 | 0.33 | 0.66 | 0.34 | 0.68 | 0.32 | 0.67 | 0.33 |
| Leics, Northants and Rutland | 0.73 | 0.27 | 0.72 | 0.28 | 0.72 | 0.28 | 0.71 | 0.29 |
| Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire | 0.71 | 0.29 | 0.69 | 0.31 | 0.69 | 0.31 | 0.69 | 0.31 |
| North and East Yorkshire and North Lincs. | 0.75 | 0.25 | 0.75 | 0.25 | 0.73 | 0.27 | 0.73 | 0.27 |
| North Central London | 0.67 | 0.33 | 0.67 | 0.33 | 0.68 | 0.32 | 0.65 | 0.35 |
| North East London | 0.73 | 0.27 | 0.72 | 0.28 | 0.72 | 0.28 | 0.70 | 0.30 |
| North West London | 0.70 | 0.30 | 0.69 | 0.31 | 0.67 | 0.33 | 0.67 | 0.33 |
| Northumberland, Tyne and Wear | 0.70 | 0.30 | 0.69 | 0.31 | 0.69 | 0.31 | 0.67 | 0.33 |
| Shropshire and Staffordshire | 0.72 | 0.28 | 0.72 | 0.28 | 0.71 | 0.29 | 0.70 | 0.30 |
| South East London | 0.68 | 0.32 | 0.67 | 0.33 | 0.65 | 0.35 | 0.64 | 0.36 |
| South West London | 0.66 | 0.34 | 0.66 | 0.34 | 0.63 | 0.37 | 0.64 | 0.36 |
| South West Peninsula | 0.73 | 0.27 | 0.74 | 0.26 | 0.72 | 0.28 | 0.73 | 0.27 |
| South Yorkshire | 0.71 | 0.29 | 0.70 | 0.30 | 0.71 | 0.29 | 0.71 | 0.29 |
| Surrey and Sussex | 0.69 | 0.31 | 0.69 | 0.31 | 0.69 | 0.31 | 0.68 | 0.32 |
| Thames Valley | 0.65 | 0.35 | 0.65 | 0.35 | 0.64 | 0.36 | 0.63 | 0.37 |
| Trent | 0.72 | 0.28 | 0.72 | 0.28 | 0.70 | 0.30 | 0.69 | 0.31 |
| West Yorkshire | 0.68 | 0.32 | 0.68 | 0.32 | 0.69 | 0.31 | 0.67 | 0.33 |

| | 2000 | | 2001 | | 2002 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Male* | *Female* | *Male* | *Female* | *Male* | *Female* |
| *England* | 0.67 | 0.33 | 0.66 | 0.34 | 0.66 | 0.34 |
| *NHS Region* | | | | | | |
| Northern and Yorkshire | 0.67 | 0.33 | 0.66 | 0.34 | — | — |
| Trent | 0.69 | 0.31 | 0.69 | 0.31 | — | — |
| West Midlands | 0.68 | 0.32 | 0.66 | 0.34 | — | — |
| Northwest | 0.67 | 0.33 | 0.66 | 0.34 | — | — |
| Eastern | 0.70 | 0.30 | 0.69 | 0.31 | — | — |
| London | 0.65 | 0.35 | 0.64 | 0.36 | — | — |
| South East | 0.65 | 0.35 | 0.65 | 0.35 | — | — |
| South and West | 0.69 | 0.31 | 0.69 | 0.31 | — | — |
| *Strategic Health Authority* | | | | | | |
| Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire | 0.66 | 0.34 | 0.65 | 0.35 | 0.64 | 0.36 |
| Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire | 0.71 | 0.29 | 0.69 | 0.31 | 0.68 | 0.32 |
| Birmingham and The Black Country | 0.69 | 0.31 | 0.68 | 0.32 | 0.67 | 0.33 |
| Cheshire and Merseyside | 0.65 | 0.35 | 0.64 | 0.36 | 0.64 | 0.36 |
| County Durham and Tees Valley | 0.64 | 0.36 | 0.63 | 0.37 | 0.65 | 0.35 |
| Cov., Warks, Herefordshire and Worcs. | 0.65 | 0.35 | 0.64 | 0.36 | 0.63 | 0.37 |
| Cumbria and Lancashire | 0.66 | 0.34 | 0.65 | 0.35 | 0.65 | 0.35 |

| | 2000 | | 2001 | | 2002 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Dorset and Somerset | 0.73 | 0.27 | 0.72 | 0.28 | 0.71 | 0.29 |
| Essex | 0.72 | 0.28 | 0.71 | 0.29 | 0.70 | 0.30 |
| Greater Manchester | 0.68 | 0.32 | 0.68 | 0.32 | 0.66 | 0.34 |
| Hampshire and Isle of Wight | 0.64 | 0.36 | 0.65 | 0.35 | 0.64 | 0.36 |
| Kent and Medway | 0.68 | 0.32 | 0.67 | 0.33 | 0.66 | 0.34 |
| Leics., Northants and Rutland | 0.73 | 0.27 | 0.72 | 0.28 | 0.72 | 0.28 |
| Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire | 0.69 | 0.31 | 0.68 | 0.32 | 0.66 | 0.34 |
| North and East Yorkshire and North Lincs. | 0.71 | 0.29 | 0.70 | 0.30 | 0.69 | 0.31 |
| North Central London | 0.65 | 0.35 | 0.62 | 0.38 | 0.62 | 0.38 |
| North East London | 0.68 | 0.32 | 0.66 | 0.34 | 0.66 | 0.34 |
| North West London | 0.68 | 0.32 | 0.66 | 0.34 | 0.66 | 0.34 |
| Northumberland, Tyne and Wear | 0.66 | 0.34 | 0.66 | 0.34 | 0.66 | 0.34 |
| Shropshire and Staffordshire | 0.69 | 0.31 | 0.66 | 0.34 | 0.66 | 0.34 |
| South East London | 0.64 | 0.36 | 0.63 | 0.37 | 0.62 | 0.38 |
| South West London | 0.62 | 0.38 | 0.61 | 0.39 | 0.60 | 0.40 |
| South West Peninsula | 0.72 | 0.28 | 0.72 | 0.28 | 0.72 | 0.28 |
| South Yorkshire | 0.70 | 0.30 | 0.69 | 0.31 | 0.68 | 0.32 |
| Surrey and Sussex | 0.67 | 0.33 | 0.65 | 0.35 | 0.65 | 0.35 |
| Thames Valley | 0.61 | 0.39 | 0.61 | 0.39 | 0.59 | 0.41 |
| Trent | 0.67 | 0.33 | 0.67 | 0.33 | 0.65 | 0.35 |
| West Yorkshire | 0.68 | 0.32 | 0.66 | 0.34 | 0.63 | 0.37 |

*Table 2: National health service: Proportion of dentists in England by sex at September each year*

| | England | |
|---|---|---|
| | Male | Female |
| 1991 | 0.74 | 0.26 |
| 1992 | 0.73 | 0.27 |
| 1993 | 0.72 | 0.28 |
| 1994 | 0.72 | 0.28 |
| 1995 | 0.71 | 0.29 |

### Departmental Staff

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 10 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 502W, on departmental staff, what information his Department collates on the functions undertaken by staff in each business group. [158496]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** In summary, the work of Departmental staff in the three business groups includes:

Delivery—staff responsible for supporting delivery of targets set out in the NHS Plan. These include helping reduce waiting times, increasing choice for National Health Service patients, securing resources for NHS and local government organisations, ensuring the NHS has the capacity to deliver and integrating NHS information technology systems to deliver modernised patient services.

Standards and Quality—staff responsible for the majority of our policy-making responsibilities, ranging from scientific developments and medical innovations, such as stem cell research, to lifestyle issues, such as obesity. Staff set standards and define quality in health and social care services, maintain and promote health and well being, ensure safety of patients and users and deliver key programmes, such as cancer.

Strategy and Business Development—staff responsible for important corporate services, such as communications, corporate human resources and information services, ensuring the Department is run effectively and efficiently. They also lead important programmes and policies, such as system reform, equality, medicine and pharmacy, user experience and involvement and professional leadership.

### Diabetes

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps his Department has taken to *(a)* scope, *(b)* commission and *(c)* disseminate research into the early detection of diabetes. [158029]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The National Screening Committee will, advise the Department by 2005 on the most effective policy for screening for Type 2 diabetes. It is generally accepted that screening of the whole population for Type 2 diabetes would not be cost-effective given the low prevalence of undiagnosed disease. However there is emerging evidence to suggest that it may be clinically and cost effective to offer screening to specific sub-groups of the population who are at high risk for diabetes. The Department and the National Screening Committee have commissioned research to define high-risk individuals and to evaluate pilot screening projects in primary care. The results of this research will be available to inform the advice of the National Screening Committee.

### Eye/Dental Check-ups

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the cost of implementing a policy for free *(a)* eye and *(b)* dental check-ups for all NHS patients. [155965]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Sight tests under national health service arrangements are already available to certain priority groups. These include, children, those aged 16–18 in full-time education, people on low incomes and defined categories of people at particular risk of developing eye disease. In April 1999 we extended sight tests to all people aged 60 and over.

Based on the most recent data available of the number of private sight tests, the cost of extending NHS sight tests to this group, at the 2002–03 rate of £16.72, would be an additional £80 million for England. The total cost would be increased if the change stimulated demand for more eye examinations. Costs could also be affected if

the change in the scope of the NHS service was associated with any review of the sight test fee payable to optometrists.

About a quarter of dental examinations carried out on adults in the general dental service (GDS) involve patients who are exempt from charges or who qualify for a reduced charge.

If dental examinations were made free to all adults in England, patient charge revenue would be reduced by around £85 million per annum.

### Fall-Related Injuries

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost of falls in people aged over 60 was to *(a)* the NHS and *(b)* personal social services in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [156646]

**Dr. Ladyman:** The actual cost of falls to the national health service and to personal social services is not recorded centrally. Hip fractures are the most common serious injury resulting from falls in older people. The national service framework for older people estimated the cost to the NHS of hip fractures at around £1.7 billion per annum for England.

### Fires (Care Homes)

**Sandra Gidley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many fires have occurred in care homes for the elderly *(a)* in total in England and *(b)* broken down by local authority in each year since 1997. [157369]

**Mr. Raynsford:** I have been asked to reply.

The number of fires in care homes for the elderly attended by the Fire and Rescue Service in England since 1997 are as follows:

*Fires[1,2] in care homes for elderly people by Fire and Rescue Authority area, 1997–2002*

| *Fire and Rescue Service area* | *1997* | *1998* | *1999* | *2000* | *2001* | *2002[3]* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| England | 935 | 940 | 1,041 | 851 | 738 | 780 |
| Avon | 12 | 10 | 13 | 12 | 38 | 27 |
| Bedfordshire | 9 | 12 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 10 |
| Berkshire | 15 | 9 | 35 | 16 | 30 | 21 |
| Buckinghamshire | 26 | 70 | 61 | 30 | 22 | 10 |
| Cambridgeshire | 0 | 16 | 0 | 10 | 1 | 11 |
| Cheshire | 36 | 38 | 10 | 22 | 29 | 30 |
| Cleveland | 15 | 18 | 10 | 21 | 10 | 6 |
| Cornwall | 16 | 13 | 25 | 15 | 15 | 0 |
| Cumbria | 5 | 15 | 25 | 20 | 14 | 14 |
| Derbyshire | 19 | 5 | 16 | 11 | 11 | 11 |
| Devon | 33 | 37 | 34 | 40 | 16 | 20 |
| Dorset | 6 | 0 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 11 |
| Durham | 10 | 13 | 12 | 13 | 4 | 4 |
| East Sussex | 5 | 14 | 13 | 5 | 6 | 26 |
| Essex | 13 | 13 | 18 | 11 | 10 | 24 |
| Gloucestershire | 13 | 8 | 0 | 9 | 6 | 5 |
| Hampshire | 10 | 6 | 6 | 20 | 0 | 6 |
| Hereford and Worcester | 28 | 34 | 30 | 21 | 20 | 13 |
| Hertfordshire | 75 | 66 | 75 | 24 | 13 | 25 |
| Humberside | 15 | 15 | 16 | 7 | 6 | 12 |
| Isle of Wight | 0 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Kent | 56 | 30 | 36 | 21 | 5 | 21 |
| Lancashire | 23 | 14 | 41 | 24 | 12 | 30 |
| Leicestershire | 4 | 13 | 0 | 22 | 12 | 15 |
| Lincolnshire | 1 | 11 | 7 | 13 | 12 | 17 |
| Norfolk | 6 | 0 | 3 | 10 | 9 | 4 |
| North Yorkshire | 1 | 1 | 9 | 13 | 27 | 12 |
| Northamptonshire | 54 | 35 | 64 | 18 | 30 | 10 |
| Northumberland | 14 | 6 | 15 | 17 | 11 | 10 |
| Nottinghamshire | 10 | 15 | 3 | 8 | 14 | 9 |
| Oxfordshire | 6 | 0 | 16 | 0 | 4 | 13 |
| Shropshire | 6 | 6 | 13 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Somerset | 0 | 5 | 5 | 10 | 6 | 17 |
| Staffordshire | 18 | 25 | 34 | 29 | 16 | 7 |
| Suffolk | 1 | 2 | 28 | 10 | 4 | 5 |
| Surrey | 5 | 19 | 20 | 30 | 6 | 9 |
| Warwickshire | 17 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 18 |
| West Sussex | 0 | 10 | 15 | 5 | 15 | 15 |
| Wiltshire | 29 | 18 | 12 | 18 | 14 | 18 |
| Greater Manchester | 34 | 43 | 69 | 32 | 57 | 51 |
| Merseyside | 23 | 15 | 27 | 23 | 7 | 12 |
| South Yorkshire | 15 | 16 | 8 | 23 | 24 | 12 |
| Tyne and Wear | 47 | 31 | 39 | 47 | 43 | 48 |
| West Midlands | 108 | 101 | 94 | 76 | 71 | 63 |
| West Yorkshire | 19 | 31 | 12 | 26 | 19 | 25 |
| London | 75 | 68 | 56 | 58 | 43 | 49 |

[1] Including late call and heat and smoke damage incidents.
[2] Figures are based on sampled data weighted to agreed FRA totals.
[3] Excludes strike days in November 2002.
*Source:*
Fire and Rescue Authority returns to ODPM.

### Mental Health

**Mr. Denham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will make a statement on the progress made on the NHS plan target to recruit 700 carers workers; [154824]

(2) whether the 700 carers workers promised in the NHS plan will be additional to existing staff in NHS trusts. [154828]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The commitment to recruit 700 carer support workers to by 2004 to increase the breaks available for carers, and to strengthen carer support networks is part of the "Priorities and Planning Framework 2003–06" which identified the targets set for services in the three year period.

Recruitment is a local responsibility therefore we cannot say whether the 700 carer support workers will all be additional to existing national health service staff. Guidance on developing carer support services was published in 2002.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 2 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 688W, on mental health, whether the *(a)* 27 early intervention teams and *(b)* 132 crisis resolution teams conform to an early intervention model; what quality standards have been put in place for them; and if he will make a statement. [154986]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Detailed service specifications for crisis resolution and early intervention teams are contained in the "Mental Health Policy Implementation Guide" (2001), which is available in the Library.

A full analysis of the teams currently in operation against the criteria set out in the "Mental Health Policy Implementation Guide" is available from the Durham adult mental health services mapping database at http://www.dur.ac.uk/service.mapping/amh, which is regularly updated to reflect changes in team attributes.

Local services are supported and managed by strategic health authorities to develop local delivery plans to meet NHS Plan targets.

### Pulmonary Disease

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what resources have been allocated to implement the National Institute for Clinical Excellence guidelines for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease; and how implementation will be monitored. [158507]

**Dr. Ladyman:** Funding to implement the guidance and recommendations of the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) is not separately identified in primary care trust (PCT) allocations. The national health service is currently receiving the largest sustained increase in funding in its history, so the question of affordability of NICE recommendations should not be an issue. The total of PCT allocations is £45 billion for 2003–04, £49.3 billion for 2004–05 and £53.9 billion for 2005–06. This represents an increase of £12.7 billion, or an average of 30.8 per cent. over the three years 2003–04 to 2005–06.

The Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection will inspect against healthcare standards. The Health Care Standards were published on 10 February 2004 and are now out for consultation. NICE guidance features at two places within the standards. Within the "core" standards (under "clinical and cost effectiveness"), NICE appraisals are included; and under the "developmental" standards, NICE clinical guidelines are shown. The developmental standards are aspirational and for the NHS to implement over a longer period of time.

### Whitehaven Care Home

**Mr. Gibb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures are being taken by the National Care Standards Commission following the inspection of the Whitehaven Care Home For Adults in Felpham, Bognor Regis on the 11 and 12 of November 2003. [159728]

**Dr. Ladyman:** This is a matter for the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC). I understand that the NCSC has monitored the requirements made of the service provider during its inspection of November 2003. It is satisfied with the action plan which the provider has drawn up to address the shortfalls identified in the inspection. The NCSC will continue to keep closely in touch with the service provider and monitor the situation to ensure that compliance with Regulations and national minimum standards is achieved and that there is no risk to the people living at Whitehaven.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Anti-social Behaviour

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the impact of anti-social behaviour orders in *(a)* reducing the frequency and seriousness of crimes by children and young people and *(b)* reassuring communities; and what plans he has to publish his findings. [158841]

**Ms Blears:** Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) are intended to address anti-social behaviour. In Home Office research study 236, January 2002 'A review of anti-social behaviour orders', Siobhan Campbell carried out some research into ASBOs shortly after they had been introduced. Campbell found that few areas managed to monitor ASBOs successfully, but just over one third of a sample of 40 individuals given ASBOs were known to have breached their order. Fewer (30 per cent.) had committed further offences during that time. In only four cases had the individual been taken to court for both breach and a further offence.

Campbell also found that there was anecdotal evidence to suggest that ASBOs had been successful. The Home Office has not carried out further research to assess the impact of ASBOs in *(a)* reducing the frequency and seriousness of crimes by children and young people and *(b)* reassuring communities.

### Asylum Seekers

**Mr. Lansley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many detainees have been

resident at the Oakington Immigration Reception Centre for longer than *(a)* seven and *(b)* 10 days during the course of 2003. [145368]

**Beverley Hughes:** Information on the length of time detainees were resident at the Oakington Reception Centre and on all detainees held during 2003 is not available, except by examination of individual case-files at disproportionate cost.

### Buses (Vandalism)

**Mr. Paul Marsden:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many incidents of vandalism to buses were reported in each police force area in the last 12 months for which figures are available. [159031]

**Ms Blears:** This information is not collected centrally.

### Cannabis

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he asked the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs to assess the research carried out by Professor Robin Murray of the Institute of Psychiatry on the causal link between cannabis and schizophrenia. [159288]

**Caroline Flint:** The Home Secretary has not asked the Advisory Council on the Misuse of drugs (ACMD) to formally assess research carried out by Professor Robin Murray. Much of the research carried out by Professor Robin Murray was known to the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) at the time it was producing its report on cannabis. The ACMD felt the research did not conclusively prove a causal link between cannabis and schizophrenia. The ACMD feel any new evidence produced since its cannabis report does not affect the overall weight of evidence or their conclusions that cannabis while still harmful, is less harmful than other drugs in Class B.

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) for what reasons evaluaton of the 2004 cannabis advertising campaign is only being conducted among 14 to 17-year-olds; [159307]

(2) which agencies bid for the 2004 cannabis advertising campaign. [159308]

**Caroline Flint:** It is important to focus our evaluation of the 2004 cannabis advertising campaign on 14 to 17-year-olds because they represent the priority audience for the Government in our overall aim to reduce drug misuse among young people. It is particularly important that under 18s understand the law because they will be arrested if found in possession of cannabis.

The agency 'Mother', which is the Home Office's incumbant agency for the drugs education campaign, FRANK, was retained for the reclassification of the cannabis campaign aimed at persons under 18. They had participated in a full competitive pitch through the COI's roster of preferred providers and had been awarded a contract in October 2002.

The joint Home Office Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) advertising campaign aimed at adults was commissioned through ACPO and was based on proposals they had developed with their own agency.

### Child Trafficking

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the Government's strategy to *(a)* prevent child trafficking and *(b)* provide protection and support to the victims of child trafficking. [158227]

**Beverley Hughes:** The Government is committed to combating child trafficking, both in the UK and in source countries. I have recently established an informal ministerial group to improve further the Government's response to the trafficking of both adults and children.

The Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office raise awareness of trafficking in source and transit countries through bilateral and multilateral development programmes. These have included training for agencies working with victims of trafficking and work to raise awareness of trafficking.

Since 2000, all operational activity targeted against organised immigration crime, including people trafficking, has been co-ordinated through the multi-agency task force Reflex.

Led by the National Crime Squad (NCS), Reflex brings together all the key agencies, including the Immigration Service, the National Criminal Intelligence Service and key police forces. Reflex aims to build up the intelligence picture, co-ordinate operations and provide a focal point for the operational response to human trafficking and smuggling.

The Reflex strategy is, in part, based on seeking to disrupt activity as close to the source as possible. The development of an international network of Immigration Liaison Officers in countries that are considered to contain key nexus points for transit to the UK has been a key component of the Reflex strategy. Projects in source countries to prevent trafficking include working with law enforcement and government agencies to identify and disrupt trafficking networks and routes.

In addition, the UK is contributing to the EU five year funding programme AGIS which will fund projects to promote police and judicial co-operation on combating organised crime.

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 sets out wide-ranging offences covering trafficking for sexual exploitation with a maximum sentence of 14 years imprisonment. A new offence covering trafficking for non-sexual purposes, such as forced labour or removal of organs, is included in the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Bill which is currently before Parliament, however, we have also tabled amendments in the House of Commons to ensue that the Bill gives adequate protection to victims of child slavery.

The Immigration Service has started specialist child interviewing training for around 600 operational members of staff nation-wide which will help identify child victims of trafficking as they arrive in the UK.

The Government has also published a best practice toolkit, available at www.crimereduction.gov.uk/toolkits, as a guide for professionals who are likely to come into contact with victims of trafficking. This includes specific sections on children and young people.

The Government is committed to providing appropriate support to victims of trafficking. Child victims of trafficking are likely to be in need of welfare services. Under the Children Act 1989 local authorities have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are in need, by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those needs or arranging for their provision by other agencies. Assistance and support should therefore be provided by local statutory services in response to identified needs, whether directly or though specialist agencies.

The Green Paper Every Child Matters highlighted tackling child trafficking as a key challenge for children's services. It also sets out new arrangements to join up services at the local level to strengthen child protection.

### Coroners

**Mr. Fabian Hamilton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance coroners are given on being sensitive to the families of the deceased in cases where an inquest many be necessary and on doing all that is reasonably practicable to meet the acute needs of the bereaved. [159968]

**Paul Goggins:** All those involved in the coroner and death certification system are expected to approach bereaved families and friends of the deceased in a sensitive manner. The Fundamental Review of Death Certification and Coroner Services, and the Shipman Inquiry both (laid before Parliament last year) recommended a more involved role for the family of the deceased. The Home Secretary and I are considering the recommendations set out in these and other reports and are deciding on a programme of reform which will include proposals to make the system more sensitive to the needs of the bereaved. We plan to publish a position paper shortly.

### Corruption

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on *(a)* investigations and *(b)* prosecutions of individuals and companies for the offence of bribery of a foreign public official by the Metropolitan Police under (i) UK corruption laws and (ii) the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001. [158308]

**Paul Goggins:** I am informed that the Metropolitan Police is currently investigating two allegations of bribery of a foreign public official. The Metropolitan Police is not responsible for the prosecution of offences.

There have been no prosecutions for the offence of bribery of a foreign public official since the enactment of part 12 of the ATCS Act which allows for extra-territorial jurisdiction over crimes of corruption committed abroad by UK nationals and incorporated bodies. The Home Office does not keep specific statistics on prosecutions of bribery of a foreign public official within the UK, although there is one reported case (R *v.* Raud 1989).

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the *(a)* the UK Central Authority, *(b)* the National Criminal Intelligence Service and *(c)* the Metropolitan Police have received a request from the (i) French authorities, (ii) US authorities and (iii) Nigerian authorities for assistance into investigations of allegations involving payments by the consortium TSKJ in connection with the Bonny Island liquified natural gas plant in Nigeria. [158312]

**Caroline Flint:** It is the Home Office's practice to treat letters of request for assistance in criminal matters from foreign governments confidentially, as communications between two countries. We are normally therefore unable to confirm or deny that we have received a request.

However, the United Kingdom remains committed to assisting its international partners in the fight against corruption and bribery wherever possible.

### Disorder Penalties (Merseyside)

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many occasions Merseyside police have issued penalty notices for disorder to 16 to 17-year-olds. [159597]

**Ms Blears:** The penalty notice for disorder scheme is in the process of being rolled out to all police forces in England and Wales. It is expected to be in place nationally by 1 April. Merseyside police commenced issuing penalty notices for disorder with effect from 1 March. Data are not yet available on penalty notices issued.

### Dog Theft

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what steps he is taking *(a)* to establish the extent of the problem of stolen dogs and *(b)* to co-ordinate a national strategy for dealing with the problem; [158725]

(2) what discussions his Department has had with *(a)* the police and *(b)* other countries concerning dog theft ; [158726]

(3) what plans he has to introduce a national dog register; [158727]

(4) what representations he has received concerning dog theft; and if he will make a statement; [158728]

(5) what steps he intends to take to ensure that instances of dog theft are properly investigated by the police; [158729]

(6) if he will introduce a time threshold after which a dog reported as being missing will be classified by police as stolen; [159493]

(7) if he will make it his policy to introduce passports for dogs travelling out of Britain to counter the problem of stolen dogs. [159494]

**Ms Blears:** There is no national strategy to counter dog theft. Where this emerges as a pressing local crime issue, it would be for the police, in consultation with the

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, to take appropriate action. Statistics on the kidnapping of dogs are not held centrally.

### Driving Disqualification

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals in Greater London were disqualified from driving in each of the last 10 years. [158448]

**Caroline Flint:** Available information up to 2001, which has been taken from the Home Office Court Proceedings Database is given in the table. Information for 2002 will be available early in the spring.

*Number of persons disqualified[1] from driving at all courts for motoring offences, within Greater London 1992–2001*

| *Year* | *Persons disqualified* |
|---|---|
| 1992 | 20,900 |
| 1993 | 26,400 |
| 1993 | 30,000 |
| 1995 | 17,100 |
| 1996 | 26,800 |
| 1997 | 26,300 |
| 1998 | 23,100 |
| 1999 | 21,100 |
| 2000 | 19,800 |
| 2001 | 20,900 |

[1] Includes persons disqualified under s. 35 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988 (penalty points system).

### Driving Standards

**Mr. Chope:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* endorsements and *(b)* disqualifications were registered by the Driver Vehicle Licensing Agency against holders of GB driving licences in each of the last five years. [159789]

**Caroline Flint** *[holding answer 8 March 2004]:* Information is not collected centrally on the number of endorsements and disqualifications issued against GB driving licence holders.

Available data, given in the tables, shows the number of fixed penalty notices issued for endorsable offences and the number of offences where endorsements without disqualifications and total disqualifications were imposed at all courts within England and Wales from 1997 to 2001.

*Table A: Driving licence endorsements by type of action, England and Wales, 1997–2001*

*Number of offences*

| | *Type of action* | |
|---|---|---|
| | *Fixed penalty notices: issued for endorsable offences* | *Court proceedings (all courts): endorsements without disqualifications* |
| 1997 | 841,055 | 623,205 |
| 1998 | 902,640 | 622,734 |
| 1999 | 937,719 | 637,487 |
| 2000 | [1]1,101,490 | 626,317 |
| 2001 | 1,341,564 | 599,879 |

[1] Revised since publication of HOSB.

*Table B: Driving licence disqualifications imposed at all courts, England and Wales, 1997–2001*

| | *Number of offences where total disqualifications imposed* | *Persons disqualified under s.35 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988 (penalty point system)* |
|---|---|---|
| 1997 | 161,267 | 31,120 |
| 1998 | 157,963 | 23,865 |
| 1999 | 156,099 | 34,210 |
| 2000 | 153,293 | 33,554 |
| 2001 | 165,044 | 30,079 |

### Drug Testing (Schools)

**Glenda Jackson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the change in de-toxification and rehabilitation places which random drug testing in schools will require. [157818]

**Caroline Flint:** De-toxification and rehabilitation are appropriate only for those with established drug-dependency, which is very rare in young people of school age. It is therefore unlikely that random drug testing in schools will have a significant impact on demand for de-toxification and rehabilitation services.

**Glenda Jackson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether random drug testing in schools requires the agreement of *(a)* local and *(b)* community police officers. [157819]

**Caroline Flint:** It will be for individual schools to decide upon the scope of drug testing, if any, and to decision what action to take if there has been a breach of school drug policy or of the law. Random drug testing in schools does not require the agreement of the police.

Information is available through Drugs: Guidance for Schools, which is being sent to schools on 9 March.

### Drunk Driving

**Mr. Paul Marsden:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many drivers were found to be in excess of the legal alcohol limit in each year since 1997. [159045]

**Caroline Flint:** Available information from 1997 to 2001 on the number of drivers who have been found to be in excess of the legal alcohol limit is given in the table. Statistics collected centrally do not distinguish between positive and refused tests.

Information for 2002 will be available in the Spring.

*Number of positive or refused breath tests, 1997–2001: England and Wales*

*Numbers*

| | *Number of positive or refused* |
|---|---|
| 1997 | 103,500 |
| 1998 | 102,300 |
| 1999 | 94,100 |
| 2000 | 94,600 |
| 2001 | 99,500 |

### Eastern European Immigrants

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what tests he will use to determine whether immigrants from Eastern European countries are eligible for immediate access to *(a)* benefits, *(b)* NHS treatment and *(c)* education following accession to the EU in May. [153095]

**Beverley Hughes:** As a result of the measures we announced on 23 February, nationals of the accession states (other than Cyprus and Malta) will be eligible for income-related benefits only if they have worked lawfully in the UK for a continuous period of 12 months. This restriction will apply for two years and may be extended. Those in work on a low income will be entitled to the normal work-related benefits.

From 1 May EU-wide reciprocal health rules will apply to the accession states. Temporary visitors from these states can access immediately necessary treatment but their home state will have to pay the bill. There will be no automatic entitlement to free treatment for pre-existing conditions unless the home country authorises and pays for that care.

Anyone who is deemed to be "ordinarily resident" in the UK, that is to say that they are living lawfully here for settled purposes, is entitled to receive free NHS care. People from accession states working here legally will therefore be entitled to the full range of NHS treatment free of charge along with all other residents.

Nationals from the accession states will be eligible for education as are nationals of existing EU states.

### Emergency Calls

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average police response time to *(a)* grade one emergency 999 calls and *(b)* other 999 calls is, broken down by region; and what steps his Department is taking to ensure the effective prioritisation of 999 calls. [158844]

**Ms Blears:** This information is not collected centrally. Responsibility for prioritising calls and deciding the most appropriate time to respond to 999 calls lie with the chief officer in each police force area. However, the vast majority of forces are committed to attending to calls requiring an immediate response within 10 minutes for urban areas and 20 minutes for rural areas.

### EU Enlargement (Health Staff)

**Mr. Baron:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether *(a)* midwives and *(b)* nurses from (i) Poland and (ii) other EU accession states will be able to work in the United Kingdom after accession. [156862]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]:* Relevantly qualified midwives and nurses from Poland and other EU accession states will be able to work in the United Kingdom after accession.

All nationals from Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania who find work in the UK will be required to apply to register with the Home Office under the new 'Worker Registration Scheme' as soon as they find work.

### Fines

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many on-the-spot fines were issued in each police authority area *(a)* in total and *(b)* per 10,000 population since their introduction, listed in descending order of number per 10,000 population. [157703]

**Ms Blears:** Penalty notices for disorder were piloted in four police forces for a period of 12 months from August and September 2002. Five police forces were involved: the British Transport Police (in West Midlands area only), West Midlands and Essex Police (both forcewide), North Wales Police (initially in their Central Division and then forcewide from April 2003) and the Metropolitan Police (Croydon Division). During the pilots over 6,000 penalty notices were issued.

An evaluation report is being compiled and will be published. The report will provide a detailed breakdown of the penalty notices issued during the pilots.

The penalty notice for disorder schemes is currently being rolled out to all police forces in England and Wales and is due to be in place nationally by 1 April.

### Gambling

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the change in the need for assessment and treatment of problem gambling among offenders consequent on the provisions of the draft Gambling Bill, with particular reference to young offenders. [158670]

**Paul Goggins:** No assessment has been made of any change in the need for assessment and treatment of problem gambling among offenders as a result of the provisions of the draft Gambling Bill.

### Home Curfew

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many offenders were placed on the Home Detention Curfew Scheme between January 1999 and 31 January 2004, broken down by *(a)* sex and *(b)* police authority. [159309]

**Paul Goggins:** Between January 1999 and 31 January 2004 there were around 78,600 males and 8,600 females placed on the Home Detention Curfew (HOC) Scheme.

Information on numbers placed on the HDC Scheme by police authority is not available.

### Illegal Immigrants

**Mr. Brazier:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many illegal immigrants were *(a)* detected attempting to enter the UK clandestinely and *(b)* detected later in the country in each of the past five years. [147063]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer 20 January 2004]:* The number of people against whom illegal entry action was initiated in each of the last five years for which information is available is shown in the table.

*Persons against whom illegal entry action was initiated 1998 to 2002*

| | *Number of persons* |
|---|---|
| 1998 | 16,500 |
| 1999 | 21,165 |
| 2000 | 47,325 |
| 2001 | 69,875 |
| 2002[1] | 48,050 |

[1] Provisional figures

Illegal entry action is initiated against those people who are detected entering the country clandestinely or by means of deception, either verbal or documentary.

Though the figures include those people who were identified as having entered the country clandestinely they are not separately identifiable, as such this information would only be available by examination of individual case-files at disproportionate cost.

The figures show a high level of activity in 2001 compared to the preceding and following years. This was caused by the large increase in asylum seekers in 2001.

Moreover, although numbers of people subject to illegal entry action fell by 31 per cent. in 2002 compared to 2001, the number of removals increased by 33 per cent. in the same period.

This information and other statistics on the immigration and asylum system are published annually in the Command publication "Control of Immigration: Statistics United Kingdom" a copy of which is in the House Library and can be found on the Home Office website http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

**Mr. Lilley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were detected trying to enter the UK illegally in 2002; how many of them subsequently claimed asylum; how many were returned before claiming asylum; and how many were removed after their asylum claim was rejected. [152862]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer 4 February 2004]:* Illegal entry action was initiated against 48,050 people in 2002. Illegal entry action is initiated against those people who are detected entering, or having entered the country clandestinely or by means of deception, either verbal or documentary.

Information on the number of these persons who subsequently claimed asylum, is not available and would be so by the examination of individual case-files only at disproportionate cost. Measures in the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants etc.) Bill will make it more difficult for those who only applied for asylum after being notified of an immigration decision to have a credible claim..

This information and other statistics on the immigration and asylum system are published annually in the Command publication "Control of Immigration: Statistics United Kingdom", a copy of which is in the Library of the House.

### Accession Treaty Nationals

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the United Kingdom's immigration policy in relation to applicant countries. [154481]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer 12 February 2004]:* Under the Accession Treaty nationals from the 10 new member states joining the EU on 1 May will have the right to travel freely across the European Union allowing them to visit, live and study in any other member state.

The Treaty allows current member states to restrict freedom to work on eight of the 10 new member states for up to seven years from accession (Cyprus and Malta are exempt from the transition period).

In line with my right hon. Friend, the Home Secretary's announcement to the House of Commons on Monday 23 February, the Government have decided to allow free movement to those who genuinely want to come and work here via a workers registration scheme. They will be required to be self-supporting while they look for work.

From 1 May, nationals of the new member states will be able to enter the UK through the EU channel at ports of entry. They will be admitted to the UK on production of their national identity card or passport.

Workers from Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic will be required to register with the Home Office as soon as they find work.

Once a national from one of these new member states has been lawfully working in the UK labour market for a continuous period of 12 months, they will gain full EU rights and will therefore no longer be subject to the workers registration scheme.

The remaining candidate countries (Bulgaria and Romania) are expected to join the EU by 1 January 2007, subject to meeting the EU acquis criteria. Until the date of accession, nationals from these countries will remain subject to full immigration control.

### Interception of Communications

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether operations by law enforcement agencies involving the bouncing of radio beams off window panes to secure the content of conversations taking place within the room require prior approval through a warrant under the Interception of Communications Act 1985; what controls there are on the use of such technology; whether he requires to be notified in advance of each use of such equipment; and if he will make a statement. [158912]

**Caroline Flint** *[holding answer 5 March 2004]:* The Interception of Communications Act 1985 has been repealed by the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA). Part II of RIPA provides for the authorisation of covert surveillance, including surveillance carried out in relation to anything taking place in residential premises by means of a surveillance device. Where the device is not present on the premises, directed surveillance may be authorised—unless the device

consistently provides information of the same quality and detail as might be expected from a device actually present on the premises, in which case authorisation for intrusive surveillance should be granted.

Deployment of any surveillance device by law enforcement agencies must be lawful and undertaken only after consideration of necessity and proportionality of that deployment. The Secretary of State is not required to be notified. Authorisation of both intrusive and directed surveillance by law enforcement agencies is subject to independent oversight by the Office of the Surveillance Commissioners.

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether access by law-enforcement agencies to conversations in a private place gained through the use of a person's mobile telephone as a transmitter constitutes an interception of communications requiring express authorisation by warrant. [158913]

**Caroline Flint** *[holding answer 5 March 2004]:* Part III of the Police Act 1997 and Part II of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) provide for the authorisation of lawful interference with property and wireless telegraphy, and for the authorisation of intrusive surveillance respectively. Authorisation of such conduct by law enforcement agencies is subject to independent oversight by the Office of the Surveillance Commissioner. Part I of RIPA provides for the warranted interception of communications only in the course of their transmission by means of a public telecommunications system.

### Munby Judgment

**Mr. Dawson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department with reference to the Munby Judgment, when he will provide a separate escort service for young people sentenced to custody. [154426]

**Paul Goggins** *[holding answer 11 February 2004]:* Although Mr. Justice Munby referred briefly to evidence relating to the escort service, he did not make any ruling or give any opinion whether a separate escort service for juvenile offenders was needed.

Escort services are provided by private companies under contract to the Prison Service (for those sent to Young Offender Institutions) and the Youth Justice Board (for those sent to secure training centres or local authority secure children's homes (LASCHs)). The secure training centre/LASCH escort service is exclusively for 12 to 17-year-olds. Those sent to Young Offender Institutions may be carried in vehicles with older offenders, but there are requirements in the contract to achieve separation from over-18-year-olds.

A tender exercise is currently under way for the next round of Prison Service escort contracts, which are due to commence in August 2004. The Prison Service has asked bidders to include the provision of separate vehicles for juveniles as an option in their bids. Whether this option is pursued will depend upon consideration of the bids as a whole.

Welfare clauses in the Prison Service escort contracts provide for those at risk. They emphasise the need for care and sensitivity with newly-remanded or -sentenced prisoners; and for recognition of religious and cultural needs and the needs of those with sensory impairment or disability or problems with communication. Handover procedures are designed to ensure that contractor's staff and other agencies communicate with each other about welfare issues. Operating procedures are kept under constant review; with a view to identifying and correcting weaknesses.

### Police

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the guidelines are for dealing with 999 calls for the police; and what he sets as the expected response time. [158785]

**Ms Blears:** There are no national guidelines for answering and responding to 999 calls. Responsibility for deciding the most appropriate time to answer and respond to 999 calls lies with the chief officer in each police force area. However, the vast majority of forces are committed to answering 999 calls within times ranging from five to 15 seconds and attending to calls requiring an immediate response within 10 minutes for urban areas and 20 minutes for rural areas.

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 243W, on police, how many accidents in the last two years in *(a)* London and *(b)* England and Wales resulted in the vehicle being written off; and at what cost. [160210]

**Caroline Flint:** Information is not collected centrally on the number and cost of police vehicle accidents that result in a vehicle being written off.

### Policemen's Helmets

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representations he has received on the design of policemen's helmets; and if he will make a statement. [159390]

**Ms Blears:** The traditional police helmet is currently subject to investigation as to whether the design can be modified to provide a greater level of protection. Alternative headgear is necessary to ensure compliance with Health and Safety legislation and a prototype designed to meet operational requirements is being trialled in three police forces (Dyfed Powys, Greater Manchester and Wiltshire) from 1 March for a period of three months. If the design performs satisfactorily, it is proposed to widen the trial from May to a further two forces (Thames Valley and Dorset).

The final design will be subject to approval by Ministers. It is not intended that it should replace the existing helmet, but will ensure that officers have appropriate headgear where specific risk assessment has shown it is necessary. It will be the responsibility of individual Chief Officers to decide when it is appropriate for the new headgear to be issued and worn.

### Prison Lavatories

**Mr. Godsiff:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* male and *(b)* female prisoners do not have access to lavatory facilities and rely on slopping out. [158109]

**Paul Goggins:** All prisoners in normal location accommodation have access to sanitation either by means of integral sanitation, electric unlocking, manual unlocking or open access.

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which prisons have sprinklers fitted in their residential areas. [157067]

**Paul Goggins** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]:* Only one prison (HMP The Weare) has sprinklers fitted in residential parts.

HMP The Wear is a floating structure and as such subject to the Safety of Life at Sea Regulations, which require sprinklers to be fitted.

### "Reducing Crime, Changing Lives"

**Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to give the Probation Service a new name following the publication of the Carter Report. [155612]

**Paul Goggins:** The structure of the National Offender Management Service is yet to be finalised and no immediate changes to the Probation Service are planned.

**Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he received from Napo following the publication of the Carter Report. [155615]

**Paul Goggins:** We have received a response from the National Association of Probation Officers to the request made in the "Reducing Crime—Changing Lives" document for views from stakeholders.

**Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what reasons underlay his decision not to consult with Napo prior to publication of his response to the Carter Report. [155616]

**Paul Goggins:** Reducing Crime—Changing Lives sets out the Government's initial response to the Carter report.

My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has sought and continues to seek views from stakeholders, including the National Association of Probation Officers, key on a number of issues relating to the effective management of offenders.

**Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the implications for future *(a)* employment status, *(b)* job security, *(c)* pay and conditions and *(d)* collective bargaining arrangements for the Probation Service following the publication of the Carter Report. [155619]

**Paul Goggins:** The structure of the National Offender Management Service is yet to be finalised and no immediate changes are planned. Any future changes to terms of service will be subject to the usual consultation arrangement with staff and unions. Once this is done, the Department will put in place appropriate mechanisms to allow collective bargaining to take place.

### TETRA Masts

**Mr. Gibb:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with O2 Airwave on the effect on television reception in the vicinity of TETRA masts following their switching on in *(a)* Bognor Regis, *(b)* Chichester, *(c)* Littlehampton and *(d)* Worthing. [158544]

**Ms Blears:** The Home Office has had no discussions with O2 Airwave on the potential effects of TETRA masts on TV reception. This is a matter for Ofcom, which is the regulatory authority on radio licensing and advises the public on interference problems.

### Vehicle Cruise Events

**Mr. Nigel Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what advice is issued by his Department to chief constables on policing vehicle cruise events. [159162]

**Caroline Flint:** I recognise the problems that vehicle cruise events can generate and welcome the consideration given to the issue last year by the Association of Chief Police Officers' (ACPO) Road Policing Operations Forum. The ACPO policy is now to:

> encourage forces to work on understanding the website community through which illegal cruising events are organised;
>
> apply robust public order tactics to constrain the activity of any illegal cruises, including via the arrest of attendees causing a public nuisance and the seizure of their vehicles;
>
> support pro-actively alternative functions organised in accordance with local authority requirements for a public event; and,
>
> meet organisers of illegal cruises who are keen to move their hobby into a legal arena.

I am pleased that police forces are now adopting this policy. With effect from 1 January 2003, we have given police forces a power under the Police Reform Act to seize vehicles being driven either off-road without authority or on-road carelessly or inconsiderately, and in such a way as to cause alarm, distress or annoyance. We issued guidance at the time on this new provision, which a number of forces are using to tackle cruises.

**Mr. Nigel Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will review the law relating to vehicle cruise events. [159163]

**Caroline Flint:** We believe the existing law is sufficient to deal with the problems to which vehicle cruise events give rise. We gave the police on 1 January 2003 new powers under section 59 of the Police Reform Act 2002 to seize vehicles being used anti-socially. I know that a number of forces have been successfully using these to deal with the problems caused by cruises.

**Mr. Nigel Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance he has issued to police authorities on monitoring of vehicle cruise events advertised on the internet. [159164]

**Caroline Flint:** I am aware that there has over several years been a developing youth culture of attending vehicle cruises. The activity has over 200 websites dedicated to it in the UK. I support the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) policy to encourage forces to work on understanding the website community through which cruising events are organised.

### Vulnerable Prisoners

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what lessons have been learnt from the internal inquiries into serious incidents of self-harm by prisoners on the prevention of recurrences. [155245]

**Paul Goggins:** Serious incidents of self-harm are investigated at senior managers' discretion to identify the cause and lessons to be learned. Preventing recurrence is tackled at the individual level through care plans and case reviews.

In 2003, 30 in-depth interviews were carried out with prisoners who had survived a severe self-harm incident requiring resuscitation or treatment in outside hospital. The findings included: the importance of staff talking and listening to prisoners, proactive care for prisoners who feel unable to ask for help; increased in-cell and out-of cell 'distraction' activities; specialist support for prisoners with a history of abuse; flexible peer support; and reliable delivery of medication for mental health problems. This learning has informed a number of initiatives: quotes from the interviews in the development of Key Messages cards, posters and an information booklet for prison staff; the training of new prison officers; and development of the second phase suicide prevention strategy planned to be introduced soon.

More accurate self-harm data recorded since December 2002 is enabling closer analysis of trends at local, area and national levels. A number of intervention strategies have been introduced into establishments for people who self-harm. These include counselling, support groups, and specialised psychological interventions. A network of establishments has been set up to develop interventions, facilitate evaluation and share good practice, and an information booklet for staff on working with prisoners who self-harm has been circulated to establishments. A guidance document for managing and caring for prisoners who self-harm is being prepared.

### Work Permits

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many work permits were issued in each of the last five years. [157456]

**Beverley Hughes:** The number of work permits issued in each of the last five calendar years is given in the table.

| | *Number issued* |
|---|---|
| 1999 | 60,743 |
| 2000 | 88,651 |
| 2001 | 120,823 |
| 2002 | 136,151 |
| 2003 | 145,351 |

### Young Offenders

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which bodies are used to provide education within young offenders institutions. [158734]

**Paul Goggins:** 28 contractors currency provide Learning and skills for young offenders, most of which are colleges of further education. Young Offenders also benefit from the involvement of a wide range of voluntary and community organisations in learning activities. Some of these, such as the Prisoners' Education Trust, provide financial support for distance learning. Others, such as the YMCA, Clean Break Theatre Company and Writers in Prison Network are directly involved in providing learning services.

**Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the latest figure is of the cost per week of detaining a person in custody in a young offenders institution. [159510]

**Paul Goggins:** The average weekly cost of keeping someone in establishments categorised as young offender institutes during the financial year 2002–03 was £535.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average sentence served within young offenders institutions was in each year since 1997. [158732]

**Paul Goggins:** Table 3.14 of 'Prison Statistics England and Wales 2002' gives the average time served in prison under sentence by young offenders discharged from determinate sentences on completion of sentence or on licence, for the period 1997–2002. A copy of this publication is available in the House of Commons Library.

## TREASURY

### Asthma

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many deaths were caused by asthma in each year since 1 January 1996; and how many were caused by sudden onset attacks, broken down by *(a)* age, *(b)* sex and *(c)* health authority. [159784]

**Ruth Kelly** *[holding answer 8 March 2004]:* The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Cheryl Gillan dated 9 March 2004:*

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question concerning how many deaths were caused by asthma in each year since 1st January 1996; and how many were caused by sudden onset attacks, broken down by *(a)* age, *(b)* sex and *(c)* health authority.

Numbers of total asthma deaths in England and Wales by sex and five-year age groups are published annually by the Office for National Statistics in the series "DH2, Mortality Statistics, Cause" The latest publication is for 2002 and copies of this, and earlier volumes, are in the Library of the House.

Asthma deaths caused by sudden onset attacks cannot be separately identified.

I am placing four tables in the House of Commons Library, showing the numbers of deaths from asthma in Strategic Health Authorities in England and for Wales since 1996.

These tables respectively show the number of deaths for *(a)* men, *(b)* women, *(c)* persons aged under 65 and *(d)* persons aged 65 and over.

### Census

**Mrs. Fitzsimons:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how the latest census was broken down by *(a)* ethnic origin, *(b)* age, *(c)* gender and *(d)* religion;

how many constituents in the Rochdale constituency fall into each category (i) in absolute terms and (ii) as a percentage of the total population; and what plans he has to revise classification categories. [157505]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Mrs. Lorna Fitzsimons, dated 9 March 2004:*

As National Statistician and Registrar General for England and Wales I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking how the latest census was broken down by *(a)* ethnic origin, *(b)* age, *(c)* gender and *(d)* religion; how many constituents in the Rochdale constituency fall into each category (i) in absolute terms and (ii) as a percentage of the total population; and what consideration he has given to revising existing classification categories. (157505)

The classifications used in the 2001 Census output for ethnic origin, gender and religion are shown in the attached tables. Age ranges are presented in a variety of ways across the prospectus of Census outputs. For Parliamentary Constituencies, data are presented in quinary (five-yearly) age groups.

The requested information for Rochdale Parliamentary constituency is published in the "Census 2001 Report for Parliamentary Constituencies", and its accompanying CD, which includes both national and constituency level tables. A copy of this report is available in the House of Commons Library and is on the National Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/cn_70.asp

The National Statistics website also includes profiles of each local authority area from the 2001 Census. Further detail on the population profile of Rochdale local authority, including age and gender breakdowns, is available at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/pyramids/pages/00bq.asp A more general profile of the Rochdale local authority area, including information on ethnicity and religion, is available at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/profiles/00bq.asp

Updated National Statistics guidelines on the measurement and collection of ethnicity data were published in January 2004 and are available on the National Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/ethnic_group_statistics

These guidelines were produced after consultation with relevant government departments and other organisations, including the Home Office and the Commission for Race Equality. They reflect the need for a balance between the prime requirement for comparability with the 2001 Census while, at the same time, acknowledging the fact that classifications are never set in stone. In particular, the perceptions and descriptions of ethnicity are constantly evolving and it is important that the guidance is periodically reviewed to ensure that it reflects these shifts. The ethnic group question and classification will be reviewed in time for the 2011 Census. This process is likely to begin in 2005.

*Ethnic Group Classification*

*White*
- British
- Irish
- Other White

*Mixed*
- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Other Mixed

*Asian or Asian British*
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Other Asian

*Black or Black British*
- Caribbean
- African
- Other Black

*Chinese or other ethnic group*
- Chinese
- Other Ethnic Group

*Religion Classification*

(People stating religion as:)
- Christian
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Other religions
- No religion
- Religion not stated

*Gender Classification*
- Males
- Females

### Child Care Vouchers

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps his Department has taken to publicise information on childcare vouchers to small and medium sized enterprises. [159268]

**Dawn Primarolo** *[holding answer 5 March 2004]:* The Inland Revenue will ensure that information and guidance to support the new tax exemption on child care vouchers is available to all employers before the changes are introduced in April 2005. Naturally, this will include all small and medium sized enterprises.

And, of course, the Chancellor himself has publicised the exemption by writing to all MPs on 16 December last year, and including an information sheet for Members to pass on to businesses in their constituencies.

### Child Tax Credit

**Mr. Goodman:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost to his Department of administering *(a)* child care credit and *(b)* child tax credit was (i) in total and (ii) per claimant in the last year for which figures are available. [158078]

**Dawn Primarolo:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Havant (Mr. Willetts) on 28 April 2003, *Official Report,* column 161W. On 30 January 2004 there were £6 million families in total benefiting from tax credits.

**Mr. George Osborne:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the additional cost would be of raising the first threshold for those entitled to Child Tax Credit only for the year 2004–05 from £13,480 to £13,600; [159759]

(2) what the additional cost would be of raising the second income threshold for tax credits from £50,000 to £51,380; [159760]

(3) what the additional cost would be of raising the first income threshold for tax credits from £5,060 to £5,200; [159761]

(4) what the cost would be of raising the family element of the Child Tax Credit from £545 to £565 for 2004–05; [159762]

(5) what the cost would be of raising the family element of the Child Tax Credit to £1,130 for 2004–05. [159763]

**Dawn Primarolo:** I refer the hon. Member to table 4 "Direct effects of illustrative tax changes" on the HM Treasury website at http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media//AAB24/pbr03_trr.pdf

The figures exclude any estimate of behavioural response to the tax credits changes.

**Mr. George Osborne:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how much a family with a joint income before tax in 2004–05 of £52,000 will receive in child tax credit; and how much they would receive in child tax credit if the second income threshold was £51,380; [159764]

(2) how much a family with a joint income before tax of £14,000 in 2004 will receive in child tax credit; and how much they would receive if the first threshold for those entitled to child tax credit only was increased to £13,600; [159765]

(3) how much a family with a joint income before tax of £5,200 in 2004–05 will receive in tax credits; and how much they would receive if the first income threshold was £5,200. [159766]

**Dawn Primarolo:** The tax credit award a family receives depends on a variety of factors relating to their particular circumstances, not just their level of income.

### Company Car Tax

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer for what reason a liquefied petroleum gas-powered vehicle is classified as a luxury option within the P11D form under the company car tax regime; and if he will make a statement. [157754]

**John Healey:** A liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) powered vehicle is not classified as a luxury option under the company car tax regime.

### Competitive Tendering

**John Mann:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of best practice in the use of competitive tendering by Government departments. [159453]

**Mr. Boateng:** OGC is working with Departments to produce and update Best Practice and has provided extensive advice on the use of competitive tendering, in particular on evaluation using whole lifecycle cost approaches.

### Council Tax

**Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will introduce a non-means-tested council tax and rates relief scheme for over 70-year-olds. [159197]

**Mr. Boateng:** There are no plans to introduce a non-means-tested council tax relief and rates scheme for over 70-year-olds.

### Debt Relief/Trade Justice

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he has held with *(a)* churches and *(b)* church leaders on debt relief and the campaign for trade justice. [159049]

**John Healey:** On 16 February, Lord Carey and Lord Griffiths hosted a conference on "Making Globalisation Work For All: The Challenge of Delivering the Monterrey Consensus" at the Treasury. The Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for International Development were among the keynote speakers at the conference which was attended by a number of church leaders and faith groups.

The conference brought together leaders from faith groups, NGOs, governments, businesses and universities to discuss how to make progress in meeting the Millennium Development Goals and eliminating global poverty. Debt relief and trade justice are central to improving growth and reducing poverty in developing countries, and the UK continues to call for the full implementation of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and for a strengthened commitment to ensure that trade liberalisation delivers poverty reduction.

The conference also focused on the need for extra resources to provide further debt relief, and for additional aid to improve the investment climate and help the private sector in developing countries respond to the new opportunities and challenges created by trade liberalisation. The UK's proposal for an International Finance Facility would provide the much-needed substantial increase in resources that debt relief alone would not achieve and that could be disbursed byway of grants and additional debt relief.

### Departmental Buildings (Asbestos)

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of buildings occupied by *(a)* staff of the Department and *(b)* staff of the Department's executive agencies have been surveyed for the purpose of identifying the presence of asbestos prior to implementation of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002. [159375]

**Ruth Kelly:** I refer the hon. gentleman to the answer given by my hon. friend the Economic Secretary to the Treasury on 10 June 2003, *Official Report*, column 745W.

### Departmental Secondments

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many officials from his Department have been seconded in each of the last five years to work in less developed countries, broken down by country. [159050]

**Ruth Kelly:** According to our records, since 1999 the Treasury has seconded one official to work for the Azerbaijan Finance Ministry. As part of our interchange programme, our officials also go on loan to other Government Departments and may be posted to other countries.

### Economic Activity (Lancashire)

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the economic activity rate in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley was in (i) 2002–03 and (ii) 1996–97. [157691]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Lindsay Hoyle dated 9 March 2004:*

As National Statistician. I have been asked to reply to your recent parliamentary Question on economic activity rates in Lancashire and Chorley. (157691)

The attached table shows the working age economic activity rates for Lancashire and the Chorley Local Authority District. The Chorley Parliamentary Constituency is identical to the Local Authority. The data cover the 12month period ending February 1997 and February 2002. Information for the 12 month period ending February 2003 is not yet available.

As with any statistical sample survey, estimates for the Labour Force Survey are subject to sampling variability.

*Working age[1] economic activity rates[2] for Lancashire and the Chorley LAD*
*12 month period ending February each year*

*Percentage*

| | 1996–97 | 2001–02 |
|---|---|---|
| Lancashire | 78.5 | 76.8 |
| Chorley LAD | 78.5 | 80.3 |

*Source:*
ONS Labour Force Survey
[1] Includes men aged 16–64 and women aged 16–59
[2] Economic activity rate is the percentage of the working age population who are either in employment or unemployed

### Emergency Protection Orders

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for the Isle of Wight of 2 March 2004, *Official Report,* columns 852–53W, on Emergency Protection Orders, what the population was of each area listed as a county at the most recent date for which information is available; [159695]

(2) pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for the Isle of Wight of 2 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 852–53W, on Emergency Protection Orders, what the population was of the areas served by each family proceedings court at the most recent date for which information is available. [159696]

**Ruth Kelly** *[holding answer 8 March 2004]:* The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Andrew Turner, dated 9 March 2004:*

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your questions concerning the most recent population of each county, and of the areas served by each family proceedings court. (159695,159696)

Attached is a table showing the mid-2002 population estimate of each area listed as a "county" in the Official Report, 2 March 2004, column 852W, in answer to your earlier question on emergency protection orders. These are primarily the former counties rather the current shire county administrative areas, for example in the table "Hampshire" includes Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight as well as the current county area.

The Office for National Statistics does not produce mid-year population estimates for areas served by family proceedings courts.

*Total populations of 'county' areas[1]: all ages, mid-2002*

*Thousands*

| *Area* | *Persons* |
|---|---|
| England | 49,561.8 |
| Avon (Former County excl N Somerset and S Gloucestershire) | 551.2 |
| Bedfordshire (Former County) | 570.8 |
| Berkshire (Former County) | 803.6 |
| Buckinghamshire (Former County) | 688.5 |
| Cambridgeshire (Former County) | 716.3 |
| Cheshire (Former County) | 986.1 |
| Cleveland and Darlington | 639.1 |
| Cornwall and Isles of Scilly | 508.4 |
| Cumbria | 488.5 |
| Derbyshire (Former County) | 962.5 |
| Devon (Former County) | 1,082.3 |
| Dorset (Former County) | 696.3 |
| Durham | 492.3 |
| East Riding and North Lincolnshire | 471.2 |
| Essex (Former County) | 1,622.4 |
| Gloucestershire | 567.0 |
| Greater London | 7,355.4 |
| Greater Manchester | 2,513.5 |
| Hampshire (incl Isle of Wight and Former County) | 1,789.7 |
| Hereford and Worcester (Former County) | 722.4 |
| Hertfordshire | 1,036.1 |
| Humberside (Former County excl E Riding and N Lincolnshire) | 399.4 |
| Kent (Former County) | 1,589.3 |
| Lancashire (Former County) | 1,421.9 |
| Leicestershire (Former County) | 933.7 |
| Lincolnshire | 657.8 |
| Merseyside | 1,361.0 |
| N Somerset and S Gloucestershire | 435.8 |
| Norfolk | 802.8 |
| North Yorkshire (Former county) | 755.3 |
| Northamptonshire | 638.2 |
| Northumberland | 308.4 |
| Nottinghamshire (Former County) | 1,023.2 |
| Oxfordshire | 607.5 |
| Shropshire (Former County) | 445.8 |
| Somerset | 503.4 |
| South Yorkshire | 1,267.3 |
| Staffordshire (Former County) | 1,047.5 |
| Suffolk | 671.9 |
| Surrey | 1,059.9 |
| Sussex (incl East and West Sussex) | 1,500.0 |
| Tyne and Wear | 1,073.5 |
| Warwickshire | 512.7 |
| West Midlands | 2,575.8 |
| West Yorkshire | 2,089.2 |
| Wiltshire (Former County) | 616.9 |

[1] Areas as listed in *Official Report*, 2 March 2004, column 852W
*Source:*
Mid-2002 Population Estimates, Office for National Statistics

### Insurance Premium Tax

**Brian Cotter:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to alter the rate of insurance premium tax. [159270]

**Ruth Kelly** *[holding answer 5 March 2004]:* As with all taxes, the future rates of Insurance Premium Tax are a matter for the Chancellor to consider as part of the Budget process.

### Lord Butler of Brockwell

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his answer of 27 February, *Official Report*, column 575–56W, when *(a)* Sir Nicholas Montagu KCB, Chairman of Inland Revenue, *(b)* Mr. Timothy Flesher CB, former Commissioner of Inland Revenue,

*(c)* Mr. Gabriel Makhlouf, former Director of Inland Revenue International Division and *(d)* Mr. Graham Dean, former Inland Revenue employee, was informed that Lord Butler of Brockwell had joined the advisory board of IBM UK; and who the Commissioner responsible for that department was in each year from 1996 97 to date. [159984]

**Dawn Primarolo:** Lord Butler's appointments are not a matter for the Inland Revenue. Sir Nicholas Montagu has been Chairman of the Board of the Inland Revenue since July 1997: his predecessor was Sir Anthony Battishill.

### LPG

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will reconsider his decision to change the duty on liquefied petroleum gas. [159325]

**John Healey:** I refer to my reply to the hon. Member for Castle Point (Bob Spink) of 1 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 690W.

### Ministerial Speeches

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many speeches *(a)* he and *(b)* the Chief Secretary to the Treasury made between 9 June 2003 and 1 February 2004; and where a copy of each speech can be obtained. [156144]

**Ruth Kelly:** Treasury Ministers make a number of speeches on a wide range of domestic and international issues. The Chancellor's and Chief Secretary's speeches are available on the departmental website (www.hm-treasury.gov.uk).

### Money Laundering

**Brian Cotter:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the impact of new money laundering regulations on small firms of *(a)* accountants and *(b)* solicitors. [159251]

**Ruth Kelly:** The Money Laundering Regulations 2003, together with amending orders for the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 and the Terrorism Act 2000, came into force from 1 March 2004.

A Regulatory Impact Assessment was placed in the House Library when the Regulations were laid, and this is also available on the Treasury website www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media//4ADBC/fullriamlr03_80.pdf. The RIA contains details of cost estimates and changes to the draft Regulations in light of responses to the consultation undertaken, particularly with representatives of the businesses affected.

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps his Department is taking to *(a)* raise awareness of money laundering and *(b)* ensure businesses are compliant with the 2003 Money Laundering Regulations. [160199]

**Ruth Kelly:** The Government continues to raise awareness of money laundering and the controls needed to combat it. Examples of the work that the Government has undertaken to raise awareness include:

The National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) publishes an annual UK Threat Assessment, which exposes the principal threats posed in the area of financial crime.

The Government have set up the Money Laundering Reporting Taskforce, which is tasked with working to improve communications with key stakeholders, including industry and consumers.

Last year the Treasury, Financial Services Authority and NCIS, in partnership with industry, published an information leaflet intended to gain greater public support in combating money laundering and terrorist financing. This leaflet continues to be distributed widely through financial service providers.

The Treasury expects to launch its money laundering strategy paper soon, which will outline the Government's strategy for tackling money laundering.

The Assets Recovery Agency provides regular updates on the progress in recovering the proceeds of crime.

The Government engaged in extensive formal and informal consultation with stakeholders over a long period of time prior to the production of the Money Laundering Regulations 2003. This included dialogue with representative bodies, such as the Law Society, The Consultative Committee of Accountancy Bodies, the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and the British Casinos Association, who have regularly informed their members about the Money Laundering Regulations 2003. The Government are also aware that many of these bodies are producing guidance for their own industry on how to implement the Regulations, which they may choose to submit to the Treasury for approval.

The Government have been working with the Federation of Small Businesses and the Small Business Service to try to ensure that small businesses are aware of any implications that the Regulations may have for their business.

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the impact of the 2003 Money Laundering Regulations on small and medium-sized businesses. [160215]

**Ruth Kelly:** A Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) was placed in the House Library when the Money Laundering Regulations 2003 were laid, and this is also available on the Treasury website see www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media//4ADBC/fullriamlr03_80.pdf. The RIA contains details of cost estimates and changes to the draft Regulations in light of responses to the consultation undertaken, particularly with representatives of the businesses affected. The Government have been working with the Federation of Small Businesses and the Small Business Service to try to ensure that small businesses are aware of any implications that the Regulations may have for their business.

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the businesses subject to the requirements of the 2003 Money Laundering Regulations. [160216]

**Ruth Kelly:** Regulation 2(2) of the Money Laundering Regulations 2003 sets out all those professions and activities that are covered by the Regulations.

### National Census

**Mrs. Fitzsimons:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people identified themselves as Kashmiri in the latest National Census; how many did so in Rochdale constituency; and how many public

sector bodies have requested the identification in the Census of the numbers identifying themselves as Kashmiri. [157857]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Mrs. Lorna Fitzsimons, dated 9 March 2004:*

As National Statistician and Registrar General for England and Wale have been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many people identified themselves as Kashmiri in the latest National Census; how many did so in Rochdale constituency; and how many public sector bodies have requested the identification in the Census of the numbers identifying themselves as Kashmiri. (157857)

People could identify themselves as Kashmiri in the 2001 Census by writing in that response against the ethnic group question on the Census form. The number of people who thus identified themselves as Kashmiri in England and Wales is 23,197 and in the Rochdale Parliamentary Constituency, 3,489.

Two public bodies have requested information on Kashmiris specifically.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will break down the latest census results by *(a)* ethnicity, *(b)* age, *(c)* gender and *(d)* religion for the (i) Chorley constituency and (ii) total population; and if he will make a statement on population growth in Chorley. [157974]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Lindsay Hoyle, dated 9 March 2004:*

As National Statistician and Registrar General for England and Wales I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking for a breakdown of the latest census results by *(a)* ethnic origin, *(b)* age, *(c)* gender and *(d)* religion for the (i) Chorley constituency and (ii) total population, and a statement on population growth in Chorley. (157974)

The information requested for both the Chorley Parliamentary constituency and England and Wales as a whole is available on the CD accompanying the published *Census 2001 Report for Parliamentary Constituencies*. The information for England and Wales as a whole is also available in the published *Census 2001 Key Statistics for local authorities in England and Wales* printed volume. Both these published volumes are available in the House of Commons Library and also on the National Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/cennews.aspat

The National Statistics website also includes profiles of each local authority area from the 2001 Census. Further detail on the population profile of Chorley local authority, including age and gender breakdowns, is available at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/pyramids/pages/30ue.asp. A more general profile of the Chorley local authority area, including information on ethnicity and religion, is available at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/profiles/30ue.asp.

With regard to the population growth of Chorley, please see the answer given in my previous answer (155307) giving mid-year population estimates for Chorley local authority, 1998–2002, the most recent years for which estimates are available. These showed that the population of Chorley has been growing in recent years.

### National Statistics

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the death rates for end stage renal failure in *(a)* England and *(b)* other European countries; and if he will make a statement. [159783]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Paul Burstow, dated 9 March 2004:*

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question on death rates for end-stage renal failure in England and other European countries. (159783)

Death rates for end-stage renal failure are not available as it is caused by a number of different diseases, including diabetes and infections, that damage the kidneys. Deaths will therefore be certified as due to one of these causes, so it is not possible to obtain reliable data on mortality from end-stage renal failure from the routine death registration system.

Age-standardised death rates for chronic renal failure, mentioned anywhere on the death certificate, are however available. These were 19.4 and 8.9 per 100,000 people for males and females respectively in England and Wales in 2002 (the latest year for which figures are available). Comparable figures are not readily available for other European countries.

Information on survival rates for patients receiving renal replacement therapy is available from the Euronean Dialysis and Transplant Association (EDTA) Registry. Their website address is: http://www.era-edta.org/erafset.htm

### Pre-tax Family Incomes

**Mr. George Osborne:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many families have incomes before tax of between £5,060 and £5,200; [159767]

(2) how many families have joint incomes before tax of between £50,000 and £51,380; [159768]

(3) how many families have joint incomes before tax of between £13,480 and £13,600. [159769]

**Dawn Primarolo:** Sample sizes from household income surveys for families with children with incomes before tax in each band are too small to yield reliable results. The information cannot be estimated from administrative data until all families with children receiving the tax credits have reported their 2003–04 income

### Rubies and Jadeite

**Vera Baird:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the value of *(a)* rubies and *(b)* jadeite imported into the UK was in each of the past five years. [159883]

**John Healey:** HM Customs and Excise are responsible for the collection of data on imports. It is not possible to identify imports of rubies or jadeite, separately from other precious stones with which they are classified.

### Scottish Transport Group Dissolution Order

**Annabelle Ewing:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what payments have been received from the Scottish Executive with respect to the Scottish Transport Group Dissolution Order; and on what dates; [160088]

(2) how much has been received to date by the Treasury with respect to the Scottish Transport Group pension fund. [160089]

**Mr. Boateng:** My right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State for Scotland announced on 13 February 2002, *Official Report*, column 364W a reduction in the 2001–02 Scottish Departmental Expenditure Limit of £50 million following the Scottish Transport Group Dissolution Order.

### Secondments

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what secondments *(a)* PricewaterhouseCoopers, *(b)* Deloitte & Touche, *(c)* Ernst & Young and *(d)* KPMG have made to his Department since 2001; for what (i) periods and (ii) tasks the secondments were made; whether secondments of staff from his Department have been made to those firms; and for what (A) periods and (B) tasks. [156915]

**Ruth Kelly:** Since 2001, the Treasury has hosted the following secondments:

| *Organisation* | *Period* | *Directorate* |
|---|---|---|
| PricewaterhouseCoopers | 24 June 2003 to 24 October 2003 | Financial Regulation and Industry Directorate |
| Deloitte & Touche | 8 September 2003 to date | Public Services Directorate |
| Ernst & Young | 1 April 2003 to date | Budget and Public Finances Directorate |

Since 2001, the Treasury has seconded an official to KPMG from 8 September 2003 to date, to work in their Corporate Finance Department.

### Sudden Deaths

**Mr. Baron:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what action is being taken on *(a)* recording and *(b)* classifying sudden and unexpected death, where no cause of death can be detected at autopsy but where an underlying cardiac condition resulting in fatal cardiac arrhythmia is suspected. [159827]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Mr. John Baron, dated 9 March 2004:*

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning the action being taken on *(a)* recording and *(b)* classifying sudden and unexpected death, where no cause of death can be detected at autopsy but where an underlying cardiac condition resulting in fatal cardiac arrhythmia is suspected. (159827)

All deaths in England and Wales that are sudden and unexpected must be referred to the coroner for investigation. It is the responsibility of the coroner to undertake any necessary investigations to ascertain the cause of death and to record the findings.

When the death is registered, the Office for National Statistics codes the cause according to the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems. Currently the tenth revision of this classification is in use. If no precise cause is identified, but the certificate states that the death was sudden, it would be classified to R96, 'sudden death, cause unknown'. If a cardiac defect was identified on the certificate, the death would be classified under cardiovascular diseases, using the most precise and accurate code available for the identified condition.

Following publication in 2003 of the Third Report of the Shipman Inquiry and the Fundamental Review of Death Certification and the Coroner Service, the Government is committed to taking forward proposals for reform of the coroner and death certification service.

**Mr. Webb:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his latest estimate is of the amount of overpayments of *(a)* child tax credit and *(b)* working tax credit made owing to official error; and if he will make a statement. [158769]

**Dawn Primarolo** *[holding answer 4 March 2004]:* As set out in its Code of Practice 'What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?', the Inland Revenue will accept that an overpayment should not be recovered if it arose because of their mistake and the person could reasonably have thought their award was right. The total of overpayments during 2003–04 cannot be established until awards for that year are finalised. However, the Inland Revenue may accept during the year that the test of official error is satisfied and adjust payments accordingly. The overpayment will then be finally written off when the award is finalised.

### Unemployment (Wales)

**Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many unemployed people there are in Wales; and what the percentage change was in the last year in each constituency, listed in descending order of percentage reduction. [157663]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Martyn Jones, dated 9 March 2004:*

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about unemployment in Wales and its Parliamentary Constituencies. (157663)

In the three months ending in December 2003, there were an estimated 65,000 unemployed people aged 16 and over in Wales. Information on the levels of unemployment in each Parliamentary Constituency is not available as the Labour Force Survey sample is too small to give reliable estimates.

However, information is available on the number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) in each Constituency in Wales. The total number of JSA claimants in Wales as a whole in January 2004 was 45,944. The attached table shows, for each Parliamentary Constituency in Wales, the percentage change in JSA claimants over the twelve month period ending January 2004.

*Percentage change from January 2003 to January 2004 in the number of claimants of Jobseeker's Allowance in Wales, by Parliamentary constituency*

| *Area* | *Percentage Change* |
|---|---|
| Wales | -9.1 |
| Caernarfon | -22.9 |
| Cerediglon | -19.6 |
| Wrexham | -18.0 |
| Cardiff South and Penarth | -15.7 |
| Clwyd South | -15.6 |
| Meirionnydd Nant Conwy | -15.3 |
| Vale of Glamorgan | -14.4 |
| Ynys-Mon | -13.3 |
| Llanelli | -13.1 |
| Newport East | -13.0 |
| Newport West | -12.5 |
| Blaenau Gwent | -12.0 |
| Gower | -11.4 |
| Vale of Clwyd | -11.1 |
| Clwyd West | -10.4 |
| Cardiff Central | -10.0 |
| Cardiff West | -10.0 |
| Carmarthen East and Dinefwr | -9.9 |
| Aberavon | -9.8 |
| Islwyn | -9.8 |
| Conwy | -9.4 |
| Alyn and Deeside | -8.2 |
| Preseli Pembrokeshire | -7.6 |
| Cardiff North | -7.3 |
| Neath | -7.3 |
| Caerphilly | -7.2 |
| Swansea West | -7.1 |
| Pontypridd | -6.1 |
| Delyn | -5.9 |
| Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire | -5.2 |
| Bridgend | -4.7 |
| Ogmore | -4.6 |
| Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney | -4.0 |
| Monmouth | -3.0 |
| Torfaen | -1.8 |
| Swansea East | -1.7 |
| Rhondda | -0.6 |
| Brecon and Radnorshire | 1.0 |
| Cynon Valley | 3.4 |
| Montgomeryshire | 16.7 |

*Source:*
Jobcentre Plus administrative system

### Valuation Office Agency

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the Answer of 27th February 2004, *Official Report*, column 579W, on the Valuation Office Agency, when the Valuation Office Agency made an enquiry of the Public Appointments Unit to seek suitable candidates for the position of non-executive director; how many of the four short-listed candidates were interviewed by the selection panel; and whether the position filled by Miss Grinstead was a new position. [160100]

**Dawn Primarolo:** The Valuation Office Agency approached the Public Appointments Unit in the latter part of 2001, and a list of potential candidates was supplied in November 2001. Of the four short listed candidates, three declined and one was interviewed. The non-executive post being filled was an existing position.

### Westminster Hall

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make it his policy to have senior Ministers reply to debates in Westminster Hall. [159622]

**Ruth Kelly:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer he received from the Leader of the House on 8 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1234W.

# Written Answers to Questions

*Wednesday 10 March 2004*

## CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

### Asbestos

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will list the buildings occupied by his departmental and agency staff which require *(a)* remedial work on and *(b)* removal of asbestos; what this work will cost; what budgets are available for this work for (i) 2004 and (ii) 2005; and what budget is available for future asbestos surveys. [159651]

**Mr. Lammy:** My Department has 14 buildings that require remedial work and three buildings which require the removal of asbestos. These are:

*Remedial work*

Inner London Sessions House,
Royal Courts of Justice,
Technology and Construction Court,
Bow County Court,
Clerkenwell County Court,
Romford County Court,
Willesden County Court,
Woolwich County Court,
Ilford County Court,
West London County Court,
Edmonton County Court,
Brentford County Court,
Wandsworth County Court,
Shoreditch County Court

*Removal work*

Epsom County Court,
Swansea Crown Court (Guildhall),
Selborne House

The remedial works have a budget cost of £150,000 and the removal works a budget cost of £70,000. All remedial and removal works are scheduled to be completed by 31 March 2005. Future asbestos surveys will be funded from existing building maintenance budgets.

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what proportion of buildings occupied by *(a)* staff of the Department and *(b)* staff of the Department's executive agencies have been surveyed for the purpose of identifying asbestos prior to the implementation of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002. [159657]

**Mr. Lammy:** My Department will have had all of its HQ estate buildings surveyed for the purpose of identifying asbestos prior to the full implementation of the CAWR 2002. 72 per cent. of the Court Service estate has been surveyed to date with the balance due to be completed in the financial year 2004–05.

### Costs Orders

**Mr. Keetch:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what rules are set out regarding costs orders in relation to cases involving children; and if he will make a statement. [158955]

**Mr. Leslie:** The approach to costs contained in the Civil Procedure Rules 1998 now applies to all family proceedings, including private law proceedings relating to children. The court has discretion to make orders as to whether costs are payable by one party to another, and generally takes the approach that the unsuccessful party will be ordered to pay some or all of the costs of the successful party. The court may, however, make a different order and frequently will consider it appropriate to make no order for costs. In deciding what order, if any, to make about costs the court will consider all the circumstances of the case, including the conduct of the parties.

### Courts (London)

**Mr. Mark Field:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what discussions he *(a)* has had and *(b)* plans to have with representatives of the Greater London Magistrates' Court Association about court provision across London in advance of the formation of the unified courts authority in 2004; and if he will make a statement. [159466]

**Mr. Leslie:** I have had discussions with representatives from the Greater London Magistrates' Courts Authority (GLMCA) about court provision across London on 15 July 2003. Presently I have no further meetings arranged but would be happy to do so if required. Officials from my Department working in the Unified Courts Administration Programme have regular discussions with both the acting Justices' Chief Executive and other senior managers of the GLMCA on all matters including court provision.

### Ministerial Speeches

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many speeches he made between 9 June 2003 and 1 February 2004; and where a copy of each speech can be obtained. [156152]

**Mr. Leslie:** The Ministerial Team at DCA made 84 policy speeches during this period. Those speeches where a transcript was available can be found on the DCA website at www.dca.gov.uk.

## WALES

### Asbestos

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the buildings occupied by his staff which require *(a)* remedial work on and *(b)* removal of asbestos; what this work will cost; what budgets are available for this work for (i) 2004 and (ii) 2005; and what budget is available for future asbestos surveys. [159654]

**Mr. Touhig:** A complete asbestos survey of the Wales Office was conducted in 2002. The Wales Office is now compliant with 2002 regulations and no further work is required.

The cost of any future surveys or work required would be met from existing maintenance budgets.

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what proportion of buildings occupied by his staff have been surveyed for the purpose of identifying the presence of asbestos prior to the implementation of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002. [159659]

**Mr. Touhig:** The Wales Office arranged for a complete asbestos survey in 2002. Subsequently, all the recommendations of the survey have been undertaken, so the Wales Office is compliant with the 2002 regulations.

### Welsh Economy

**Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give a forecast for growth for the Welsh economy for the next three years. [157664]

**Mr. Hain:** Wales is seeing real economic growth, shown by increasing numbers of jobs; rising employment and falling unemployment; the third highest rise in earnings in Britain in 2002–03 and the progress made in closing the gap on economic inactivity.

Furthermore, Welsh GDP grew by 15.6 per cent. between 1997 and 2001

Based on this evidence and projections for UK growth Wales' economic growth seems set to continue in the future.

## TRANSPORT

### Asbestos

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will list the buildings occupied by his Department's staff, including agencies, which require *(a)* remedial work on and *(b)* the removal of asbestos; what that work will cost; what budgets are available for this work for (i) 2004 and (ii) 2005; and what budget is available for future asbestos surveys; [159365]

(2) what proportion of buildings occupied by *(a)* staff of the Department and *(b)* staff of the Department's executive agencies have been surveyed for the purpose of identifying the presence of asbestos prior to implementation of the control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002. [159369]

**Mr. McNulty:** An updated list of the number of DfT properties identified as containing asbestos has been placed in the Libraries of the House. In terms of numbers of properties these represent some 20 per cent. of the total DfT estate but they mostly comprise small operational buildings.

The responsibility for taking action to comply with the requirements of the Control of Asbestos Work Regulations 2002 are delegated to the managers of the individual property centres within the Department. The action taken will depend on the nature of the property centres' occupancy of the buildings, whether or not asbestos has been found, where it is located and its quantity.

Although there are a number of buildings which do contain asbestos it does not follow that it poses a risk to staff or visitors because risks vary according to the type of asbestos present and how it is managed. Where asbestos has been found its existence has been entered onto asbestos registers and specialist consultants or contractors handle its management or removal.

Comprehensive information on the costs and budgets relating to asbestos surveys and works in each of the identified buildings and the nature of the works involved is not readily available without incurring disproportionate cost. However, we have identified that across the Department at least £204,500 has been allocated to be spent on remedial works and surveys during 2004–05.

### Rail Compensation

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to change the compensation arrangements for rail passengers suffering *(a)* delays and *(b)* cancellations. [159593]

**Mr. McNulty:** Compensation for delays and cancellations to passengers will be paid under the conditions of each train operating company's Passengers Charter. In tendering for the renewal of franchises, the Strategic Rail Authority will ensure that the conditions of the train operator's Passengers Charter are subject to competitive pressure and will be taken into account in the franchise award evaluation criteria.

### Transport Spending

**Mr. Damian Green:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much the Government have spent to date on the spending commitments set out in the 10-year plan on *(a)* roads, broken down by (i) strategic, (ii) local and (iii) London *(b)* railways, *(c)* London Underground and *(d)* all other transport; and if he will make a statement. [158235]

**Mr. McNulty:** Tables A2 and A3 of the Department's 2003 Annual Report (Cm 5907) provide data on transport spending from funds within DfT's Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL). Spending on strategic roads is separately identified under 'Roads (includes Highways Agency)' whilst spending on local authority roads is included within the figures in the 'Transport in London' and 'Local Transport' lines. With the exception of funding for major road schemes in England out side London, it is a matter for local authorities to decide what proportion of their funding allocation is spent on roads. Outturn expenditure on local roads is published in the progress reports, accounts or other corporate documents of individual authorities but is not held centrally. Expenditure on railways, London Underground and other transport is separately identified in the Department's Annual Report.

In addition to funding provided from DfT's DEL, local authorities receive revenue funding for transport through ODPM's Formula Spending Share (FSS) process. We estimate that authorities spent approximately £2.76 billion of their FSS allocation on transport in 2001–02 and £2.83 billion in 2002–03.

## DEFENCE

### Continuous Attitudes Survey

**Angus Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what questions concerning overstretch were asked in the 2003 editions of the Continuous Attitudes Survey for the *(a)* Royal Navy, *(b)* Army and *(c)* RAF; and if he will publish the answers; [160112]

(2) what questions concerning equipment were asked in the 2003 editions of the Continuous Attitudes Survey for the *(a)* Royal Navy, *(b)* Army and *(c)* RAF; and if he will publish the answers; [160113]

(3) what questions concerning contractualisation were asked in the 2003 editions of the Continuous Attitudes Survey for the *(a)* Royal Navy, *(b)* Army and *(c)* RAF; and if he will publish the answers; [160117]

(4) what questions concerning nationality were asked in the 2003 editions of the Continuous Attitudes Survey for the *(a)* Royal Navy, *(b)* Army and *(c)* RAF; and if he will publish the answers. [160118]

**Mr. Caplin:** Copies of the questions asked in the Services' Continuous Attitude Surveys are available in the Library of the House.

**Angus Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many responses the Royal Navy Continuous Attitudes Survey received for the consultation round launched in September 2003; and if he will make a statement. [160114]

**Mr. Caplin:** In September 2003 the administration for the Royal Navy Continuous Attitude Survey (CAS) recorded the following: 2,000 Questionnaires were distributed, 107 were returned 'addressee unknown' and 946 were returned completed.

In September 2003 the administration for the Royal Marines CAS recorded the following: 1,027 Questionnaires were distributed, 23 were returned 'addressee unknown' and 409 were returned completed.

**Angus Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many responses the Army Continuous Attitudes Survey received for the consultation round launched in December 2003; and if he will make a statement. [160115]

**Mr. Caplin:** The latest Army Serving Personnel Continuous Attitude Survey was distributed in December 2003 to 5,040 individuals. As at 4 March, 2,168 responses had been received.

### Eurofighter Typhoon

**Mr. Jack:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials in his Department had meetings in the last nine months with BAE personnel to discuss the order for the Second Tranche of Eurofighter Typhoons; when the meetings took place; who attended; and what representations he has received from the other partners in this project on the ordering of Tranche II. [159497]

**Mr. Hoon:** Ministers and officials have had many meetings with BAE Systems personnel in the last nine months at which the order for the second Tranche of Typhoons has been discussed. Regular meetings have also taken place with our partner nations in the project as part of the ongoing commercial and international negotiations on the same subject.

### Forces (Overseas Postings)

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* regular service and *(b)* Territorial Army personnel are serving overseas. [157851]

**Mr. Caplin:** Some 36,000 British service personnel are serving overseas, including some 1,200 members of the Territorial Army.

### Gulf War Illness

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 11–12W, to the hon. Member for Taunton (Mr. Flook), on Gulf War illness, if he will publish a description of the monitoring tests for depleted uranium to which he refers. [158259]

**Mr. Caplin:** The tests involve chemical processing of urine samples and analysis using inductive coupled plasma mass spectrometry. This reveals both the total concentration of uranium in the urine and the relative amounts of its two principal isotopes, 238U and 235U. The Depleted Uranium Oversight Board has judged that, taking into account experimental uncertainty, a 238U/235U ratio of 142 or higher indicates the presence of depleted uranium. A pilot exercise will soon be underway to evaluate the logistic arrangements for the testing process and to establish whether urine samples collected over a 24-hour period or single ("spot") samples are more appropriate. If reliable results can be obtained from spot samples, they will be used for the main testing programme as they are more convenient for the donor.

### Military Bases (Contamination)

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what studies have been commissioned by his Department into *(a)* the degree of contamination and *(b)* the prospects for remedial action at military bases in (i) the United Kingdom and (ii) dependent territories abroad. [158903]

**Mr. Caplin:** To date, over 500 Land Quality Assessments (LQA) have been prepared across the Defence estate since 1995 to identify the degree and extent of contaminated land, predominantly in the United Kingdom, but also in dependent territories such as Gibraltar and Cyprus. LQA identify potentially contaminative site activities. Studies are prioritised, e.g. on sites in proximity to vulnerable aquifers, or where contamination is known or suspected. This process determines remedial options.

Current Ministry of Defence policy is to undertake remediation of contaminated land where there is significant risk to human health or the environment and it is practical or necessary to remove all contamination from a site. This may be confined to the removal of radioactive contamination or other defence specific contaminants, wherein the MOD's environmental specialists (or specialist consultants) and the environmental regulators work closely together to establish the extent to which the land is to be decontaminated.

The MOD seeks to ensure compliance with relevant statutory environmental provisions and any additional requirements arising from international treaties and protocols to which the UK is a signatory. Overseas, the Department will apply UK standards where reasonably practicable and, in addition, comply with host nation standards. This ensures resources are used efficiently and land is being managed in the best interests of good environmental performance and sustainable development.

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what studies his Department has commissioned on the levels of *(a)* toxic and *(b)* other pollution at military bases in the UK; and what publications his Department has issued in this respect since May 1997; [158904]

(2) how many locations there are where there is recorded contamination *(a)* at and *(b)* from military bases, broken down by (i) location, (ii) nature of contamination, (iii) remedial works taken or planned and (iv) the financial cost of contamination; and if he will make a statement. [158905]

**Mr. Caplin:** The information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### Recruitment

**Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost of recruitment of civil servants for the Department was in each financial year since 1996–97, broken down by *(a)* delegated or contracted out recruitment procedures and *(b)* recruitment procedures carried out by the Department. [158195]

**Mr. Caplin:** This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

## INTERNATIONAL DEVEOPMENT

### Afghanistan

**Mr. Ancram:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department is taking to work with the governments of *(a)* Kazakhstan, *(b)* Turkmenistan, *(c)* Tajikistan and *(d)* Pakistan to stabilise wheat prices in Afghanistan; and what assessment he has made of the impact of wheat prices on stability within Afghanistan. [159503]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** We are working with the Afghan Government to assist them to build good relationships with all their neighbouring countries on a range of issues. To this end the Good Neighbourly Relations Declaration was signed in December 2002 between the Afghan Government and the six countries with which they share a common border. Discussions within this group encompass a range of issues, including trade.

Since the fall of the Taliban the cost of wheat in Afghanistan has fallen, partly due to aid agencies bringing in much needed food aid but also as a result of the break in the drought, which led to an 80 per cent., increase in the harvest. Discussions took place last year between my department, the Afghan Government and the aid agencies regarding the impact of wheat prices on the country. At that time it was noted that local purchase of wheat by aid agencies would increase its price and while this might have a positive impact for farmers it would also increase the market price for ordinary Afghans. The outcome of the discussions was a plan for WFP to procure 10,000 metric tons of wheat locally in 2004.

### Bilateral Aid

**Mr. Jenkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much bilateral aid the UK gave to *(a)* Armenia, *(b)* Azerbaijan and *(c)* Georgia in 2003. [160082]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** The UK gave the following bilateral aid in 2003:

(a) Armenia: £1,933,221

(b) Azerbaijan: £182,730

(c) Georgia: £2,092,989

### Burundi

**Mr. Chidgey:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what measures are being taken to reduce the use of child soldiers in Burundi. [159040]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** The UK condemns unequivocally the use of child soldiers. We work closely with others in the international community including the UN to end the use of child soldiers. This includes support for a UNICEF programme to improve advocacy on the situation of children affected by armed conflict at all levels. The UK is also supporting a UN Security Council resolution on Children and Armed Conflict (currently under discussion) which calls on all parties to, inter alia, produce time-bound action plans to halt the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict.

We are working actively within the international community to achieve a full peace settlement in Burundi and the implementation of a comprehensive disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programme. We have committed US $25 million for the Multi-Country Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme for the Great Lakes Region. A national child soldier reintegration project has begun to implement activities and to date 400 child soldiers have been demobilised. Funds from this will be used in Burundi for a special project managed by UNICEF to demobilise child soldiers and reintegrate them into their home communities.

### Commission for Africa

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what payment will be made to those who will sit on the Commission for Africa; and how this will be funded. [159380]

**Hilary Benn:** Commissioners will not receive payment for sitting on the Commission for Africa. Travel and subsistence costs incurred on Commission work will be reimbursed from the budget allocated to the Commission by the Department for International Development.

### Jamaica

**Joyce Quin:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much aid was given by the Government to Jamaica in each year since 1992, expressed in real terms. [159751]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** UK bilateral aid provided to Jamaica since 1992 is as follows:

*(Real terms 2002–03 = 100.00 total gross public expenditure)*

| | £ million |
|---|---|
| 1992–93 | 6.395 |
| 1993–94 | 7.959 |
| 1994–95 | 4.213 |
| 1995–96 | 12.042 |
| 1996–97 | 11.215 |
| 1997–98 | 3.573 |
| 1998–99 | 11.130 |
| 1999–2000 | 9.710 |
| 2000–01 | 8.945 |
| 2001–02 | 9.263 |
| 2002–03 | 10.708 |

The UK also provided aid to Jamaica through the multilateral agencies over this period. The imputed multilateral share is as follows:

| | £ million |
|---|---|
| 1992 | 1.0 |
| 1993 | 0.3 |
| 1994 | 3.7 |
| 1995 | 4.1 |
| 1996 | 6.2 |
| 1997 | 7.6 |
| 1998 | 9.9 |
| 1999 | 0.0 |
| 2000 | 4.5 |
| 2001 | 5.1 |

### Uzbekistan

**Tom Brake:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what progress Uzbekistan has made towards meeting the human rights goals set out by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. [159845]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) is currently reviewing Uzbekistan's progress towards seven benchmarks for political and economic reform set out in the EBRD Strategy for Uzbekistan of March 2003. These include provisions in the area of human rights.

A mission of EBRD Directors recently visited Uzbekistan to review developments. They held discussions with the government, local and international NGOs, donors, local business and diplomatic community. The mission noted that some progress has been made on human rights, but much remains to be done. Detailed conclusions from the mission and the next steps for EBRD will be discussed by the full Board later this month.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Common Funding Formula

**Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the Common Funding Formula will be introduced; what the reasons are for the delay in introducing it; and if he will make a statement. [157454]

**Jane Kennedy:** Following consultation with schools, which will be undertaken within the next few months, we aim to implement the Common Funding Formula in April 2005.

The decision to delay the implementation date for the introduction of new arrangements for funding schools was taken after very careful consideration of the issues and in particular the need to ensure that schools have sufficient opportunity to comment on the proposed outcomes. The consultation was due to commence in autumn 2003 but delays, including those related to the collation of verified data needed for this process, meant this would have provided very little time not only for schools to consider the details for this major change in schools funding but also for any issues arising to be fully considered.

The revised timetable offers the opportunity to take account of refinements needed as a result of the consultation process and of any changes which may be necessary in the future as a result of recommendations made by the Post-Primary Review Working Group a also the CCEA Review of the Curriculum.

### Fencing

**Kate Hoey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether *(a)* Lottery money and *(b)* public funds have been used, directly or indirectly, to send fencers representing the Republic of Ireland to (i) competitions in (A) Italy and (B) Germany, (ii) world championships and (iii) training camps in Eastern Europe. [158318]

**Angela Smith:** Both *(a)* Lottery money and *(b)* public funds, have been used to fund fencers who have represented the Republic of Ireland in (i) competitions in (A) Italy and (B) Germany, (ii) world championships and (iii) training camps in Eastern Europe.

**Kate Hoey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much funding the sport of fencing has received in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [158319]

**Angela Smith:** The sport of fencing has received the following Exchequer funding:

| | £ |
|---|---|
| 1999–2000 | 3,500 |
| 2000–01 | 3,500 |
| 2001–02 | 3,500 |
| 2002–03 | 7,525 |
| 2003–04 | 14,300 |

The sport of fencing has received the following Lottery funding:

| | £ |
|---|---|
| 1999–2000 | 18,000 |
| 2000–01 | 67,320 |
| 2001–02 | 9,720 |
| 2002–03 | 8,080 |
| 2003–04 | 14,240 |

**Kate Hoey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many fencers are on the Talented Athlete Next Generation programme in Northern Ireland. [158320]

**Angela Smith:** There are five fencers on the Talented Athlete Next Generation Programme.

**Kate Hoey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many fencers from Northern Ireland in receipt of United Kingdom Talented Athlete Funding have competed for a country other than the United Kingdom. [158321]

**Angela Smith:** There are no fencers in receipt of United Kingdom Talented Athlete funding that have competed for a country other than the United Kingdom.

### Funding

**Kate Hoey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much *(a)* lottery funding and *(b)* public funds have been allocated to Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [158322]

**Angela Smith:** The Sports Council is responsible for the distribution of funding for sport in Northern Ireland. The total amount of *(a)* public funds and *(b)* lottery funding allocated by the Sports Council in each of the last five years is as follows:

| | £ |
|---|---|
| *Public funds* | |
| 1999–2000 | 2,406,970 |
| 2000–01 | 4,423,988 |
| 2001–02 | 3,536,324 |
| 2002–03 | 5,276,074 |
| 2003–04[1] | 7,472,075 |
| Total | 23,115,431 |
| *Lottery Funding* | |
| 1999–2000 | 7,218,436 |
| 2000–01 | 7,585,022 |
| 2001–02 | 8,254,768 |
| 2002–03 | 7,300,142 |
| 2003–04[2] | 5,111,326 |
| Total | 35,469,694 |

[1] Estimated to 31 March 2004

[2] 1 April 2003 to 31 January 2004

### Manufacturing (De-rating)

**Mr. Trimble:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the impact the phasing out of de-rating on manufacturing industries will have on *(a)* revenue, *(b)* profitability, *(c)* costs and *(d)* employment within the industry; and if he will make a statement. [157272]

**Mr. Pearson:** Our assessment on the likely impact of the phasing out of industrial de-rating on the manufacturing industry in Northern Ireland (NI) came from a variety of different sources; for example, studies by DTZ Pieda, Invest NI as well as evidence presented during the public consultation exercise in 2002 by the Enterprise, Trade and Investment and Finance and Personnel Assembly Committees, the CBI and local economists. The policy paper published in April last year included the Regulatory Impact Assessment, New TSN and Equality Impact Assessments. All this evidence was summarised, analysed and considered objectively and the various options were discussed openly with representatives of the business community before a final decision was made.

In terms of revenue, the estimated long-term yield from the rating of the manufacturing sector is around £55 million a year and I refer you to my earlier answer of 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 165W, for fuller detail.

In relation to the specific impact on profitability, costs and employment within the industry, a sudden withdrawal of de-rating could have a potentially detrimental impact on manufacturing business and this is why it is proposed to phase the removal of industrial de-rating from 1 April 2005 with businesses not paying full rates until April 2011. This lengthy phasing out period should ensure that no sustainable jobs are lost. Furthermore, the intention to introduce a hardship scheme that will apply to all businesses where exceptional circumstances exist and work on Government proposals to reduce electricity costs for business are further mitigating measures which will help manufacturing absorb the removal of de-rating.

### Money Advice

**Mr. Trimble:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps are being taken by the *(a)* Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment and *(b)* Department of Social Development to modernise the provision of Money Advice; and if he will make a statement. [157271]

**Mr. Pearson:** The Consumer Strategy for Northern Ireland was published in March 2002. As a result, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment commissioned research into the provision of a suitable framework for the delivery of effective money advice in Northern Ireland. This is now being taken forward within the context of the Department for Social Development's Information and Advice strategy, which is scheduled to be published for consultation in May 2004.

### Senior Civil Servant Pay

**Mr. McGrady:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the percentage pay award to Northern Ireland senior civil servants was which came into effect on 1 April 2003. [158634]

**Mr. Pearson:** The 2003 increase in pay bill cost for Senior Civil Servants in the 11 Departments of the Northern Ireland Administration was 5.37 per cent. The amount received by an individual depended on performance ranking and position on the payband. A separate pay system exists for the Senior Civil Service with increases made on the basis of recommendations made by the independent Senior Salaries Review Body. Unlike other staff groups the Senior Civil Service pay award process does not involve negotiations with trade unions.

### Sunbeds

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many public leisure facilities in Northern Ireland are equipped with sunbeds; what his Department's policy is on the provision of sunbeds in public leisure facilities in Northern Ireland; and what plans he has to phase out the use of sunbeds in public leisure facilities in Northern Ireland. [156949]

**Angela Smith:** There is no central register of facilities, including sunbeds, provided at public leisure centres and this information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

District councils have statutory responsibility for the provision of facilities for recreational, social, physical and cultural activities in their areas. The decision whether or not to provide sunbeds in public leisure centres is a matter for each council.

### Ulster Scots

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what margin of error is applied in Northern Ireland to measure demand for Ulster Scots. [159539]

**Angela Smith:** The 1999 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (NILT) sought to identify the percentage of the Northern Ireland population that spoke Ulster Scots. The questions used in this survey have a margin of error for all sample estimates within the parameters of ± 3 per cent.

An example is shown as follows:

| | *(%) speak Ulster Scots* | *Standard error of (%)* | *95% Confidence limits* |
|---|---|---|---|
| All | 2.0 | 0.30 | 1.4–2.6 |
| *Gender* | | | |
| Men | 2.7 | 0.56 | 1.6–3.8 |
| Women | 1.4 | 0.28 | 0.9–1.9 |
| *Age* | | | |
| 18–24 | 0.8 | 0.64 | 0–2.1 |
| 25–34 | 1.6 | 0.67 | 0.3–2.9 |
| 35–44 | 2.0 | 0.66 | 0.7–3.3 |
| 45–54 | 2.0 | 0.75 | 0.5–3.5 |
| 55–64 | 1.7 | 0.82 | 0.1–3.3 |
| 65+ | 2.9 | 0.83 | 1.3–4.5 |
| *Religion* | | | |
| Catholics | 1.2 | 0.35 | 0.5- 1.9 |
| Protestants | 2.1 | 0.43 | 1.3–2.9 |
| No religion | 3.4 | 1.19 | 1.1–5.7 |

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many attitudinal surveys he has received from bodies other than the Department of Education to measure the demand for the Ulster Scots language and culture in Northern Ireland; and from whom. [159561]

**Angela Smith:** I am aware of three exercises that have been carried out that might be termed attitudinal surveys to measure the demand for Ulster-Scots. These are:

Questions in the 1999 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (NILT),

Questions in the 2000 and 2001 Omnibus survey (RES) and

A research report undertaken in 2002 by Dunne, Dawson and Morgan.

## CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### Licensing Authorities

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list for each licensing authority in England *(a)* the cost of and *(b)* the expenditure on liquor and entertainment licensing in the last 12 months for which figures are available; and for each prospective licensing authority and for England what estimate she has made of the annual (i) cost of and (ii) income from liquor and entertainment licensing after implementation of the Licensing Act 2003. [159876]

**Mr. Caborn:** No figures are kept centrally for the annual cost of, and the annual expenditure on, liquor and entertainment licensing by local authority area. Local authorities have no current responsibility for liquor licensing and fee income goes to the courts. The new arrangements under the Licensing Act 2003 will integrate six existing licensing regimes: liquor, public entertainment, theatre, cinema, late night refreshment and night cafe licensing. We estimate that the income from all these regimes collectively is about £36.8 million annually for England and Wales, if renewal fee income is spread across the period of the renewal (which varies). We estimate that the actual cost of the six regimes to the courts and local authorities involved is approximately £69.3 million annually. Estimates of future expenditure under the new arrangements set out in the Licensing Act 2003 are currently being considered. No final decisions have yet been taken about fee levels and these will affect total income. Fee levels will be set so as to permit full recovery of the costs of administration, inspection and enforcement associated with the licensing regime.

**Mr. Nigel Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the timetable is for the transfer of licensing powers from magistrates to local authorities; when she intends to publish national guidance relating to the implementation of the Licensing Act 2003; and if she will make a statement. [159989]

**Mr. Caborn:** We will be laying the draft Guidance before both Houses for approval shortly. The start of

the transitional period, during which existing licence holders may apply to the licensing authorities to convert their existing licences to new premises licences and club premises certificates, is expected to be approximately six months after the date on which Parliament approves the Guidance. During this period of six months, licensing authorities will prepare and publish their statements of licensing policy. The transitional period is expected to last for nine months and, as a result, the Licensing Act is expected to be fully implemented by mid 2005.

### Private Finance Initiative

**Mr. Reed:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how her Department's £150 million of PFI credits for the spending review period 2003–04 to 2005–06 are being allocated. [159951]

**Mr. Caborn:** DCMS is using its allocation of £150 million PFI credits for the spending review of 2003–04 to 2005–06 to support 16 PFI schemes in the following areas:

*£ million*

| *Nature of scheme* | *PFI credits allocated* | *Recipient authorities* |
|---|---|---|
| Community facilities (as part of wider schools projects, e.g. leisure facilities, theatre, library) | [1]26.594 | Sheffield borough council, Liverpool City council, Telford and Wrekin borough council, Croydon (London borough), South Tyneside council |
| Sports/Leisure | 60.097 | Brent council, Wolverhampton City council, Redbridge (London borough), Shepway district council, Rotherham borough council |
| Libraries/Archives | 67.277 | Oldham borough council, Cambridgeshire district council, Newcastle City council, Liverpool City council, Rochdale borough council |
| Theatre | 9.8 | Bournemouth borough council |
| Total | [2]163.768 | 16 PFI schemes |

[1] All joint funded with DfES.
[2] This figure is higher than £150 million PFI credits allocated within the 2003–04 to 2005–06 spending review as some additional credits were rolled over from the previous financial year. These were not allocated to one scheme in particular but were added to the overall sum available for allocation to new schemes during the 2003–04 to 2005–06 spending review.

### School Sports

**Mr. Reed:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans her Department has to issue joint guidance with the Department for Education and Skills on the ideal specification for sports facilities for a secondary school. [159952]

**Mr. Caborn:** At present, Sport England publishes detailed guidance on developing sports facilities on school sites. The guidance deals with the inception, construction, and management of these facilities.

The Department will continue to work closely with the Department for Education and Skills and Sport England to consider what further steps should be taken to ensure that secondary schools are given appropriate guidance on the provision of sports facilities.

### Village Halls

**Dr. Murrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what funding was given to village halls by the National Lottery in each year since its inception. [159676]

**Estelle Morris:** Since the introduction of the 1998 Lottery Act and changes to policy directions, we have encouraged distributors to work together to make Lottery funding more accessible and to support projects aimed at developing communities. Village halls and other community buildings encourage community spirit and help ensure the survival of many local interest groups.

There is currently no specific funding strand for village halls although many community buildings have benefited from National Lottery grants. The Community Fund is the main Lottery funder of community buildings and the following table shows the awards it has granted to community buildings since the start of the Lottery. In a stand alone programme, the Millennium Commission also awarded over £65.8 million to village halls and a breakdown is shown in the second table below. (This figure does not include urban community centres and includes the monies given to village halls as enhancement grants in 2003.) Other Lottery distributors have also awarded grants to village halls although these figures cannot be separately identified and displayed.

*Grants awarded by the Community Fund to projects involving community building*

| | *Applications* | *Amount requested (£)* | *Awards* | *Amount awarded (£)* | *Success rate (Percentage)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1995–96 | 250 | 11,983,973.00 | 31 | 1,194,336.00 | 12 |
| 1996–97 | 230 | 11,552,453.00 | 23 | 1,013,664.00 | 10 |
| 1997–98 | 702 | 60,412,623.00 | 175 | 9,266,546.00 | 25 |
| 1998–99 | 503 | 42,409,794.00 | 314 | 23,993,258.00 | 62 |
| 1999–2000 | 523 | 56,379,485.00 | 306 | 27,828,022.00 | 59 |
| 2000–01 | 497 | 66,603,473.00 | 196 | 21,292,221.00 | 39 |
| 2001–02 | 435 | 59,909,111.00 | 158 | 17,085,082.00 | 36 |
| 2002–03 | 457 | 58,776,770.00 | 142 | 14,420,027.00 | 31 |
| 2003- | 179 | 39,278,168.00 | 64 | 5,850,851 .00 | 36 |
| Total | 3,776 | 407,305,850.00 | 1,409 | 121,944,007.00 | 37 |
| Awards for all | 4,510 | 17,202,623.00 | 3,100 | 11,763,805.00 | 69 |
| Grand total | 8,286 | 424,508,473.00 | 4,509 | 133,707,812.00 | 54 |

*Grants awarded by the Millennium Commission to village hall projects*

| | £ |
|---|---|
| 1995 | 6,583,774 |
| 1996 | 35,390,498 |
| 1997 | 21,046,235 |
| 1998 | 1,431 ,924 |
| Subtotal | 64,452,431 |
| 2003 | 1,426,648 |
| Grand total | 65,879,079 |

### Websites

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the total annual cost of her Department's websites, including those of its agencies, was in the most recent year for which figures are available. [159517]

**Mr. Caborn:** The total annual cost in 2003–04, covering all 12 of the Department's websites and that of the Royal Parks Agency, was £62,000 including VAT.

### Westminster Hall

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make it her policy to have senior Ministers reply to debates in Westminster Hall. [159612]

**Mr. Caborn:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House on 8 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1234W.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Business Link

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 27 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 588W, on Business Link, what the value is of the contracts offered by the Small Business Service to *(a)* BL Derbyshire, *(b)* BL Tees Valley and *(c)* BL Bedfordshire; and if she will make a statement. [158878]

**Mr. Timms:** The value of the Business Link Operator (BLO) Core Service funding allocation for 2003–04 is as follows.

| | £ |
|---|---|
| BL Derbyshire | 2,502,742 |
| BL Tees Valley | 1,460,480 |
| BL Bedfordshire | 1,515,800 |

I have nothing further to add to my hon. Friend's answer of 27 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 588W.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to make available the independent audit reports of Business Link operators. [157225]

**Nigel Griffiths:** The independent audit reports of Business Link Operators are commercially restricted.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which Business Link Operators have been required to undergo a business performance review. [157226]

**Nigel Griffiths:** Further to the five Business Link Operators named given to the hon. Member on 27 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 588–89W, the following Business Link Operators have also been required to undergo a Business Performance Review:

BL Leicestershire

BL Northamptonshire Chamber Business Enterprise (Manchester)

BL South Yorkshire.

### Business Statistics

**Mr. Llwyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many new businesses have been registered in *(a)* London and *(b)* Wales, broken down by local authority, in each of the past three years. [158037]

**Nigel Griffiths** *[holding answer 3 March 2004]:* The official measure of business start-up activity in the UK is VAT registrations. However, businesses are unlikely to be registered if they fall below the compulsory VAT threshold which has risen in each year since 1997. Only 1.8 million out of the estimated 3.8 million enterprises in the UK were registered for VAT in 2002.

Value Added Tax (VAT) registration data are available up to 2002. Data for 2003 will not be available until autumn 2004.

VAT registration rates per 10,000 resident adults (aged 16 and over) are shown to allow fair comparisons between areas. The numbers and rates of businesses registering for VAT in each London borough and Welsh unitary authority, in each calendar year are as follows:

*VAT registrations*

| | *Number* | | | *Rate per 10,000 resident adults* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* |
| United Kingdom | 184,035 | 174,620 | 175,800 | 39 | 37 | 37 |
| London | 37,760 | 34,385 | 33,490 | 67 | 59 | 57 |
| Inner London | 20,955 | 18,820 | 18,195 | 96 | 82 | 78 |
| City of London | 1,460 | 1,110 | 1,015 | 2,345 | 1,653 | 1,428 |
| Camden | 2,260 | 1,910 | 1,910 | 142 | 112 | 110 |
| Hackney | 1,230 | 1,035 | 1,025 | 81 | 65 | 63 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 1,250 | 1,205 | 1,100 | 94 | 85 | 75 |
| Haringey | 985 | 910 | 840 | 58 | 51 | 46 |

*VAT registrations*

| | *Number* | | | *Rate per 10,000 resident adults* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* |
| Islington | 1,380 | 1,245 | 1,230 | 97 | 84 | 82 |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 1,330 | 1,025 | 1,095 | 105 | 74 | 78 |
| Lambeth | 920 | 895 | 925 | 43 | 40 | 42 |
| Lewisham | 640 | 640 | 575 | 33 | 32 | 28 |
| Newham | 605 | 580 | 550 | 34 | 31 | 29 |
| Southwark | 1,135 | 1,110 | 975 | 59 | 55 | 48 |
| Tower Hamlets | 1,115 | 1,025 | 1,005 | 75 | 65 | 62 |
| Wandsworth | 1,200 | 1,200 | 1,180 | 56 | 53 | 52 |
| Westminster | 5,455 | 4,925 | 4,775 | 360 | 304 | 288 |
| Outer London | 16,415 | 15,420 | 15,270 | 47 | 43 | 43 |
| Barking and Dagenham | 390 | 365 | 335 | 31 | 29 | 26 |
| Barnet | 1,865 | 1,540 | 1,515 | 76 | 60 | 59 |
| Bexley | 600 | 620 | 545 | 35 | 36 | 31 |
| Brent | 1,205 | 1,125 | 1,040 | 59 | 52 | 47 |
| Bromley | 960 | 970 | 955 | 41 | 41 | 40 |
| Croydon | 1,005 | 985 | 1,000 | 39 | 37 | 38 |
| Ealing | 1,250 | 1,205 | 1,195 | 53 | 49 | 48 |
| Enfield | 900 | 820 | 875 | 42 | 37 | 39 |
| Greenwich | 545 | 510 | 510 | 33 | 30 | 29 |
| Harrow | 935 | 905 | 930 | 57 | 54 | 55 |
| Havering | 640 | 640 | 615 | 36 | 36 | 34 |
| Hillingdon | 875 | 760 | 840 | 46 | 39 | 43 |
| Hounslow | 820 | 880 | 825 | 49 | 51 | 47 |
| Kingston upon Thames | 620 | 580 | 560 | 53 | 48 | 46 |
| Merton | 780 | 685 | 615 | 52 | 44 | 39 |
| Redbridge | 860 | 760 | 725 | 46 | 40 | 38 |
| Richmond upon Thames | 995 | 920 | 1,010 | 72 | 65 | 71 |
| Sutton | 510 | 525 | 510 | 36 | 36 | 36 |
| Waltham Forest | 665 | 625 | 660 | 39 | 36 | 37 |
| Wales | 6,310 | 5,985 | 6,110 | 27 | 26 | 26 |
| Isle of Anglesey | 125 | 125 | 135 | 23 | 23 | 25 |
| Gwynedd | 290 | 260 | 285 | 31 | 28 | 30 |
| Conwy | 265 | 230 | 240 | 30 | 26 | 27 |
| Denbighshire | 205 | 220 | 200 | 28 | 29 | 26 |
| Flintshire | 345 | 330 | 365 | 29 | 28 | 31 |
| Wrexham | 255 | 235 | 240 | 25 | 23 | 23 |
| Powys | 420 | 360 | 390 | 41 | 35 | 38 |
| Ceredigion | 170 | 185 | 185 | 27 | 30 | 29 |
| Pembrokeshire | 305 | 270 | 270 | 34 | 30 | 30 |
| Carmarthenshire | 405 | 370 | 420 | 29 | 26 | 30 |
| Swansea | 450 | 475 | 430 | 25 | 26 | 24 |
| Neath Port Talbot | 190 | 200 | 195 | 18 | 19 | 18 |
| Bridgend | 250 | 255 | 235 | 25 | 25 | 23 |
| The Vale of Glamorgan | 285 | 235 | 310 | 30 | 25 | 33 |
| Cardiff | 800 | 775 | 790 | 33 | 32 | 32 |
| Rhondda Cynon Taff | 355 | 350 | 355 | 19 | 19 | 19 |
| Merthyr Tydfil | 75 | 70 | 55 | 17 | 16 | 12 |
| Caerphilly | 240 | 250 | 265 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| Blaenau Gwent | 90 | 70 | 75 | 16 | 13 | 14 |
| Torfaen | 150 | 140 | 120 | 21 | 20 | 17 |
| Monmouthshire | 270 | 275 | 260 | 40 | 40 | 38 |
| Newport | 305 | 290 | 275 | 29 | 27 | 25 |

*Source:*
Business Start-ups and Closures: VAT Registrations and De-registrations 1994–2002, Small Business Service.

## Defence Exports

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations she has made to the US Administration about *(a)* requirements to produce US defense equipment in the USA, *(b)* restrictions on foreign content in defence exports with military sales support, *(c)* technology export controls and *(d)* limits on control of US subsidiaries by UK companies; and what the outcome of such representations has been. [157050]

**Mr. Hoon:** I have been asked to reply.

Ministerial colleagues and I expressed concerns last year about legislative proposals before Congress to impose further restrictions on overseas procurements to meet the United States' defense requirements. The legislation subsequently enacted did not include the proposals of most concern to us. Steps are regularly taken to press the case for United Kingdom companies to receive fair access to programmes for the supply of US-sourced equipment for third parties under foreign

military sales arrangements. The licensing of US technology for export to the UK has been discussed with the US Administration in the context of proposals for a UK waiver from the International Traffic in Arms Regulations.

On this I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave on 18 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 1066W. The matter of controls on foreign investment in the US has recently been raised with the US Administration by DTI Ministers. The Administration has given reassurances that the US would take proper account of the UK/US relationship in their case-by-case consideration.

### Iraq

**Sir Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 54W, on Iraqi oil, if she will list, by month, *(a)* the volume of Iraqi oil sold since May 2003, *(b)* the amount paid for the oil and *(c)* the amount received by the Development Fund for Iraq; and if she will make a statement. [158145]

**Mr. Timms** *[holding answer 9 March 2004]:* Information on the amount of Iraqi oil produced each month is given in Table 1 as follows. Information on the amount paid for the oil is not publicly available. As of 4 March 2004, US $6.15 billion of oil proceeds had been received by the Development Fund for Iraq. This information is available through the CPA website at www.cpa-iraq.org/budget/DFI_intro1.html

*Table 1: Iraqi oil production*

*Million barrels per day*

| | *Net production*[1] |
|---|---|
| May 2003 | 0.28 |
| June 2003 | 0.44 |
| July 2003 | 0.70 |
| August 2003 | 1.11 |
| September 2003 | 1.41 |
| October 2003 | 1.58 |
| November 2003 | 1.92 |
| December 2003 | 1.97 |
| January 2004 | 2.04 |

[1] Estimated Iraqi oil supply net of re-injected crude oil.

*Source:*
International Energy Agency

**Sir Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 54W, on Iraqi oil, on what basis Iraqi oil has been sold other than on a spot basis; to whom the oil has been sold; and if she will make a statement. [158146]

**Mr. Timms** *[holding answer 9 March 2004]:* Iraqi oil is sold by two other means, in addition to that sold on a spot basis.

The first is through tendered cargoes by which "parcels" of crude are advertised for sale and for which sealed priced bids are made. The second is through long-term agreements whereby certain regular buyers of Iraqi oil agree to buy a given volume of Iraqi oil at a pre-agreed sale price. These buyers may also be offered additional volumes at the same price should there be excess production.

The Iraqi State Oil Marketing Organisation (SOMO) is responsible for the sale of oil on behalf of the Ministry of Oil.

**Mr. Chidgey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many contracts for reconstruction projects in Iraq have been awarded to each British company to have won such a contract; and what the total value is of such contracts. [159003]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** Because of the large number of different organisations involved it has become increasingly difficult to maintain a clear picture of the total volume of contracts awarded, and the cumulative value of these contracts. Numerous British companies have been awarded contracts and sub-contracts for the reconstruction process in Iraq but some have asked us not to publicise their success because of issues of commercial confidentiality. As such, we are not able to put a value on the contracts awarded and the fact that many are involved in partnership with American, Iraqi and other companies.

### Nuclear Decommissioning Authority

**John Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what relationship she envisages between the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and Nirex. [159023]

**Mr. Timms:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has announced that the Government are giving consideration to the future of Nirex. It will only be possible to set out definitively the relationship between Nirex and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority once this consideration has been completed.

### Regional Venture Capital Funds

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action her Department is taking to attract corporate investment in regional venture capital funds. [157210]

**Mr. Timms:** In order to enable Fund Managers to attract private sector investors, the Government subordinated its investment position in the Regional Venture Capital Funds (RVCFs). This has allowed around £74 million of Government investment to lever an additional £176 million from private sector investors, some of whom were corporate investors.

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1628W, to the hon. Member for Eddisbury (Mr. O'Brien) on the Regional Venture Capital Fund, what the regional breakdown by *(a)* number and *(b)* value is of the regional venture capital fund investments; and what proportion of the funds have been drawn down in each region. [157000]

**Nigel Griffiths:** As at 31 January 2004, the nine Regional Venture Capital Funds had made 112 investments in 87 small businesses, totalling over £21 million. Details of the numbers of investments made in each region are contained in the table.

£

| RVCF | Total investments Number | Total investments Amount | Total fund size | DTI investment commitment | Drawn down from DTI as at 31 January 2004 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| London | 10 | 2,250,000 | 50,000,000 | 15,000,000 | 2,950,000 |
| East Midlands | 19 | 3,245,047 | 30,000,000 | 9,000,000 | 3,650,000 |
| North East | 23 | 3,321,882 | 15,000,000 | 4,500,000 | 4,200,000 |
| West Midlands | 11 | 1,720,000 | 20,000,000 | 6,000,000 | 1,850,000 |
| South West | 4 | 1,000,000 | 25,000,000 | 7,500,000 | 1,000,000 |
| Yorkshire and Humber | 4 | 1,000,000 | 25,000,000 | 10,000,000 | 1,050,000 |
| South East | 27 | 6,100,000 | 30,000,000 | 7,500,000 | 7,050,000 |
| North West | 14 | 2,446,333 | 35,500,000 | 8,875,000 | 4,187,500 |
| East of England | 0 | 0 | 20,000,000 | 6,000,000 | 600,000 |

### Spam E-mails

**Michael Fabricant:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures she plans to help those who receive spam to block spam e-mails from their systems. [159749]

**Mr. Timms:** Effective blocking and filtering are a key part of the solution to spam. My Department is looking at ways of building up a stronger dialogue with internet service providers and other stakeholders about the deployment of network based spam blocking and filtering systems, and the education of users about the steps they can take to avoid spam. Our most recent initiative was the launch last year of an online source of information on e-security. This resource draws together a range of tools, advice and guidance on core areas of information security, including spam, and is aimed particularly at smaller businesses. New content is currently being added to this site which can be found at www.ukonlineforbusiness.gov.uk/informationsecurity.

The Government believe that the problem of spam needs to be tackled in the longer term by a combination of regulation, international cooperation, industry action and user awareness. The UK implemented new EU rules on the sending of unsolicited commercial e-mail here in December last year and we are playing a leading role in the development of international work on how to tackle crossborder spam.

### Small Business (Rochdale)

**Mrs. Fitzsimons:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what central Government support the small business sector has received in the constituency of Rochdale in each year since 1996. [157506]

**Mr. Timms:** The constituency of Rochdale has benefited from the following funding from central Government.

*Business Link Core Funding*[1]

| | SBS Core Funding for Business Link for North Manchester (£) |
|---|---|
| 2003–04 | 2,868,225 |
| 2002–03 | 2,925,330 |
| 2001–02 | 2,661,103 |

[1] Business Link for North Manchester includes four other local authority areas in addition to Rochdale.

| L/A/Financial year | Number of offers | Total grant offered | Total project costs | Jobs to be created | Jobs Sfgd |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1996–97 | 29 | 1,198,000 | 9,160,899 | 274 | 116 |
| 1997–98 | 9 | 249,000 | 2,541,360 | 70 | 15 |
| 1998–99 | 14 | 959,500 | 7,878,023 | 217 | 84 |
| 1999–2000 | 7 | 929,000 | 10,619,376 | 117 | 293 |
| 2000–01 | 5 | 920,000 | 9,466,448 | 226 | 20 |
| 2001–02 | 3 | 380,000 | 3,329,350 | 82 | 18 |
| 2002–03 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2003–04 | 1 | 249,000 | 2,369,000 | 77 | 0 |
| Total | 68 | 4,884,500 | 45,364,456 | 1,063 | 546 |

*Enterprise Grant Scheme*

From January 2000–04

24 offers

Total amount £912,300.

*Smart/Research and Development*

From January 2000–04

7 offers

Total amount £586,263.

### Regulatory Impact Assessments

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what work is being done to improve the quality of regulatory impact assessments carried out in her Department. [155324]

**Nigel Griffiths:** The Cabinet Office published updated guidance on regulatory impact assessments (RIA) in January 2003, which built on lessons learnt since the system of RIA was first introduced in 1998. The Department is promoting the application of the guidance to help improve the quality of RIAs produced by this Department.

### TETRA Contract

**Paul Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the termination by the Austrian Government of the TETRA contract for the ADONIS nationwide radio communication network in June 2003; and what factors will be taken into account when a decision is made on the Firelink contract in the United Kingdom. [156979]

**Mr. Timms:** The decision by the Austrian Government to terminate their TETRA contract is entirely a matter for them.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is responsible for placing the contract for the Firelink project. The evaluation criteria for the Firelink procurement will take into account the operational requirements and commercial aspects set out in the invitation to submit proposals. The successful bidder would also have to comply with all relevant UK planning, environmental and safety regulations.

## CABINET OFFICE

### Civil Servants (Company Directors)

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many civil servants in his Department are directors of companies. [159343]

**Mr. Alexander:** The rules on civil servants and directorships are set out in paragraph 4.3.9 of The Civil Service Management Code, a copy of which is in the Library of the House.

Details of any civil servants who may hold an outside directorship will be held on an individual's personnel file. Such information is not held recorded centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate costs.

### Civil Service

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office (1) what recent representations he has received regarding the need for legislation to protect the independence of the civil service; [159577]

(2) what progress has been made on the Government's commitment to bring forward legislation to protect the impartiality of the Civil Service in this parliamentary session; [159578]

(3) what recent representations he has received on establishing a Civil Service commission in statute. [159581]

**Mr. Alexander:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to my statement of 21 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1341–349. In addition, the Public Administration Select Committee published its proposals for a Civil Service Bill on 5 January 2004. I am also aware of the debate that took place on this issue in the other place on 5 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 889–934.

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the annual change in the number of Civil Service employees was in each year since 1997–98; and if he will make a statement. [159579]

**Mr. Alexander:** The information requested is published annually in Civil Service Statistics, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House and at www.civil-service.gov.uk/statistics

### Civil Service Training

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what recent representations he has received regarding Civil Service training; and if he will make a statement. [160020]

**Mr. Alexander:** The Cabinet Office receives representations from a wide range of stakeholders and interested parties regarding Civil Service training including the Civil Service Trade Unions. The Centre for Management and Policy Studies which includes The Civil Service College is constantly seeking feedback on its courses with a view to ensure that Civil Service training meets the needs of the future of the Civil Service.

### Emergency Planning College

**Patrick Mercer:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what new training methods have been put in place at the Emergency Planning College at Easingwold over the past two years. [158981]

**Mr. Alexander:** A review of Emergency Planning College courses, their content and delivery methods was initiated in May 2003.

Changes resulting from this review, including new courses, will begin to take effect from September 2004.

### Government Services

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office pursuant to his answer of 2 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 764W, on Government services, what estimate each Government Department has provided on the amount of money expected to be saved by providing services through electronic means by 2005. [160018]

**Mr. Alexander:** Departments are required to develop business cases for major e-service projects. The Efficiency Review led by Sir Peter Gershon is working with departments to consider how electronic services could be used to deliver additional savings.

### Office of the e-Envoy

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office (1) what assessment he has made of the impact of the Office of the e-Envoy on the delivery of Government services online; and if he will make a statement; [160024]

(2) what assessment he has made of the progress of the Office of the e-Envoy; and if he will make a statement. [160022]

**Mr. Alexander:** In 2002 the Information Age Partnership commissioned a major assessment of the UK's performance across the e-agenda leading to the publication of an independent international benchmarking report, 'The world's most effective policies for the e-economy'. The benchmarking results showed that the UK had made particularly strong progress with low internet access prices and high embedding of ICT in education. The report also found that UK's 'e-government readiness'—defined as the preparedness of government to engage and drive the e-agenda, and particularly deliver e-government—was a strength relative to G7 nations. The Office of the e-Envoy is working with departments towards the target of achieving 100 per cent. of services online by 2005 with key services achieving high levels of use. 68 per cent. of government services are now available electronically.

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many *(a)* special advisers and *(b)* staff in total are employed in the Office of the e-Envoy. [160025]

**Mr. Alexander:** No special advisers are employed in the Office of the e-Envoy. On 1 March 2004 there were 102 staff in post in the office of the e-Envoy.

### Policy Hub

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what assessment he has made of the impact of Policy Hub; and if he will make a statement. [160033]

**Mr. Alexander:** I would refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Gainsborough (Mr. Leigh) on 6 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 158.

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the total expenditure has been *(a)* in the past 12 months and *(b)* since the inception on Policy Hub; and if he will make a statement. [160034]

**Mr. Alexander:** The information is as follows:

*(a)* Expenditure on Policy Hub for the 12 months ending 31 January 2004, was £91,000. This reflects the costs of IT hosting, support and maintenance.

Since 1 February 2004, the site has been located on the Cabinet Office server. Hosting, support and maintenance costs are now absorbed by general Cabinet Office IT costs.

*(b)* Running costs since inception, including that for the twelve months ending 31 January 2004 quoted above, totals £207,000 excluding VAT. Policy Hub was launched by the Centre for Management and Policy Studies in the Cabinet Office in March 2002 as part of a wider IT Knowledge Management project, however, it is not possible to disaggregate the costs of Policy Hub from the other elements of the project.

### Recruitment

**Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the cost of recruitment of civil servants for the Department was in each financial year since 1996–97, broken down by *(a)* delegated or contracted out recruitment procedures and *(b)* recruitment procedures carried out by the Department. [158196]

**Mr. Alexander:** Cabinet Office staff recruitment processes and associated budgeting has been delegated to individual Management Units, who are supported by the Cabinet Office HR central recruitment team.

Staff costs for the Cabinet Office HR central recruitment team are available from 2002 to present and are:

2002–03: £216,712

2003–04: £187,678

Overall Cabinet Office recruitment costs and a breakdown between contracted out activity and recruitment procedure are not maintained centrally and could be provided in the detail required only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much money has been spent advertising Civil Service recruitment in *(a)* 1996–97 and *(b)* the most recent period for which figures are available. [160049]

**Mr. Alexander:** Responsibility for advertising government jobs lies with individual Government Departments. The information requested is not, therefore, collected centrally. The Civil Service Commissioners Code makes clear that a reasonable opportunity must be given to prospective applicants to become aware of vacancies.

### Regulation Costs

**Mr. H[illegible]** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what estimate he has made of the *(a)* recurring and *(b)* non-recurring costs for (i) a typical business and (ii) all business of the regulations passed so far this Session. [160045]

**Mr. Alexander:** All proposals which have a potential impact on business, charities or voluntary bodies must be accompanied by a regulatory impact assessment determining whether the costs of the proposal are justified by its benefits. Costs of individual regulations can be found in the published regulatory impact assessments, available in the House Library.

### Regulatory Impact Assessments

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office (1) what percentage of regulatory impact assessments recommended that the regulatory instruments under examination should not proceed in the last year for which figures are available; [160123]

(2) how many regulatory instruments have failed to proceed following the negative conclusion of the regulatory impact assessments in each year since 2000. [160143]

**Mr. Alexander:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for North Norfolk (Norman Lamb) on 2 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 715W.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office (1) what estimate he has made of the number of regulatory impact assessments conducted in 2003 which included a statement of what the respective department expected to happen in the absence of regulation; and what guidance his Department has issued on this subject; [160138]

(2) what assessment he has made of the possible effect on the net benefits of regulation of including a do nothing option in regulatory impact assessments; [160137]

(3) how many regulatory impact assessments conducted in 2003 contained a do nothing option. [160136]

**Mr. Alexander:** The Government are committed to regulating only where necessary and promoting the use of alternatives to regulation. This includes the do nothing option, which provides a useful baseline against which to judge the potential impact of a proposal. As set out in Cabinet Office guidance 'Better Policy Making: A Guide to Regulatory Impact Assessment', Departments are required to consider alternatives as part of the RIA process. RIAs are published and placed in the Libraries of the House.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what assessment he has made of the finding in the Evaluation of Regulatory Impact Assessments Compendium Report 2003–04, published

by the National Audit Office, that none of the sample regulatory impact assessments concluded that the costs to small business would be disproportionate. [160139]

**Mr. Alexander:** The Government welcome the National Audit Office's (NAO) Compendium Report on the Evaluation of Regulatory Impact Assessments (RIA), and is currently in the process of looking at the findings and recommendations of the report.

### Secondments

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many private sector workers are seconded to *(a)* the Strategy Unit and *(b)* the Office of the e-Envoy; and if he will make a statement. [160026]

**Mr. Alexander:** There is at present one private sector worker seconded to the Strategy Unit and none to the Office of the e-Envoy.

### Service Denial

**Mr. Jenkins:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many *(a)* denial of service and *(b)* distributed denial of service attacks have been recorded on Government department and agency computer networks and websites in each of the last five years. [160058]

**Mr. Alexander:** IT infrastructure, including IT security arrangements, is the responsibility of individual departments. The information requested is not, therefore, collected centrally.

The Government have a continuous programme of work to identify vulnerabilities and prevent damage to critical national infrastructure, public sector networks and other inter-dependent information systems.

### Special Advisers

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what powers special advisers within his Department have *(a)* to give direct orders to civil servants and *(b)* to exercise other executive powers; and if he will make a statement. [159585]

**Mr. Alexander:** The duties and responsibilities of special advisers are set out in the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers. Under the terms of the Civil Service Order in Council, up to three special adviser posts in the Prime Minister's office can have executive powers. Only one special adviser currently has such powers.

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the total cost has been of special advisers accompanying Ministers on visits *(a)* abroad and *(b)* within the United Kingdom in the last 12 months. [159569]

**Mr. Alexander:** The Government publishes on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. The cost figure includes the costs of any special advisers accompanying the Minister overseas. The cost for the financial year 2003–04 will be published as soon as it is ready after the end of the current financial year. The detailed information requested is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

All travel complies with the requirements of 'Travel by Ministers' and the 'Civil Service Management Code' as appropriate.

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the total cost has been of provision of Government cars to special advisers in the last 12 months. [159570]

**Mr. Alexander:** Special advisers are not provided with allocated Government cars. As with all civil servants, special advisers are entitled to use official pool cars if departmental rules allow.

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office (1) what the total cost has been of provision of Government office facilities to special advisers *(a)* in the last 12 months and *(b)* since 1997–98; [159571]

(2) which Government-owned properties are used by special advisers for official business purposes; and if he will make a statement. [159574]

**Mr. Alexander:** Special advisers provide advice to Ministers. They will normally be located in the same building as the appointing Minister. The cost of providing office facilities to special advisers will not normally be separately identifiable from the cost of Ministers' private offices.

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many special advisers are employed *(a)* within his Department and *(b)* across Government as a whole; and if he will make a statement. [159572]

**Mr. Alexander:** Within the Cabinet Office, the Minister without Portfolio currently employs one special adviser.

As of 8 March, there are 77 special advisers employed across Government as a whole.

### Strategy Unit

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what inquiries the Strategy Unit is undertaking. [159332]

**Mr. Alexander:** The Strategy Unit's current projects include:

Alcohol Misuse—producing an alcohol harm Reduction Strategy for England;

A study of the medium to long-term issues facing the UK Fishing industry;

A project on "Improving the prospects of people living in areas of multiple deprivation in England";

A project on "Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People";

A study of the long-term issues facing London and its role as the UK's capital and as a world city;

A joint analytical study with the Home Office on police reform; and

An analysis of the challenges raised by Countries at risk of Instability and how the UK should improve its strategic response to them.

Details of the Unit's work can be found on its website: www.strategy.gov.uk

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many *(a)* special advisers and *(b)* staff in total are employed in the Strategy Unit. [160028]

**Mr. Alexander:** *(a)* No special advisers are employed in the Strategy Unit. *(b)* There are currently 79 members of staff employed in the Strategy Unit.

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office (1) what assessment he has made of the impact of the Strategy Unit; and if he will make a statement; [160029]

(2) how many projects have been undertaken by the Strategy Unit *(a)* in the last 12 months and *(b)* since it was established; if he will make an assessment of their impact; and if he will make a statement. [160032]

**Mr. Alexander:** The Strategy Unit carries out long-term strategic reviews and policy analysis across a range of areas. It works with departments to improve strategic capability across government.

The Government Chief Social Researcher's Office, which is based in the Strategy Unit, also provides strategic leadership to social research across departments.

Details of the Strategy Unit's work can be found on its website www.strategy.gov.uk.

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many people have been employed on each project undertaken by the Strategy Unit since its inception. [160031]

**Mr. Alexander:** The Strategy Unit was formed in June 2002. Strategy Unit staff work across a number of project issues. Staff numbers usually average between 70 and 90 depending upon the workload.

### Valuation Office Agency

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office pursuant to the answer from the Paymaster General of 27 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 579W, on the Valuation Office Agency; whether the vacancy for a non-executive director of the Valuation Office Agency was advertised on the Public Appointments Unit website; when the names of the four candidates who were short-listed by the Valuation Office Agency for the position first entered the Cabinet Office's Public Appointments list; and whether they were self nominations. [159991]

**Mr. Alexander:** The vacancy for a non-executive director of the Valuation Office Agency was not advertised on the Public Appointments Vacancies website. The appointment was made in April 2002 prior to the development of the website which was launched on 27 March 2003. Since the website enables the open advertising of public appointments opportunities, it has replaced the use of a central list. In accordance with the Data Protection Act, the Department was not able to retain personal information about individuals who were on the list.

### Women (Consultation)

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will list the women's organisations which have been consulted by his Department on proposed legislation during this Session; and whether their responses have been published. [160003]

**Mr. Alexander:** The Government are committed to ensuring that all relevant stakeholders are identified and involved in consultations on proposed legislation.

A 12-week public consultation on the draft Civil Contingencies Bill took place between 19 June and 11 September 2003. Views were sought from a wide range of organisations with an interest in civil protection activity, including the Women's Royal Voluntary Service.

The Government's response to the public consultation was published on 7 January and is available in the Libraries of the House.

## EDUCATION AND SKILLS

### Enterprise Advisers

**Mr. Blizzard:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to his answer of 17 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 954W, on enterprise advisers, when the chief executive of the Learning and Skills Council will supply the information required. [157482]

**Mr. Miliband:** The LSC's chief executive has today written to the hon. Member about the start of the new Enterprise Advisor Service.

### Ministerial Speeches

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many speeches he made between 9 June 2003 and 1 February 2004; and where a copy of each speech can be obtained. [156154]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** My right hon. Friend has spoken at a number of events during this period, some transcripts of which can be found on the departmental website www.dfes.gov.uk. Details relating to a specific speaking event can be obtained by emailing the Department's Speeches Team through the link provided on this website.

### School Governors

**Mr. Jenkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how his Department has improved the way in which it assists school governors in *(a)* making decisions and *(b)* assessing budgets. [160069]

**Mr. Miliband:** My Department has given school governing bodies greater freedom to take decisions through removing unnecessary restrictions on delegation under new arrangements deregulating governing body procedures introduced last September. The new arrangements allow governing bodies to decide for themselves whether the majority of decisions need to be taken by the whole governing body, a committee with delegated powers, or an individual governor or the head teacher. This will enable governing bodies to operate more flexibly, make better use of available expertise and speed up decision making.

Alongside this, we have improved information and communication arrangements so that governors have greater access to the information they need to take well informed decisions. Governors have access to up to date information across the full range of their responsibilities through GovernorNet, our governors' portal; the Governors' Guide to the Law, which we can now keep up to date on GovernorNet; GovernorLine, an

independent advice line backed up by a legal advice service which all governors can access free of charge seven days a week; and our termly Newsletter for School Governors which is available in hard copy for all governors. The Newsletter is used to raise governor awareness of current issues, which should improve governing body decision making. In addition, our National Training Programmes for New Governors and Governing Body Clerks should improve the ability of new governors to contribute at an earlier stage as well as governing body decisions to be better documented. A new programme for anyone chairing governing body meetings or committees "Taking the Chair" and a joint programme for head teachers, governing body chairs and other school leaders "Leading Together" will both be available in the autumn.

The Department has commissioned the National College for School Leadership and KPMG to design, develop and deliver a varied menu of support and guidance to help schools' budget management. This includes a dedicated website and helpdesk, which is available to all school governing bodies. There are also workshops for schools in those LEAs eligible for targeted transitional support, in the period January to March 2004. A team of two from each school can attend the workshop, which could include the chair of governors or the chair of the finance committee.

**Mr. Jenkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many school governor places in England are vacant; and what percentage this represents of capacity. [160078]

**Mr. Miliband:** There are approximately 350,000 school governor places at maintained schools in England. At any one time, across the country, around 12 per cent. of these places are vacant.

### Schools (Capital Spending)

**Mr. Jenkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been spent on schools capital spending programmes in each year since 1979 in *(a)* England and Wales and *(b)* Staffordshire. [160059]

**Mr. Miliband:** The following table shows capital allocations to local education authorities and schools in England and Staffordshire, from 1996–97 to 2003–04. Reliable figures are not available prior to this period. Allocations for Wales are a matter for the Welsh Office.

*Total capital allocations for England and Staffordshire from 1996–97 to 2003–04*

*£ million*

| | *England* | *Of which: Staffordshire* |
|---|---|---|
| 1996–97 | 700 | 3.7 |
| 1997–98 | 800 | 7.4 |
| 1998–99 | 1,100 | [1]25.9 |
| 1999–2000 | 1,400 | 15.5 |
| 2000–01 | 2,100 | 31.1 |
| 2001–02 | 2,200 | 23.0 |
| 2002–03 | 3,000 | 26.6 |
| 2003–04 | 3,800 | 35.5 |

[1] Includes £13.7 million of PFI credits.

### Students (Dependent Children)

**Vera Baird:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if the Higher Education Funding Council for England will collect and publish statistics for the number of students with dependent children attending higher educational institutions, broken down by *(a)* institution and *(b)* region; [159858]

(2) whether the Higher Education Funding Council for England collects statistics for the number of students with dependent children attending higher education institutions; and whether such statistics are publicly available. [159881]

**Alan Johnson** *[holding answer 9 March 2004]:* The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) collects and publishes statistics on behalf of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). Data on the number of students with dependent children are not currently collected by HESA and there are no plans for their future collection or publication.

### Westminster Hall

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make it his policy to have senior Ministers reply to debates in Westminster Hall. [159611]

**Mr. Stephen Twigg:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House on 8 March 2004, *Official Report*, column. 1234W.

## DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

### Bed and Breakfast Accommodation

9. **Simon Hughes:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the Government expect to meet their target that there should be no families in bed and breakfast for more than six weeks in London boroughs; and what steps he will take to sustain this policy. [159910]

**Yvette Cooper:** Official figures show that the number of families in bed and breakfast accommodation for more than six weeks halved between September 2002 and September 2003. Monitoring by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister shows considerable progress has been made since then. From April local authorities will have a statutory obligation not to house families in bed and breakfast for more than six weeks.

### Local Democracy (Participation)

10. **Jim Dobbin:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what action his Department is taking to increase participation and engagement in local democratic structures. [159911]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The Government are keen to encourage participation and engagement in local democracy and continues to pursue a range of initiatives aimed at achieving this.

These include local government reform, new community-based initiatives, electoral pilots, the extension of e-government, and the opportunity for people to vote on regional devolution in the northern regions.

### Council Houses

11. **Bob Russell:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many council houses he expects will be built in the financial year 2004–05. [159912]

**Keith Hill:** The total number of local authority dwellings proposed to be built or acquired in 2004–05 for England is about 350.

### Council Tax

12. **Mr. Ben Chapman:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on changes to council tax levels in 2004–05. [159913]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will publish definitive information on council tax levels in 2004–05 once we have validated returns from all authorities. In the meantime, I am pleased to say that most councils are budgeting prudently, and that council tax increases are expected to be, on average, less than half last year's levels.

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the statement by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State on 10 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1347, if he will place in the Library a copy of the letter to the Mayor of London on the capping of council tax. [159174]

**Mr. Raynsford:** No. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has written to a number of authorities but as a matter of policy it has not published either the names of these authorities or the text of the letters. It would be invidious to single out authorities by making public the letters they have received on this matter.

### Student Housing

13. **Julie Morgan:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to prevent concentration of student housing in cities from affecting the sustainability of communities. [159914]

**Keith Hill:** Several Members of this House have made representations to me about the concentration of student housing in cities. There is limited scope for what can be achieved through national planning and housing policies. It is essential that universities and host local authorities work together to develop and share best practice and to plan and manage the impact students have on the wider community.

Therefore, I have agreed to arrange a meeting with key stakeholders, including the Minister of State for Further and Higher Education, Universities UK and the Local Government Association to take this issue forward.

### Local Government (East Lancashire)

14. **Mr. Chaytor:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the options under consideration for local government reorganisation in East Lancashire. [159915]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The options under consideration for local government reorganisation are matters for the independent Boundary Committee for England.

Government will not take a view on any prospective scheme for reorganisation until we have received the final recommendations from the Boundary Committee, which we expect in May 2004.

### Burials (Private Land)

**Mr. Fabian Hamilton:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister under what circumstances *(a)* a planning condition may be imposed and *(b)* a section 106 agreement may be made to limit the frequency of burials on private land to one a week, averaged over *(a)* three, *(b)* six, *(c)* nine and *(d)* 12 months. [159964]

**Keith Hill:** A limited number of burials over a period of time may not constitute a "change of use" and no planning permission is necessary. Exceeding this "limited" number of burials may require planning approval.

Planning conditions can only be attached to planning permissions. They are imposed to enable planning permission to be given. It is for the local authority to determine what conditions should be imposed to make it possible to grant permission for the desired use.

Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 enables a person with an interest in land to enter into a planning obligation to

(a) restrict the development or use of the land in any specified way;

(b) require specified operations or activities to be carried out in, on, under or over the land;

(c) require the land to be used in any specified way; or

(d) require a sum or sums to be paid to the authority on a specified date or dates or periodically.

The obligation can be in the form of an agreement between a local planning authority or a unilateral undertaking.

Planning obligations under section 106 may be made at any time, but in practice they are usually made between a developer and a local planning authority in the context of a planning permission. A person with an interest in land cannot be compelled to enter into planning obligations.

### Community Plan Areas

**Mr. Clifton-Brown:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which urban development corporations, either existing or proposed, cover the four community plan areas; what the dates are for their inception; what discussions have taken place with their constituent local authorities; and for what reason the Stansted-Cambridge community plan was extended to the whole of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. [159963]

**Keith Hill:** The Sustainable Communities Plan included a commitment in the Growth Areas to set up strengthened local delivery agencies with the necessary powers to drive forward development and the investment, public and private, it requires. For each major growth location the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister consulted local authorities on their views of the

best approach before taking a final decision. In the majority of locations we have agreed that a local authority led local partnership is the best way forward. In a few locations with regeneration objectives, cross-boundary issues and large scale or difficult sites, the long-term focus, funding and special powers of an Urban Development Corporation (UDC) will be required to help to deliver the necessary change and maximise the potential for large scale investment. To date this approach has been either adopted or proposed in two locations in the Thames Gateway and one in the Milton Keynes-South Midlands Growth Area.

In the Thames Gateway, a UDC was established for Thurrock on 29 October 2003. Following public consultation earlier this year, and subject to parliamentary approval, it is expected that a second UDC will be established for London Thames Gateway in summer 2004. In both Thurrock and London Thames Gateway, Ministers and officials have been engaged in lengthy and wide-ranging discussions with local authorities on the proposals to establish a UDC.

In Milton Keynes-South Midlands, a UDC has been proposed for West Northamptonshire. As in the Gateway, we are firmly committed to a partnership approach for the proposed UDC, working closely with the local authorities, English Partnerships and the RDA. Prior to consultation, the Government and local authorities agreed that a UDC would be needed for West Northamptonshire to drive forward the regeneration of the area. We are currently engaged in a public consultation on the proposed UDC that will end on 12 March 2004. Subject to parliamentary approval, it is expected that the West Northamptonshire UDC will come into operation later in 2004. For Milton Keynes the proposed delivery mechanism will be an Urban Development Area (UDA), overseen by a Committee of English Partnerships. This "Milton Keynes Partnership Committee" will include representatives of the local authority, English Partnerships, the Local Strategic Partnership and the private sector. Consultation on the proposed UDA ended on 5 March.

On 2 February, we announced our intention to extend the London-Stansted-Cambridge (L-S-C) Growth Area to include Peterborough and all of Cambridgeshire. This decision takes account of the important role and potential of Peterborough in contributing to sustainable housing growth linked to the London-Stansted-Cambridge Growth Area, and the work of the Regional Planning Panel for the East of England in preparing new regional planning guidance for the region.

It also reflects the important work under way on sustainable housing growth across Cambridgeshire, and particularly through the Cambridge Sub Region Infrastructure Partnership, which includes Fenland, East Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire.

### Fire Engines (Accidents)

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many accidents involving fire engines took place in each London borough in 2003. [160214]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister understands from the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority that the following is the number of accidents involving fire appliances that took place in each London borough in 2003:

| *Borough* | *Total* |
|---|---|
| Barking and Dagenham | 18 |
| Barnet | 13 |
| Bexley | 6 |
| Brent | 14 |
| Bromley | 12 |
| Camden | 20 |
| City of London | 7 |
| Croydon | 13 |
| Ealing | 19 |
| Enfield | 16 |
| Greenwich | 15 |
| Hackney | 14 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 7 |
| Haringey | 12 |
| Harrow | 5 |
| Havering | 6 |
| Hillingdon | 13 |
| Hounslow | 11 |
| Islington | 23 |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 28 |
| Kingston | 5 |
| Lambeth | 36 |
| Lewisham | 16 |
| Merton | 8 |
| Newham | 16 |
| Redbridge | 3 |
| Richmond | 3 |
| Southwark | 17 |
| Sutton | 7 |
| Tower Hamlets | 32 |
| Waltham Forest | 7 |
| Wandsworth | 16 |
| Westminster | 34 |
| Total | 472 |

### Mobile Phone Masts

**Sir Michael Spicer:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will provide further *(a)* planning guidelines and *(b)* resources to local planning authorities with respect to applications for G3 technology telecommunications masts. [160249]

**Keith Hill:** Current planning guidance for all electronic communication developments is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 8 (revised) (PPG8). The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has also issued a Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has no plans to change these arrangements at present.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is, however, making £350 million of additional resources available to planning authorities over three years to drive performance improvement. Authorities are free to spend this money in whatever way they wish.

### Public Sector Procurement

**Mrs. Roche:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of public

sector procurement as a tool for inner city regeneration; and what plans his Department has to develop the use of public sector procurement in the future. [158085]

**Yvette Cooper:** No specific assessment has been made of the effectiveness of public sector procurement as a tool for inner city regeneration. The National Procurement Strategy for Local Government, jointly published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Local Government Association (LGA) in October 2003, sets out a three-year strategy for procurement which encourages public sector bodies to consider wider corporate objectives such as economic and social regeneration as well as the need for better and cost-effective services for citizens.

### Regional Assemblies

**Mr. Jenkin:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will answer the question tabled by the hon. Member for North Essex on 10 February, reference 155144, on elected regional assemblies; and what has delayed his response. [159828]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The relevant question was answered on 4 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1106W.

It will be for the Elected Regional Assembly in each of the three regions to decide on how best to meet its long-term accommodation requirements, including location.

In reaching a decision on any initial temporary accommodation which may be required once an Elected Regional Assembly is in place, the Government will consult the regional chambers in the north-east, north-west and Yorkshire and the Humber.

**Mr. Jenkin:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many regional assembly members would be elected by *(a)* a the first-past-the-post system and *(b)* the additional member system in each of the regions where the Government propose to establish elected regional assemblies. [159830]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister laid out in the White Paper, "Your Region, Your Choice", published May 2002 that the electoral system for the regional assemblies would be the additional member system. This will mean that two thirds of the members in each region will be elected as constituency members, and one third will be top-up regional list members. Each region will have between 25–35 members in total.

**Mr. Jenkin:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the number of assembly members for the proposed elected regional assemblies in the north-west and Yorkshire and the Humber will be determined. [159831]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister announced in the White Paper, "Your Region, Your Choice", published in May 2002, that each assembly will have between 25 and 35 members.

Section 21 of the Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Act 2003 requires the Secretary of State to direct the Electoral Commission to advise him. The topics on which advice can be requested are listed and include the number of electoral areas that an assembly should have. The Act requires that this direction be made no later than two years after a yes vote is gained in a referendum.

**Mr. Jenkin:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the constituencies for regional assembly members elected by the first-past-the-post system would be in *(a)* the north-east, *(b)* the north-west and *(c)* Yorkshire and the Humber. [159832]

**Mr. Raynsford:** Two thirds of the members in each region will be elected by regional constituencies under the first-past-the-post system, while the other third will be elected as "top-up" list members under the Additional Member System.

Section 21 of the Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Act 2003 requires the Secretary of State to direct the Electoral Commission to advise him. The topics on which advice can be requested are listed and include the electoral areas for the assembly. The Act requires that this direction be made no later than two years after a yes vote is gained in a referendum.

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether administrative cost savings consequent on the change in status of local government in North Yorkshire in the event of the establishment of a Regional Assembly would be deducted from future funding allocations to the county. [159196]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will be discussing how to treat the costs and potential savings of reorganisation with local government. A working group has been established to look at costs and the wider practical implications of reorganisation. Its first meeting took place on 9 March.

### South East England Development Agency

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list each project on the Isle of Wight funded by South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) in the last 12 months for which information is available, showing the *(a)* funding from SEEDA for each project and *(b)* intended outcomes of each project. [155257]

**Mr. Raynsford:** In the financial year April 2003 to March 2004, South East England Development Agency will invest a total of £13 million on 17 projects on the Isle of Wight. The purpose of those projects is to support the sustainable economic development of the Island. Forecasted core outputs should:

create or safeguard 388 jobs, create or fill 1,672 learning opportunities between three and 30 hours duration and 112 over 30 hours and create 40 new businesses while sustaining a further 12 for 12 months. The following table applies this in more detail to individual projects.

SEEDA has also provided £35,000 towards the Island's Community Wind project. This has funded a feasibility study which has been extended to cover use of renewable energy in refurbishment and newbuild in an estate in Newport. As well as added value through dissemination there is also a possibility of creating two jobs.

*Isle of Wight SEEDA forecast spend and core outputs for 2003–04*

| | | *Core tier 3 outputs* | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Project* | *Forecast spend (£)* | *New jobs created/ safeguarded* | *Hectares of brownfield land remediated or recycled* | *Number of learning opportunities created and filled (3–30 hours)* | *Number of learning opportunities over 30 hours* | *New businesses created* | *New businesses sustained for 12 months* |
| Ryde 2000—SRB scheme | 1,699,000 | 25 | — | 307 | — | 25 | 12 |
| Island Inclusive—SRB scheme | 106,106 | — | — | 75 | — | — | — |
| Rural Development Programme | 400,000 | 17 | — | 52 | — | 14 | — |
| Leader + (rural) | 100,000 | — | — | 133 | — | — | — |
| Market Town Initiative: (Sandown, Shanklin, Ventnor)[1] | 184,342 | 2 | — | 5 | — | 1 | — |
| Regional Selective Assistance Project | 200,000 | 44 | — | — | — | — | — |
| Better Skills Better Community | 338,000 | — | — | 1,000 | — | — | — |
| Learning for all | 130,000 | — | — | 100 | 100 | — | — |
| Management Development—PLATO[2] | 25,500 | — | — | — | 12 | — | — |
| Isle of Wight Enterprise Hub[3] | 44,355 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Cowes Marine Cluster[3] | 91,000 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Direct Development Activities (GKN, Cowes Waterfront, 3 Gates Road) | 9,600,000 | 300 | Output is not calculated until land is remediated | — | — | — | — |
| Isle of Wight Economic Partnership Funding | 90,000 | [4]— | [4]— | [4]— | [4]— | [4]— | [4]— |
| Total spend in Isle of Wight 2003–04 | 13,008,303 | [4]— | [4]— | [4]— | [4]— | [4]— | [4]— |

[1] Market Towns also deliver rural outputs such as improved community facilities and child care places.
[2] This programme applies across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight and this represents a pro-rata allocation for the Isle of Wight.
[3] Will deliver supplementary outputs such as business advice.
[4] Not applicable

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Accession States

**Glenda Jackson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether British embassies and high commissions in the EU accession countries will issue UK workers registration certificates; and whether there will be a charge for such certificates. [156932]

**Beverley Hughes:** I have been asked to reply.

My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary indicated in his statement to the House on 23 February 2003, *Official Report* columns 23–25, that, from 1 May, accession country nationals will have free movement across EU borders. They will not be required to apply for entry clearance to travel to the United Kingdom in search of work. With the exception of Malta and Cyprus, citizens of the new member states will need to register with the Home Office when they find a job in the UK, providing information about where and for whom they are working. Employers will be required to satisfy themselves that accession country nationals in their employ apply for and receive registration under this scheme.

The registration scheme will be run by the Immigration and Nationality Directorate. The Directorate is looking into whether all or part of the administrative costs of the scheme could be recovered through charges.

Registration under the scheme will be issued for 12 months, and within that period will be valid for as long as the worker is in the registered employment. The worker should apply to renew the registration if he or she finds a job with a new employer. Registration under the scheme will apply only to workers in the United Kingdom, not to those who are not working.

### Afghanistan

**Mr. Ancram:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate his Department has made of the number of *(a)* Afghan National Army personnel and *(b)* Afghan police that will (i) have completed training and (ii) be working officially within Afghanistan by 30 June. [159016]

**Mr. Straw** *[holding answer 9 March 2004]:* We currently estimate that around 10,000 Afghan National Army personnel and at least 5,000 Afghan police personnel will have completed training and be operational in Afghanistan by 30 June.

**Mr. Ancram:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions his Department has had with the German Government regarding the role of the German military in eradicating poppy production in the north of Afghanistan. [159018]

**Mr. Straw** *[holding answer 9 March 2004]:* As lead nation co-ordinating international counter-narcotics assistance to Afghanistan, the UK works closely with all Afghan and international partners, including Germany, to co-ordinate Afghanistan's drug control efforts to best effect. We have regular discussions with German counterparts about counter-narcotics assistance to Afghanistan.

Although no international military forces are involved in the Afghan campaign to eradicate opium poppy, we encourage the Afghan authorities to use existing liaison mechanisms to ensure that all drug enforcement interventions are de-conflicted with the

wider security programmes in place. We understand the mandate for the German military forces in Afghanistan agreed by the German Parliament currently precludes any engagement in counter-narcotics activity of any type.

**Mr. Ancram:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the British Government's objectives are for the conference on Afghan reconstruction in Berlin on 31 March and 1 April; and if he will make a statement. [159019]

**Mr. Straw** *[holding answer 9 March 2004]:* We will use the Berlin Conference to reaffirm our commitment to Afghanistan; to encourage other donors to contribute additional resources to the reconstruction effort; and to take forward the Action Plans that emerged from the joint Afghan/UN/UK Counter-Narcotics Conference in Kabul on 9 February.

The conference will also provide an opportunity to take stock of progress to date against the Bonn Agreement of December 2001, and to agree with the Afghan Government and our international partners a blueprint for continued engagement over the next three to five years.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development, made a Written Statement on 1 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 74WS, setting out the UK's increased pledge of at least £500 million for Afghanistan up to 2006–07. We are encouraging our international partners to follow our example and provide sufficient resources to allow Afghanistan to build on the achievements of the Bonn Process to date.

**Mr. Ancram:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions his Department has had regarding the role played by the German Government in setting the agenda for the international summit on Afghanistan to be held in Berlin. [159504]

**Mr. Straw** The agenda for the Berlin Conference on Afghanistan (31 March to 1 April) has been set by the Afghan Transitional Administration, in consultation with Germany and other international partners.

**Mr. Ancram:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions his Department has had with the US Administration on stability in Uruzgun, Afghanistan during the period of February to 30 June 2004. [159537]

**Mr. Straw:** Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials at all levels are in regular contact with their US counterparts on all aspects of the current situation in Afghanistan, including security and stability in the regions.

## Cyprus

**Mr. Ancram:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his answer of 13 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 643W, on Cyprus, whether the University of Oslo has completed its report on the elections to the Assembly of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus; and if he will make a statement. [159536]

**Mr. Straw** *[holding answer 9 March 2004]:* The publication of the University of Oslo report has been delayed. We expect it to be published in the very near future.

## Hong Kong/China

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what UK assets in Hong Kong were given to China at the handover of sovereignty; and what their value was. [158505]

**Mr. Rammell:** Under the terms of the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration, the British Government agreed to restore Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China on 1 July 1997. A small number of military sites were covered by a separate Exchange of Notes in 1994 (Cm 2888 of June 1995). In practice the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government took over on 1 July 1997 the functions previously exercised by the colonial Hong Kong Government. This was done without any compensation and it was therefore not appropriate to put any value on what was handed back.

The Joint Declaration provides Hong Kong with a high degree of autonomy from mainland China except in foreign and defence affairs. The Joint Declaration states that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region "shall deal on its own with financial matters, including disposing of its financial resources" and "shall use its financial revenues exclusively for its own purposes and they shall not be handed over to the Central People's Government".

## Iraq

**Norman Lamb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his answer of 15 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 733W, on Iraq, if he will make a statement on the extent of the involvement of Mr. Nadhmi Auchi in the company which has been awarded the licence for the provision of mobile telecommunications services in the central region of Iraq including Baghdad. [149424]

**Mr. Rammell:** The Coalition Provisional Authority has informed us that the licence for the central Iraq sector, including Baghdad, was awarded to Orascom Iraq Holding Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Orascom Telecom Holding SAE, an Egyptian joint stock company. As the company is registered outside the UK, we are not in a position to verify information on its shareholders. Only UK registered companies are required to list their shareholders with Companies House.

**Norman Lamb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he has received of investigations by the Pentagon Inspector General into the awarding of contracts for the provision of mobile telecommunications services in Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [149438]

**Mr. Rammell:** We have asked the United States Government for clarification and are awaiting a response.

**Sir Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on *(a)* the 28 February deadline for the

approval of the Fundamental Law in Iraq and *(b)* the 31 May deadline for elections to the transitional assembly. [158148]

**Mr. Straw** *[holding answer 9 March 2004]:* The Transitional Administrative Law (TAL) was signed by the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) on 8 March after intensive debate. The agreement on a TAL is a great achievement. The UN's recent report on the holding of the elections in Iraq concluded that properly organised elections to a Transitional National Assembly would not be feasible until late 2004 at the earliest and more probably early 2005. The IGC and the CPA have accepted the UN's recommendations on timings for the elections.

**Sir Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what security arrangements have been agreed between the Coalition Provisional Authority and the Iraqi Governing Council; what time limits are attached to those agreements; what requirements they place on any future provisional government of Iraq; what their basis is in *(a)* Iraqi and *(b)* international law; and if he will make a statement. [158149]

**Mr. Straw** *[holding answer 9 March 2004]:* The status of multinational forces in Iraq and the legal mandate that will govern their presence and operations after the handover of authority to an Iraqi Government remain under consideration.

### Kurdish Independence

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Kurdish independence within a federal Iraq following the publication of the draft interim national constitution. [158554]

**Mr. Rammell:** The long term political structure of Iraq will be determined by the Transitional National Assembly due to be elected by January 2005. However, the Transitional Administrative Law recognises the administrative and legislative functions of the Kurdistan Regional Government, which is recognised as the official regional government of those territories that were administered by that Government as of 19 March 2003.

Functions performed by the Kurdistan Regional Government shall continue to be exercised throughout the transitional period, except over those issues which fall within the exclusive competence of the central federal government as specified in the Transitional Administrative Law.

### Temporary Staff

**Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many staff the Department employs on a temporary basis through employment agencies; what percentage this is of total staff employed; and how much the Department paid employment agencies to supply temporary staff in *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2002–03 and *(c)* 2003–04 to the most recent date for which figures are available. [158239]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** We do not have a central record of the numbers of staff employed under contract from agencies; to obtain these figures would incur disproportionate costs. However the cost of temporary staff supplied to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is:

| *Financial year* | *Agency costs (£)* |
|---|---|
| 2001–02 | 1,933,841 |
| 2002–03 | 1,850,779 |
| 2003–04 (until end November 2003) | 1,063,713 |

### Ukraine

**Tom Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans his Department has to develop closer *(a)* economic and *(b)* trading ties with the Ukraine; and if he will make a statement. [159544]

**Mr. MacShane:** Economic and trade ties between the UK and Ukraine are developing. For example, a Birmingham Chamber of Commerce trade mission visited Ukraine in February. Also the UK is a major investor in Ukraine, notably through BP's partnership with the Russian company TNK and through direct investments in Ukraine by the UK oil and gas company JKX. Trade will develop once Ukraine accedes to the WTO. The EU signed a bilateral WTO protocol with Ukraine last year; Ukraine is negotiating with other WTO members. The EU-Ukraine Partnership and Co-operation Agreement provides for an eventual Free Trade Agreement.

**Tom Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of the Ukraine concerning its future membership of the European Union; and what *(a)* advice he plans to give and *(b)* co-operation he plans to undertake with the Ukraine in this matter. [159545]

**Mr. MacShane:** The UK has regular contacts with Ukraine at official and ministerial level, at which Ukraine's relationship with the EU is often discussed. I visited Ukraine on 14 and 15 September 2003. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary met Ukrainian Foreign Minister, Kostyantyn Gryshchenko on 12 January 2004.

Ukraine has a long way to go before the question of EU membership can be addressed. For now, Ukraine should focus on domestic reform and developing closer relations with the EU both through implementation of its Partnership and Co-operation Agreement and through full participation in the new European Neighbourhood Policy, which is aimed at strengthening the EU's relations with its neighbours.

The Foreign Secretary made clear to Foreign Minister Gryshchenko in January that closer relations between Ukraine and the EU will depend on Ukraine's democratic process and its progress with democratic and other reforms. The extent to which the 2004 presidential elections are free and fair will be a crucial test.

The UK has committed almost £3 million to help create an environment in which elections can be more democratic, including by enabling the independent Ukrainian media to expose electoral malpractice. Of this amount, some £600,000 directly targets the 2004 presidential election. The UK will also provide support to international election monitoring.

**Tom Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of the Ukraine concerning its future membership of NATO; and what his policy is on such membership. [159546]

**Mr. MacShane:** My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary discussed NATO issues with the Ukrainian Foreign Minister Kostyantyn Gryshchenko in January.

We welcome Ukraine's determination to pursue full Euro-Atlantic integration. The UK continues to work closely with Ukraine and NATO Allies to promote full implementation of the NATO-Ukraine Action Plan launched at the Prague Summit in November 2002.

Any enhancement of NATO-Ukraine relations needs to be based on a shared commitment to Euro-Atlantic values and standards. The extent to which the 2004 presidential elections are free and fair will be a crucial test of Ukraine's readiness for a closer relationship with NATO.

**Tom Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to visit the Ukraine; and if he will make a statement. [159547]

**Mr. MacShane:** I refer my right hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Canterbury (Mr. Brazier) on 10 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1308W.

### United Nations

**Richard Ottaway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether there have been breaches by the UK of the *(a)* Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations 1946 and *(b)* Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations 1961 in the last two years. [159378]

**Mr. Straw:** The United Kingdom is obliged to comply with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations 1961 and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations 1946 in accordance with international law. There have been a small number of cases where, through administrative error, arriving diplomats have been referred for medical checks or had their personal effects opened in a manner not in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. On each occasion the matter was amicably resolved after the Foreign and Commonwealth Office apologised to the diplomatic mission concerned.

### US Visas

**Peter Bottomley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the number of *(a)* British passport holders and *(b)* British journalists who visited the USA in each of the last five years; if he will make a statement on the new visa arrangements for travel from the UK to the US; and what assessment he has made of the effect of the new arrangements on the timescale for issuing US visas to UK citizens. [159156]

**Mr. Mullin:** The Office for National Statistics estimates the number of UK residents visiting the US in each of the last five years as:

| | *Number of UK residents (million)* |
|---|---|
| 1999 | 4.73 |
| 2000 | 5.06 |
| 2001 | 4.66 |
| 2002 | 4.21 |
| 2003 | 3.8 |

It is not possible to break these figures down between British Citizens, other British Nationals and others resident in the UK, or give figures for British passport holders who travelled to the US from another country in which they are normally resident.

The US embassy in London issued the following numbers of five-year multiple entry visas to 'representatives of the media':

| | *Number of visas issued* |
|---|---|
| 1999 | 1,906 |
| 2000 | 2,034 |
| 2001 | 2,078 |
| 2002 | 1,816 |
| 2003 | 2,001 |

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has expressed concern to US Secretary of State Colin Powell at the effect of changes to the US Visa Waiver Programme due to come into effect on 26 October 2004. Discussions are under way with the US authorities. It is too early to predict the outcome.

### Westminster Hall

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to have senior Ministers reply to debates in Westminster Hall. [159620]

**Mr. Straw:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House gave on 8 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1234W.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### Climate Change

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the national security implications of climate change. [157945]

**Mr. Morley:** Across Government, we are carrying out internal assessments to identify how policy and operational responsibilities in all Departments could be affected by climate change. This process is currently reporting, and has included both the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The MOD is continuing to look at the implications of climate change for national security.

Some of the potential linkages between climate change and security include increased pressure on food and water resources and energy supplies, which in turn (and in combination with other factors) may contribute to the causes of migration, instability and conflict.

### Waste

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to increase the total for private finance initiative credits for waste disposal plans. [156387]

**Mr. Morley:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State recognises the increasing contribution that the private finance initiative (PFI) is making in the area of waste management and disposal. £475 million of PFI credits are being made available for waste projects over the period from 2001–02 to 2005–06. To date, eight waste PFI projects have reached contract completion and there have been seven new approvals since April 2003. PFI is being considered as one funding route as part of the current Government Spending Review covering spending up to 2007–08. The outcome of the Spending Review will be announced in the summer.

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs at what level she intends to fix penalties for local waste authorities which do not meet waste targets. [156389]

**Mr. Morley:** The level of penalty for Waste Disposal Authorities which landfill more than their available allowances under the Landfill Allowances Trading Scheme will be made known when the outcome to the recent consultation is published on the Defra website www.Defra.gov.uk. This is likely to be in early April. Waste Disposal Authorities will be able to avoid the imposition of penalties by making full use of the flexibilities in the scheme.

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps are being taken to reduce the amount of waste generated by *(a)* households and *(b)* businesses in London. [155273]

**Mr. Morley** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* The Government's national policies to reduce the amount of waste generated will have an impact on London.

The Government have committed over £40 million over the next three years (2003–06) to the Waste and Resources Action Programme's (WRAP) waste minimisation work. Its work tackles household waste minimisation through four schemes:

- an expansion of home composting;
- promotion of re-usable nappies;
- a research and development programme, aimed at identifying and developing innovative approaches to waste minimisation;
- work with major retailers to reduce the amount of waste entering the waste stream from supermarkets.

Two London local authorities will participate in the 22 home composting pilot schemes that WRAP is running in 2004–05.

In addition WRAP will take forward an education and awareness programme. This will operate at both a national and local level to raise the public's awareness about waste issues, including waste minimisation.

The Government have also provided significant extra funding through the London Recycling Fund, which in its first two years specifically funded a number of waste minimisation schemes.

The London Recycling Fund has recently reviewed its business plan and has announced that waste minimisation and reuse is one of its three main priority areas for funding.

The Mayor of London's municipal waste management strategy "Rethinking Rubbish in London" sets out a number of policies he proposes to take to reduce municipal waste growth in London.

For businesses the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations 1997 (as amended) set targets for the recovery and recycling of packaging waste and provide incentives to reduce the amount of packaging handled.

The Government have entered into a voluntary agreement with the newspaper industry, which has seen recycled content of newspapers increase to well over the target of 60 per cent. last year. The Government are looking to enter into more agreements of this kind.

The Government fund Envirowise, a business support programme dedicated to making businesses more resource efficient, saving money by minimising waste. Last year alone, Envirowise helped UK businesses to achieve annual cost savings of over £175 million, with a reduction of 1.6 million tonnes of solid waste. It also funds the Sustainable Technologies Initiative that provides funding for research and development projects aimed at minimising waste at source.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to require the Environment Agency to maintain more precise data on *(a)* inert, *(b)* non-hazardous and *(c)* hazardous waste arisings. [156406]

**Mr. Morley:** None. The Environment Agency already keeps data on the origin, quantity, type and destination of every load of special waste. There are no plans to make these more precise. The Department is examining data needs in the context of the Landfill Directive targets to divert biodegradable municipal waste from landfill but also more widely in relation to the EU Waste Statistics Regulation. The intention is to consult on a draft data strategy. A decision will be made in due course as to who would be responsible for collecting these data.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the meetings she has held with the Deputy Prime Minister since 1 June 2001 to determine how the United Kingdom will provide the new waste management capacity that the Environment Agency has indicated is necessary to achieve compliance with the Landfill Directive; and what achievements have resulted from these meetings. [156407]

**Mr. Morley:** My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, meets the Deputy Prime Minister frequently to discuss all manner of topics. ODPM and Defra are working together to revise Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 10, which covers Planning and Waste Management. The current PPG 10, issued in September

1999, deals with the planning considerations to be taken into account in preparing waste local (i.e. land use) plans. In updating PPG 10 (to Planning Policy Statement 10) the government aims to provide more strategic support for local authority decision makers in providing for new waste capacity—whether in plans or planning decisions. The aim is to publish a draft PPS 10 for consultation at the earliest opportunity.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the National Interim Waste Acceptance Procedures will be published. [156408]

**Mr. Morley:** The waste acceptance criteria that currently apply and will continue to do so until Council Decision 2003/33 is implemented in England and Wales, are referred to in Regulation 10 and Schedule 1 of the Landfill (England and Wales) Regulations 2002. Consultation on the amending regulations implementing the Council Decision has ended and the outcome of that consultation should be published on the Defra website www.Defra.gov.uk in March.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when her Department will publish the *(a)* interim Hazardous Waste Regulations and *(b)* draft Hazardous Waste Regulations. [156409]

**Mr. Morley:** A draft of new Hazardous Waste Regulations will be made available when Defra goes out to consultation on the Regulations later this year. Defra has no plans to issue interim Hazardous Waste Regulations.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she has taken to ensure that hazardous waste is not transported between England and other parts of the UK to evade regulatory requirements; and if she will make a statement. [156412]

**Mr. Morley:** While regulatory requirements for hazardous waste in different parts of the UK may not be completely identical, the European Hazardous Waste List and the requirements of the Hazardous Waste Directive will be completely transposed throughout the UK. Movements of hazardous waste in the UK are tracked from the point of production to the point of final disposal, so those transporting such waste from one part of the UK to another will be unable to evade regulatory requirements.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when her Department will lay before Parliament the amendments to the Landfill (Amendment) Regulations 2002. [156413]

**Mr. Morley:** Following the publication later this month of the consultation outcome on the Landfill (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2004, the aim is to lay those Regulations before Parliament in April. This will enable the deadline of 16 July 2004 for transposing Council Decision 2003/33 on waste acceptance criteria into national legislation to be met.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the waste streams to be banned from landfill from 16 July 2004. [156414]

**Mr. Morley:** There are no waste streams that will be banned from landfill from 16 July 2004. Hazardous liquid wastes and wastes that are explosive, corrosive, oxidising or flammable have been banned from being disposed of to landfill since 16 July 2002 and whole tyres have been banned from landfill at new sites and hazardous landfills since 16 July 2003.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what high temperature incineration capacity exists in *(a)* France, *(b)* Germany and *(c)* the UK for treatment of hazardous waste; [156415]

(2) what the rate of utilisation of high temperature incineration capacity within the United Kingdom was in the latest year for which figures are available. [156436]

**Mr. Morley:** In the UK there are two operational merchant high temperature incinerators and one mothballed. The two operational plants have a current combined capacity of approximately 110,000 tonnes per annum for hazardous waste, and utilisation was broadly in line with capacity last year. There are also a number of in-house HTI plant, generally attached to other industrial facilities.

Waste industry sources advise that France has 16 hazardous waste incinerators which corresponds to 770,000 tonnes per annum.

In Germany there is incineration capacity for approximately 1 million tonnes of hazardous waste per annum in approximately 30 plant (18 of which are integrated with other industrial plant).

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether advice has been given to Government departments on how to dispose of *(a)* end of life fluorescent light bulbs and *(b)* other waste that will be classified as hazardous when the Hazardous Waste Regulations come into force. [156416]

**Mr. Morley:** It is anticipated that commitments for sustainable waste stream management on the Government Estate will be published during Spring/ Summer 2004 as part of the waste section of the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate (Framework).

Practical guidance (to include information about fluorescent tubes and hazardous waste) will be produced and placed on the Framework website.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate *(a)* her Department and *(b)* the Environment Agency has made of the total capacity using separate cells at non-hazardous landfill sites that will be able to accept stable non-reactive waste in each year from 2004 to 2010. [156417]

**Mr. Morley:** The Environment Agency is examining its records in order to identify those non-hazardous landfill operators who have expressed an interest in constructing a separate cell in their non-hazardous landfill sites for stable non-reactive hazardous waste. When complete, this work will provide a snap-shot of the position that the Hazardous Waste Forum will factor into its work on treatment and disposal capacity

post July 2004. Whether or not to provide this disposal option is a commercial decision of the waste management industry.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the extent to which the Environment Agency's Regulatory Guidance Note 6 will prohibit the development of a separate cell at a non-hazardous landfill site able to take stable non-reactive waste. [156418]

**Mr. Morley:** The Environment Agency has a duty to protect the environment and the requirements in its Regulatory Guidance Notes are drawn up with this duty to the fore. The technical/regulatory guidance that the Agency has produced on the use of separate cells for stable non-reactive hazardous waste—RGNs 6 and 11—reflect the need to maintain physical separation of the stabilised waste from chemically aggressive leachate from biodegradable waste in the same site. Providing landfill operators act in a responsible manner, there is no reason why RGN 6 should prevent the proper development of separate cells for stable non-reactive hazardous waste at non-hazardous landfill sites.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what methods were used to treat hazardous liquid waste in 2003; and how much hazardous liquid waste was sent to each of these methods; [156419]

(2) how much hazardous liquid waste was sent for treatment by landfill in each year from 2000 to 2002. [156420]

**Mr. Morley:** The Environment Agency is preparing the information requested and I will write to the hon. Member.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what penalties the European Commission could apply if the United Kingdom were to defer the ban on co-disposal of hazardous wastes with non-hazardous waste resulting from the Landfill Directive; and whether her Department has discussed such deferral with the European Commission. [156425]

**Mr. Morley:** The Landfill (England and Wales) Regulations 2002 implement the provision in the Landfill Directive that bans the co-disposal of different categories of waste, except in certain specified circumstances, from 16 July 2004. The ban is therefore already part of UK legislation approved by Parliament and as a result, there has been no reason to discuss deferral with the European Commission. The question of possible penalties also does not arise.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action *(a)* her Department and *(b)* the Environment Agency have taken to liaise with (i) the Home Office, (ii) police forces and (iii) local authorities to (A) assess levels of risk associated with the unlawful disposal of hazardous waste and (B) implement a strategy to minimise the risk to the environment and human health. [156427]

**Mr. Morley:** Defra worked closely with the Home Office on development of environmental measures in the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.

The Anti-social Behaviour Act extends a range of powers, currently only available to the Agency, to waste collection authorities to ensure they can tackle illegal dumping effectively.

The Act also gives the Secretary of State the power to issue statutory directions to reinforce an existing voluntary agreement between the Local Government Association and the Environment Agency to create a clearer division of responsibilities. Defra published a consultation on proposed statutory directions on 23 February 2004.

The Environment Agency have worked with Defra and the Local Government Association to develop "Flycapture", the National Fly-Tipping Database, that is due to go live from April 2004. This will assess the scale and cost of illegal dumping in England and Wales.

Defra also worked closely with the Agency, local authorities and other Government departments to issue a Fly-Tipping Strategy that aims to ensure that legislation to combat fly-tipping is as effective as possible.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether she asked the Minister for Ecology and Sustainable Development in the French Government at meetings of the EU Environment Council why France already requires pre-treatment of hazardous waste; and what response that Minister made. [156432]

**Mr. Morley:** My right hon. Friend discusses all manner of topics with her Ministerial colleagues in the margins of Environment Council meetings. The approach of other Governments in the EU in respect of waste management issues reflect long term attitudes to the environmental problems that can arise if waste is not handled correctly. For its part, it is the aim of this Government to continue to move towards a more sustainable waste management system in the UK by placing greater emphasis on minimising waste and on re-using, recycling, recovering or treating the waste that is produced.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what volume of hazardous liquid waste was disposed directly to public sewers in 2003; and if she will make a statement on the implications for *(a)* human health and *(b)* the environment of such disposal. [156433]

**Mr. Morley:** Data on the volume of liquid waste and waste water discharges to public sewers is not held centrally, but the Environment Agency publishes relevant information pertaining to its regulatory functions in its Pollution Inventory. This information consists of the annual loads of a range of substances released to sewer and controlled waters and is available on the Environment Agency's "What's in your backyard" website (http://216.31.193.171/asp/1_introductior..asp)

The entry of hazardous substances into sewers in England and Wales is subject to authorisation by sewerage undertakers under the Water Industry Act 1991, by the Environment Agency under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and by the Environment Agency or local authority under the Pollution Prevention Control Act 2000. In determining its authorisations the

Environment Agency ensures that discharges which may impact on the environment do not pose a significant risk to human health or the environment.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what meetings she has had with representatives of the *(a)* Confederation of British Industry and *(b)* Chemical Industries Association on developing a strategy to inform waste producers of their obligations under the Landfill Directive. [156435]

**Mr. Morley:** My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, and other Defra Ministers meet both organisations as and when necessary and may discuss a range of issues. A strategy to inform waste producers of their obligations under the Landfill Directive is an integral part of the Hazardous Waste Forum's Action Plan, published in December 2003. Both the Confederation of British Industry and the Chemical Industries Association are members of the Forum and were actively involved in drawing up the strategy. Also, both organisations have an important role to play in the delivery of that strategy.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what checks are made on low-level radioactive waste sites; how often they are checked; and by whom checks are done. [157261]

**Mr. Morley:** The Environment Agency (EA), under the provisions of the Radioactive Substances Act 1993, regulates low-Level Radioactive Waste (LLW) disposal sites in England and Wales. This is achieved through authorisations which impose various conditions on the site operator. The authorisations require the operator to routinely report to the EA disposals against the authorised limits. In addition to reviewing these reports, the EA periodically inspects all authorised LLW disposal sites, to ensure that the conditions of the authorisation remain appropriate, and are being complied with.

The primary UK national LLW disposal site, operated by BNFL at Drigg in West Cumbria, is regulated by both the EA and by the Nuclear Safety Directorate of the Health and Safety Executive, under the provisions of the Nuclear Installations Act 1965.

The EA monitors radioactivity in surface waters (leachates, boreholes and nearby rivers and streams) around waste disposal (landfill) sites where disposals of low-level radioactive waste are authorised. This is undertaken on an annual or bi-annual basis.

BNFL undertake quarterly monitoring programmes of boreholes at the Clifton Marsh landfill site. In addition the company carries out quarterly dose rate surveys in relation to the Ulnes Walton landfill site and monitoring of the River Lostock close to the outfall point. The results of these monitoring programmes can be found on the BNFL website at www.bnfl.com.

The EA undertakes a thorough radioactivity monitoring regime in the vicinity of the Drigg site. This includes monitoring of surface waters and sediments bi-annually and monitoring of sands, sediments and seaweeds on the West Cumbrian coast four times per year. The Food Standards Agency also carries out monitoring of foods in West Cumbria to check that food produced around Sellafield and Drigg is safe. The monitoring includes seafoods caught from the Irish Sea off the West Cumbrian coast.

From 2002, the results of all the environmental monitoring carried out by the Environment Agency and by the Food Standards Agency are reported jointly and annually in the Radioactivity in Food and the Environment report series, copies of which are placed in the Library.

### Air Quality Expert Group

**Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the *(a)* total budget and *(b)* budget for administration were for the Air Quality Expert Group in financial year 2002–03. [158683]

**Alun Michael:** The estimated total budget for AQEG in financial year 2002–03 was £74,000. The estimated administration budget was £27,500, based on the costs of Defra staff resources to run the Secretariat.

### Asgard Systems

**Alistair Burt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs under what circumstances a court action may be brought against the Environment Agency concerning the quality of advice given by the Agency on an enquiry by a business or member of the public; and if she will make a statement. [156717]

**Mr. Morley:** I am advised that where a public body, such as the Environment Agency, has given advice to a person, that person may be able to bring some form of court action against the public body if that body has acted in some way that is improper, negligent or in breach of its statutory duties. The nature and likely merits of any such action would depend on the particular circumstances of the case. Consequently, any person thinking of taking legal action against a public body would be well advised to seek independent legal advice before doing so.

### Batteries (Disposal)

**Mrs. Spelman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will hold a consultation exercise on the forthcoming EU directive on the disposal and recycling of batteries. [157527]

**Mr. Morley:** The Government intend to issue a consultation document on the draft Batteries Directive this spring.

### Biosafety Protocol

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what position the UK took at the recent meeting of parties to the Biosafety Protocol in Kuala Lumpur in relation to the creation of an international liability regime. [159796]

**Mr. Morley** *[holding answer 8 March 2004]:* In line with the EU's common position (as set out in December's Environment Council Conclusions), the UK supported the adoption of a process with respect to the appropriate elaboration of international rules and procedures in the field of liability and redress for damage resulting from transboundary movements of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and making a final report to the meeting of the Parties within four years (by 2008).

The EU/UK position was that the most appropriate mechanism for this process should be a group of technical and legal experts.

### Bovine TB

**Mr. Paterson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many human cases of M.bovis have been linked to occupational exposure to infected cattle in the last 10 years. [157956]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** I have been asked to reply.

There are no official records for occupational exposure, though two cases, themselves linked, are reported to have been linked to occupation in recent years. The most up to date available figures for human M.bovis infection in England and Wales since 1993 are shown in the table. Figures are not yet available for 2002.

| *Year* | *Total M.bovis human infections* |
|---|---|
| 1993 | 37 |
| 1994 | 31 |
| 1995 | 20 |
| 1996 | 32 |
| 1997 | 30 |
| 1998 | 30 |
| 1999 | 31 |
| 2000 | 18 |
| 2001 | [1]27 |

[1] Provisional data

*Source:*
MycobNet Health Protection Agency Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre 1993–2001.

### Cetaceans

**Andrew Mackinlay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures the Government have taken since 1997, and what further measures are proposed, to reduce the number of dolphins and porpoises killed; and if she will make a statement. [156215]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** Since 1997, the Government have funded a number of research projects to identify fisheries in which dolphin and porpoise bycatch occurs and to develop and trial measures to reduce this bycatch. This work has led in particular to the identification of a dolphin bycatch problem in the offshore pair trawl fishery for bass and the development of an escape grid mechanism as a potential means of reducing this bycatch. Trials of this device are currently taking place. Work has also identified that acoustic devices known as pingers are effective in reducing bycatch of harbour porpoises in fixed gear fisheries.

Alongside this work this Department, along with devolved Administrations, published in March 2003 the UK Small Cetacean Bycatch Response Strategy which made a number of recommendations to reduce bycatch. We are currently considering responses to this consultation document with a view to the implementation of this strategy. As EU measures will be most effective in reducing bycatch in community waters, the strategy will need to take account of the outcome of current discussions on European Commission proposals to reduce bycatch. I welcome the Commission proposals and I am looking for their early implementation.

### Departmental Premises (Chelmsford)

**Mr. Burns:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether her Department plans to sell its premises in Beeches Road, Chelmsford; and if she will make a statement. [159993]

**Alun Michael:** Defra does not own premises at Beeches Road, Chelmsford; it leases space from Department of Works and Pensions. We have no plans to leave.

### Ducks

**Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many ducks other than ruddy ducks, broken down by species, have been culled as a result of the ruddy duck control scheme. [159213]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** A total of five ducks other than ruddy ducks have been killed during shooting operations since April 1999; two female tufted ducks, one male tufted duck, one male teal and one juvenile long-tailed duck, this compares to a total of over 4,200 ruddy ducks shot.

A further seven ducks (mallard chicks) died during the trap-testing which took place during the control trial. This compares to 17 ruddy ducks trapped.

The killing of non-target birds is taken very seriously and every effort is made to minimise such losses. The Standard Operating Procedures issued to all field operatives make it clear that there should be a high degree of vigilance over identification and that shooting should only take place if safe to do so without causing injury or death to non-target species.

### End of Life Vehicles Directive

**Mr. Bill O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many vehicle dismantlers registered with the Environmental Agency for a site licence before the 1 February deadline under implementation of the European End of Life Vehicles Directive; and how many vehicle dismantlers she estimates are operating without licences. [157982]

**Mr. Morley:** The Environment Agency received 600 applications from vehicle dismantlers wanting to register for their site licences before the 31 January deadline. In addition, 900 sites are already licensed to treat ELVs.

It is very difficult to estimate how many vehicle dismantlers are operating without a licence because registered exempt sites may continue to accept depolluted ELVs. The agency has yet to check how many previously exempt sites have not applied for a licence, but these sites are mainly small scale and already operate to high standards of environmental protection.

### Environmentally Sustainable Procurement

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in what ways environmentally sustainable procurement strategies within the Department have driven innovation in the design and supply of products. [159102]

**Mr. Morley:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State set out an overview of the Government's approach to sustainable procurement on 30 October 2003, *Official Report*, column 15WS, signalling how recommendations from the inter-departmental Sustainable Procurement Group (SPG) would be taken forward.

The emphasis in the first phase of action will be on the frameworks for sustainable procurement practice and the embedding across Government of minimum specification standards which represent good environmental practice. We consider that these are essential steps towards tackling the still tougher challenge of encouraging environmental innovation through public procurement.

The report of the SPG (www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/sdig/improving/partf/report03/08.htm) recommended that the theme of sustainable procurement and inhovation should be a focus for further work over the coming year. That work has now started, and will be taken forward in the context also of the Government's Innovation Report, published by the Department of Trade and Industry in December (www.dti.gov.uk/innovationreport/innovation-report-full.pdf).

It is expected that the forthcoming procurement section of the "Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate" (see http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/sdig/improving/index.htnn) will set Government wide commitments for embedding sustainable development considerations in departmental procurement strategies.

### Fallen Stock

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the implications for farmers of delays in the start-up of the fallen stock collection service; and what arrangement she has put in place to exempt farmers from possible prosecution under the EU directive on prevention of burying deadstock. [159404]

**Mr. Bradshaw** *[holding answer 5 March 2004]*: The ban on burial has been in place since 1 May 2003 and, as we made clear then, we expect farmers to use existing approved outlets such as knacker yards, hunt kennels, maggot farms, rendering facilities or incineration plants for disposal of their fallen stock. However, we have asked local authorities to take a pragmatic approach to enforcement where farmers have made every effort to dispose of their fallen stock via these outlets but are genuinely unable to comply.

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many people signed up to the fallen stock collection scheme, broken down by region. [159405]

**Mr. Bradshaw** *[holding answer 5 March 2004]*: There has been no invitation to farmers to sign up to the National Fallen Stock Scheme. Initial expressions of interest in joining the scheme were sought from farmers last year.

### Farm Payments

**Mr. Nicholas Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in what circumstances the Government are unable to disclose the names and addresses of *(a)* individuals and *(b)* companies in receipt of direct payments under the Common Agricultural Policy; and if she will make a statement. [160168]

**Alun Michael:** The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) is bound by commercial confidentiality in its dealings with its customers, whether sole traders or farmers or corporations, breach of which by disclosing information relating to the affairs of individual traders or farmers or corporations would expose the RPA to the liability of legal proceedings in tort.

In relation to individual farmers or traders, information which is of a personal nature, such as individual payments to such persons, is personal data which is protected from voluntary disclosure under the Data Protection Act 1998. While the RPA can release global figures relating to payments, which do not identify individual persons, including corporations, it is unable to release individual figures without incurring the liabilities under the two principles referred to.

### GM Crops

**Gregory Barker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many GM plants per square metre would be expected to grown in a field of conventional crops of which 0.9 per cent. of plants are GM in respect of *(a)* oil seed rape, *(b)* sugar beet and *(c)* maize. [158276]

**Mr. Morley** *[holding answers 2 March 2004]*: Seed drilling rate is variable, depending on conditions, and only a proportion of those seeds sown will establish. Approximate figures for established plants are as follows: Oilseed rape 50–60 crop plants per metre square; Beet 8–10 plants per metre square; and, Fodder Maize 10 plants per metre square. Accordingly, 0.9 per cent. of these values would give 0.45–0.54 plants per metre square for Oilseed Rape; 0.07–0.09 plants per metre square for Beet; and, 0.09 plants per metre square for Maize.

### Household Waste

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the legislative changes required to allow local authorities to adopt direct and variable charging schemes for the collection and disposal of household waste. [158231]

**Mr. Morley:** Amendments to sections 45 and 51 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 would be required to allow waste collection authorities and waste disposal authorities to charge householders for the collection, processing, treatment and disposal of household waste and for household waste delivered to Civic Amenity sites respectively. Provision would also need to be made under such powers for secondary legislation to provide for the exercise of those powers by local authorities.

### Landfill

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for how long after use of a landfill site has been discontinued low-level radioactive waste monitoring is carried out. [157296]

**Mr. Morley:** Responsibility for regular annual monitoring of radioactivity in the environment around landfill sites in England and Wales rests with the Environment Agency and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency for Scotland.

There is no fixed time after which monitoring for radioactivity around landfill sites will cease to be undertaken once they cease to receive radioactive wastes. Monitoring programmes are kept under review and any decision to discontinue monitoring is only made after careful evaluation. Evaluation takes into account the inventory of waste disposed to a site, including the radionuclides and quantities, the characteristics of the disposal site, and whether monitoring results have shown that radioactivity is consistently low or not detectable.

The results of radioactivity monitoring carried out around landfill sites are reported annually. Results for 2002 are presented in Radioactivity in Food and the Environment Report (RIFE—8), which is available in the House of Commons Library.

### Meat and Livestock Commission

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much funding was given to the Meat and Livestock Commission in each of the last five years. [157706]

**Alun Michael:** Funding (ie from net Statutory Levy income and non-commercial fee and grant income) received by the Meat and Livestock Commission in the last five years was as follows:

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1998–99 | 39.566 |
| 1999–2000 | 38.461 |
| 2000–01 | 36.668 |
| 2001–02 | 27.667 |
| 2002–03 | 31.531 |

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how her Department's funding to the Meat and Livestock Commission is spent; and what rules apply to the promotion of *(a)* Welsh (i) lamb and (ii) beef, *(b)* Scottish (i) lamb and (ii) beef and *(c)* English (i) lamb and (ii) beef. [158582]

**Alun Michael:** The Agriculture Act 1967 requires the Department to pay for the remuneration and expenses of Meat and Livestock (MLC) Commissioners. As regards how the MLC spend the statutory general and promotional levies raised by them on cattle, sheep and pigs, this information is available in the MLC's annual report and accounts which Ministers are required under the Act to lay before each House of Parliament.

Bodies in receipt of MLC levy funding must abide by EU State Aid rules when undertaking lamb or beef promotion campaigns. These rules place restrictions on the use of State (including levy) funds for the advertising of agricultural products on the basis of origin. Welsh lamb, Welsh beef, Scotch lamb and Scotch beef have been awarded Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) status by the European Commission. This means that the European Commission has accepted the link between the geographical origin and the characteristics of the product. In such cases, State money may be used to fund advertising where origin is part of the message. English lamb and English beef do not have PGI status.

### Mobile Homes

**Mr. David Atkinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will provide financial assistance for owners of mobile homes in flood risk areas who are required by their insurance company to raise their homes above flood level; and if she will make a statement. [155866]

**Mr. Morley:** The Government do not offer financial assistance for homes in flood risk areas. Financial issues relating to maintenance and insurance of the property are the responsibility of the property owner.

For mobile homes as with other properties, insurers will examine the risks on a case-by-case basis, and will use their best efforts to continue to provide cover. The Association of British Insurers believes that nearly all homes are insurable to a degree, provided appropriate action is taken to protect the property, eg by raising homes above flood level.

### National Fruit Collection

**Hugh Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) if she will make a statement on the land ownership issues at Brogdale as they affect the National Fruit Collection; [159262]

(2) if she will make a statement on the future of the National Fruit Collection at Brogdale; [159263]

(3) if she will make a statement on the criteria her Department used to assess a suitable manager for the National Fruit Collection. [159264]

**Alun Michael:** The National Fruit Collection belongs to Defra and we have contracts with Brogdale Horticulture Trust covering its maintenance and curation; and with Imperial College (Wye) on scientific programme direction. Under overriding lease provisions, agreed some years ago, we have access to the NFC until 2016, irrespective of land ownership or land holding considerations. We have been holding a number of discussions with Brogdale Horticulture Trust about the future curation contract arrangements which we hope to conclude shortly.

### Radioactive Waste

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what mechanisms she is evaluating to ensure that people hundreds of years hence are aware of *(a)* the presence and *(b)* the dangers of existing radioactive material which has a half-life extending beyond hundreds of years; [152619]

(2) what safeguards she intends to put in place to prevent radioactive contamination of future generations from *(a)* existing stocks of (i) intermediate level and (ii) high-level radioactive material and *(b)* from stocks predicted to arise over the next 50 years. [152692]

**Mr. Morley:** The safe operation of interim radioactive material and waste storage and eventual disposal facilities is a matter for regulatory control by the Health and Safety

Executive and the environment agencies. Both Ministers and the regulatory bodies require safety cases submitted for the operation of such facilities to provide demonstration of adequate protection of the public and the environment both now and into the future. The Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) has been set up under the "Managing Radioactive Waste Safely" programme to provide recommendations to UK Government and the devolved Administrations on the best option, or combination of options, for safe long-term management of the UK's higher activity radioactive wastes, including all intermediate and high level waste, liable to arise in the foreseeable future.

## Water Charges

**Mrs. Calton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the percentage change in charges to householders for water charges in the last five years, broken down by region; and what advice has been given to water providers with respect to such charges. [157372]

**Mr. Morley:** Water bills and sewerage bills are set separately by each water and sewerage company and water company in England and Wales. The boundaries of these companies do not conform to the boundaries between England and Wales nor to the boundaries between English regions. It has therefore not been possible to make assessments on the basis requested.

The Director General of Water Services (Ofwat) sets upper price limits for water and sewerage companies and approves companies' yearly charges schemes for customers. The Secretary of State issues guidance to Ofwat on Government policies affecting price limits and on the approval of charges schemes.

The average household water and sewerage bills for each company in England and Wales in each financial year since 1996–97 are set out in the following two tables.

*Nominal average household sewerage bill (£)*

| | *1996–97* | *1997–98* | *1998–99* | *1999–2000* | *20000–01* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* | *2003–04* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Anglian | 154 | 158 | 164 | 156 | 144 | 151 | 157 | 163 |
| Dwr Cymru | 136 | 146 | 158 | 166 | 140 | 147 | 152 | 155 |
| North West | 109 | 122 | 133 | 143 | 119 | 122 | 113 | 116 |
| Northumbrian | 113 | 118 | 126 | 141 | 110 | 112 | 96 | 101 |
| Severn Trent | 106 | 112 | 117 | 115 | 92 | 95 | 211 | 221 |
| South West | 202 | 213 | 229 | 237 | 205 | 203 | 152 | 159 |
| Southern | 131 | 141 | 152 | 162 | 148 | 153 | 93 | 95 |
| Thames | 93 | 98 | 102 | 104 | 92 | 95 | 122 | 127 |
| Wessex | 129 | 135 | 142 | 144 | 124 | 133 | 133 | 142 |
| Yorkshire | 113 | 115 | 118 | 123 | 109 | 112 | 112 | 117 |
| England and Wales | 117 | 123 | 131 | 134 | 116 | 119 | 121 | 125 |

*Nominal average household water bill (£)*

| | *1996–97* | *1997–98* | *1998–99* | *1999–2000* | *2000–01* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* | *2003–04* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Anglian | 128 | 126 | 124 | 116 | 107 | 110 | 113 | 116 |
| Hartlepool | 88 | 91 | 96 | 95 | — | — | — | — |
| Dwr Cymru | 128 | 135 | 136 | 134 | 126 | 123 | 124 | 122 |
| North West | 93 | 99 | 101 | 103 | 103 | 107 | 109 | 118 |
| Northumbrian | 96 | 98 | 102 | 100 | 88 | 88 | 88 | 90 |
| Essex and Suffolk | 116 | 120 | 127 | 129 | 107 | 112 | 111 | 113 |
| Severn Trent | 88 | 97 | 105 | 113 | 106 | 108 | 108 | 112 |
| South West | 127 | 129 | 125 | 119 | 109 | 110 | 115 | 121 |
| Southern | 94 | 101 | 105 | 111 | 91 | 91 | 90 | 91 |
| Thames | 88 | 93 | 99 | 102 | 95 | 99 | 104 | 106 |
| Wessex | 113 | 118 | 124 | 124 | 107 | 112 | 113 | 119 |
| Yorkshire | 104 | 105 | 108 | 111 | 100 | 103 | 104 | 110 |
| York | 87 | 89 | 93 | 96 | 87 | 90 | 90 | 94 |
| Bournemouth and West Hampshire | 94 | 97 | 103 | 102 | 99 | 98 | 101 | 102 |
| Bristol | 100 | 104 | 108 | 111 | 101 | 105 | 106 | 107 |
| Cambridge | 103 | 106 | 106 | 98 | 86 | 87 | 90 | 94 |
| Cholderton | 126 | 130 | 151 | 136 | 130 | 141 | 153 | 143 |
| Dee Valley | — | — | — | 120 | 107 | 106 | 104 | 106 |
| Chester | 106 | 108 | 108 | — | — | — | — | — |
| Wrexham | 130 | 129 | 129 | — | — | — | — | — |
| Folkestone and Dover | 114 | 118 | 116 | 117 | 118 | 125 | 125 | 135 |
| Mid Kent | 131 | 135 | 141 | 146 | 117 | 123 | 127 | 128 |
| Portsmouth | 72 | 72 | 73 | 74 | 74 | 75 | 75 | 76 |
| Mid South East | — | — | — | — | 118 | 114 | 121 | 126 |
| South East | 156 | 155 | 158 | 159 | — | — | — | — |
| Mid Southern | 114 | 115 | 116 | 120 | — | — | — | — |
| South Staffs | 75 | 78 | 81 | 85 | 84 | 86 | 86 | 89 |
| Sutton and East Surrey | 136 | 135 | 139 | 134 | 112 | 120 | 121 | 126 |
| Tendring Hundred | 149 | 150 | 152 | 151 | 137 | 142 | 146 | 153 |
| Three Valleys | 107 | 112 | 117 | 124 | 106 | 111 | 112 | 116 |
| North Surrey | 108 | 112 | 123 | 126 | 109 | 111 | 103 | 110 |
| England and Wales | 101 | 106 | 112 | 112 | 103 | 105 | 107 | 111 |

## TREASURY

### Compliance Performance Targets

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the Answers of 26 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 110W, and 1 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 658W, on compliance performance targets, what the compliance performance estimate the for Inland Revenue was for 2003–04 as agreed as part of the planning process for the current year; and what the estimates for the compliance performance were in 2003–04 of *(a)* the Large Business Office and *(b)* International Division. [160099]

**Dawn Primarolo:** The Inland Revenue has not drawn up compliance performance estimates since 1999–2000, when a global estimate for the Department was given. As the Board's report for 2003 sets out, yield figures vary according to the number and tax effect of the complex enquiries brought to settlement in each year, and this is also affected by the consequences of litigation undertaken.

### Project ASPIRE

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the Answer of 27 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 575W, on the Inland Revenue, which commissioners of the Inland Revenue had prior knowledge of the suppliers with whom the Inland Revenue team intended to meet as part of the market making exercise for Project ASPIRE. [160014]

**Dawn Primarolo:** As the Board member responsible for Business Services, Tim Flesher had prior knowledge of the suppliers with whom the Inland Revenue team intended to meet as part of the Market Making exercise for Project ASPIRE.

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer who the board member referred to in paragraph 54 of the Minutes of Evidence of the Public Accounts Committee, HC 431-i, Session 1999–2000, as responsible for John Yard's division on 12 April 2000 was; on what date that board member started the planning for re-tendering the Inland Revenue's information technology service referred to in the Minutes of Evidence; and on what date it was decided to conduct the market making exercise referred to in the Minutes of Evidence. [160016]

**Dawn Primarolo:** As I stated in my answer of 6 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1081W, the Board member responsible for Business Services on 12 April 2000 was Tim Flesher, who at that time was the Inland Revenue's Deputy Chairman. As I also stated in my answer of 16 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 803W, planning for the ASPIRE project began in January 2001. The Market making exercise was conceived by the Inland Revenue between August and October 2001, as stated in my answer of 14 October 2003, *Official Report*, column 141W.

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the Answer of 30 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 569–70W, which commissioners were present at the meeting on 7 March 2002 on Project ASPIRE; whether the commissioners addressed the assembled suppliers; and whether the commissioners were informed in advance of those suppliers who had indicated that they would attend the meeting. [160015]

**Dawn Primarolo:** Sir Nicholas Montagu KCB, Chairman of the Inland Revenue, and Tim Flesher, the former Deputy Chairman of the Inland Revenue were present at the meeting on 7 March 2002. Both addressed the meeting and had been informed in advance about which suppliers would attend the meeting.

### Public Sector Borrowing

**Mr. Tyrie:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the *(a)* public, *(b)* private and *(c)* total borrowing of (i) those higher education institutions in receipt of funding from the Higher Education Funding Councils, (ii) housing associations and (iii) Network Rail was in each year from 1997–98 to 2002–03; and what the latest available figures are for the (A) public, (B) private and (C) total debt of each. [156160]

**Mr. Boateng:** Details of the borrowing for academic years 1997–81 to 2002–03 by higher education institutions in receipt of funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for England were published for each year by HEFCE in their "Outcomes of financial forecasts, annual monitoring statements and corporate planning statements", copies of which have been placed in the Library of the House.

Details of the borrowing for financial years 1997–98 to 2002–03 by housing associations are available in the Housing Corporation's Annual Private Finance Monitoring Bulletins 1998 to 2003, copies of which have been placed in the Library of the House.

Network Rail has been responsible for operating, maintaining and renewing Britain's rail infrastructure only since October 2002. Consequently, 2002–03 is the only financial year for which published information on borrowing is available. This is in the company's annual report and accounts copies of which are available in the Library of the House. None of their borrowing at the end of the year was from the public sector. The position for the current year is not yet publicly available.

### Redundancy Money

**Vera Baird:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to review the threshold at which tax is paid on redundancy money. [159882]

**Dawn Primarolo:** As with all taxes the threshold at which tax is paid on redundancy money is a matter for the Chancellor to consider as part of the annual Budget process.

### Scottish Football Industry

**Pete Wishart:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what responsibilities his Department has in relation to the Scottish football industry; and if he will make a statement. [156824]

**Dawn Primarolo** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]:* Sport is primarily a devolved matter in Scotland and so the responsibility of the Scottish Executive. In relation to non devolved fiscal aspects, the 2003 Pre-Budget Report announced that the Government is to consider

how it can best help to support Football Supporters' Trusts, in particular by a review of how they are treated by the Inland Revenue.

### Small Business Taxation

**Mr. Pickthall:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his answer of 3 March, *Official Report*, column 910W, on small business taxation, what plans he has to change the taxation of small businesses. [159644]

**Dawn Primarolo:** All taxes are reviewed as part of the annual Budget process.

### Timber

**Ms Walley:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what construction and refurbishment HM Treasury is undertaking; at what locations; and what measures are being implemented to ensure that all timber used *(a)* on the construction sites and *(b)* in the final project will come from legal and sustainable sources. [158105]

**Ruth Kelly:** The Treasury is not undertaking any construction and refurbishment projects. The Department moved into refurbished premises at 1 Horse Guards Road in the summer of 2002.

**Ms Walley:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which companies have contracts for furniture provision for HM Treasury; and what measures have been implemented to ensure that when a product contains wood, it can be shown to come from legal and sustainable sources. [158107]

**Ruth Kelly:** The Treasury purchases its furniture though direct contracts and framework agreements let by OGC Buying Solutions or Inland Revenue. In all cases there are clauses in the contract that require any wood products to come from sustainable sources.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### Housing Benefit

**Patrick Mercer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions for what reason the Housing Benefit Regulations *(a)* require a Rent Officer to review the rent of a private landlord and *(b)* do not require a rent officer to review the rent of a registered social landlord. [158985]

**Mr. Pond:** Claims received from those in the private rented sector will generally be referred to the local Rent Officer for a rental valuation to determine the HB claim. The Rent Officer will look at the level of rents within the neighbourhood as well as in the wider locality. Any subsequent restriction in the rent used to calculate Housing Benefit will reflect a reasonable market rent for suitable accommodation of the appropriate size within the locality. This ensures that benefit paid to claimants is sufficient to pay for an appropriate dwelling whilst, at the same time, protecting the public purse.

Generally, local authorities are not required to refer registered social landlord (RSL) tenancies to the rent officer for determination; the full contractual rent, less any ineligible charges, is used to calculate Housing Benefit. RSL rents are subject to Housing Corporation regulation and are generally set within prevailing market levels. However, where the local authority considers the rent to be excessive, or the accommodation overlarge for the tenant's needs, it is required to refer the tenancy to the Rent Officer. Where a tenancy is referred to a Rent Officer, Housing Benefit would be restricted to a maximum rent in the usual way.

### Age Discrimination

**Linda Perham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Code of Practice on age discrimination in the workplace. [156084]

**Malcolm Wicks:** The Code of Practice was launched in 1999 and an initial evaluation of its impact was, undertaken in 2001. This showed that the number of companies using age in recruitment had fallen from 27 per cent. to 13 per cent., awareness of the Code had risen from 14 per cent. to 37 per cent. and the number of companies having a policy against employing older workers had dropped from 14 per cent. to 7 per cent. Since then we have continued to promote the business case for recruiting, training and retaining older workers through the Age Positive, campaign and website, www.agepositive.gov.uk. We are commissioning more research with employers this year to further assess the impact of the campaign.

In December 2002, we published an updated version of the Code of Practice 'Age Diversity at work: a practical guide for business' which sets out the standards for non-ageist approaches to recruitment, training, promotion, redundancy and retirement. The campaign, which since last year has included enhanced promotion in Wales and Scotland, has been attracting considerable media coverage. This has resulted in a considerable increase in employer interest across the whole of Great Britain, as well as much increased traffic to the website. A sample survey of employers undertaken by Cranfield School of Management in 2003 indicated that a third of employers believe they have non-ageist policies in place and a further third were planning to adopt non-ageist policies within the coming two years. Copies of the survey have been placed in the Library.

### Benefit Payments

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* child benefit recipients, *(b)* pensioners and *(c)* other benefit recipients received payments (i) into bank accounts, (ii) into Post Office Card Accounts and (iii) through post offices using pension and benefit books in (A) Greater London and (B) each London borough at the most recent date for which figures are available. [158402]

**Mr. Pond:** The available information requested is shown by each London local authority as at 24 January 2004. Child benefit is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and War Pensions are the responsibility of my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Defence.

*Recipients of benefits in London local authorities broken down by method of payment*

| | Total | Bank accounts | Percentage of recipients paid by bank account | Post Office card account | Percentage of recipients paid by Post Office card account | Order book | Percentage of recipients paid by Order book |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Non pensioners* | | | | | | | |
| All London local authorities | 828,255 | 417,105 | 46.66 | 22,625 | 2.53 | 388,525 | 43.46 |
| Inner London-West | 111,460 | 57,920 | 48.28 | 4,190 | 3.49 | 49,345 | 41.13 |
| Camden | 28,255 | 14,950 | 48.64 | 790 | 2.57 | 12,515 | 40.73 |
| City of London | 535 | 300 | 50.51 | 15 | 2.71 | 220 | 37.12 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 20,915 | 11,015 | 49.35 | 1,270 | 5.68 | 8,630 | 38.66 |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 14,435 | 8,010 | 52.17 | 735 | 4.77 | 5,690 | 37.07 |
| Wandsworth | 25,365 | 12,090 | 44.03 | 505 | 1.85 | 12,765 | 46.48 |
| Westminster | 21,960 | 11,555 | 49.14 | 875 | 3.72 | 9,525 | 40.51 |
| Inner London—East | 280,320 | 130,965 | 42.86 | 9,020 | 2.95 | 140,330 | 45.92 |
| Hackney | 36,715 | 17,565 | 44.16 | 1,645 | 4.13 | 17,505 | 44.01 |
| Haringey | 32,610 | 15,350 | 42.78 | 845 | 2.35 | 16,415 | 45.76 |
| Islington | 30,925 | 15,445 | 46.42 | 1,475 | 4.43 | 14,005 | 42.10 |
| Lambeth | 37,010 | 16,805 | 40.52 | 1,015 | 2.45 | 19,195 | 46.28 |
| Lewisham | 32,370 | 15,720 | 43.48 | 685 | 1.89 | 15,965 | 44.15 |
| Newham | 39,415 | 18,175 | 43.17 | 1,395 | 3.32 | 19,845 | 47.14 |
| Southwark | 37,510 | 17,510 | 42.87 | 1,095 | 2.68 | 18,905 | 46.28 |
| Tower Hamlets | 33,765 | 14,400 | 39.92 | 875 | 2.42 | 18,495 | 51.28 |
| Outer London—East and North East | 178,745 | 87,990 | 45.99 | 3,350 | 1.75 | 87,410 | 45.68 |
| Barking and Dagenham | 25,100 | 10,630 | 39.41 | 510 | 1.89 | 13,965 | 51.76 |
| Bexley | 18,845 | 10,490 | 52.77 | 425 | 2.14 | 7,930 | 39.88 |
| Enfield | 32,615 | 16,155 | 46.83 | 825 | 2.40 | 15,635 | 45.33 |
| Greenwich | 30,805 | 14,350 | 42.36 | 700 | 2.07 | 15,760 | 46.52 |
| Havering | 19,870 | 10,225 | 49.05 | 175 | 0.84 | 9,470 | 45.43 |
| Redbridge | 23,750 | 12,650 | 51.03 | 285 | 1.14 | 10,815 | 43.62 |
| Waltham Forest | 27,760 | 13,490 | 44.27 | 430 | 1.41 | 13,840 | 45.42 |
| Outer London—South | 92,090 | 49,665 | 49.84 | 1,600 | 1.61 | 40,820 | 40.96 |
| Bromley | 23,095 | 13,315 | 53.61 | 695 | 2.80 | 9,085 | 36.59 |
| Croydon | 32,835 | 16,805 | 46.97 | 495 | 1.38 | 15,540 | 43.44 |
| Kingston upon Thames | 8,775 | 4,875 | 51.31 | 50 | 0.54 | 3,850 | 40.55 |
| Merton | 13,785 | 7,390 | 49.11 | 160 | 1.07 | 6,235 | 41.46 |
| Sutton | 13,595 | 7,290 | 50.22 | 200 | 1.37 | 6,110 | 42.11 |
| Outer London—West and North West | 165,645 | 90,565 | 51.05 | 4,460 | 2.51 | 70,620 | 39.81 |
| Barnet | 27,900 | 15,590 | 52.06 | 690 | 2.30 | 11,620 | 38.80 |
| Brent | 32,805 | 17,980 | 50.71 | 1,220 | 3.44 | 13,605 | 38.37 |
| Ealing | 33,155 | 18,100 | 51.38 | 1,370 | 3.89 | 13,680 | 38.84 |
| Harrow | 17,120 | 9,665 | 52.83 | 130 | 0.71 | 7,320 | 40.02 |
| Hillingdon | 21,985 | 10,680 | 45.04 | 165 | 0.69 | 11,140 | 46.96 |
| Hounslow | 22,890 | 12,650 | 51.96 | 700 | 2.87 | 9,540 | 39.19 |
| Richmond upon Thames | 9,795 | 5,895 | 56.56 | 190 | 1.80 | 3,715 | 35.64 |
| *Pensioners* | | | | | | | |
| All London local authorities | 1,193,680 | 683,865 | 56.94 | 6,540 | 0.54 | 503,275 | 41.91 |
| Inner London—West | 139,105 | 82,270 | 58.66 | 540 | 0.39 | 56,295 | 40.14 |
| Camden | 28,155 | 16,235 | 57.23 | 105 | 0.37 | 11,815 | 41.64 |
| City of London | 1,095 | 820 | 74.89 | 0 | 0.18 | 270 | 24.84 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 23,460 | 13,110 | 55.47 | 125 | 0.53 | 10,220 | 43.24 |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 22,040 | 15,210 | 68.11 | 70 | 0.32 | 6,755 | 30.26 |
| Wandsworth | 36,145 | 19,360 | 53.29 | 165 | 0.45 | 16,620 | 45.74 |
| Westminster | 28,215 | 17,535 | 61.55 | 70 | 0.25 | 10,610 | 37.25 |
| Inner London—East | 247,080 | 111,290 | 44.79 | 1,360 | 0.55 | 134,435 | 54.11 |
| Hackney | 26,940 | 10,535 | 38.88 | 140 | 0.52 | 16,260 | 60.00 |
| Haringey | 29,875 | 15,365 | 51.08 | 125 | 0.42 | 14,385 | 47.81 |
| Islington | 25,225 | 10,170 | 40.12 | 185 | 0.73 | 14,870 | 58.65 |
| Lambeth | 32,680 | 16,345 | 49.72 | 150 | 0.46 | 16,185 | 49.22 |
| Lewisham | 37,080 | 18,485 | 49.62 | 270 | 0.72 | 18,325 | 49.19 |
| Newham | 34,670 | 15,740 | 45.10 | 220 | 0.62 | 18,715 | 53.61 |
| Southwark | 33,235 | 15,465 | 46.31 | 165 | 0.50 | 17,600 | 52.70 |
| Tower Hamlets | 27,380 | 9,175 | 33.37 | 105 | 0.38 | 18,100 | 65.82 |
| Outer London—East and North East | 299,935 | 163,500 | 54.27 | 2,210 | 0.73 | 134,225 | 44.55 |
| Barking and Dagenham | 31,055 | 12,480 | 40.04 | 230 | 0.74 | 18,345 | 58.86 |
| Bexley | 46,295 | 27,615 | 59.45 | 465 | 1.00 | 18,220 | 39.22 |
| Enfield | 51,420 | 30,210 | 58.38 | 265 | 0.51 | 20,945 | 40.48 |
| Greenwich | 36,440 | 18,280 | 49.98 | 315 | 0.86 | 17,845 | 48.80 |
| Havering | 52,740 | 29,500 | 55.75 | 485 | 0.92 | 22,750 | 42.99 |
| Redbridge | 44,350 | 25,935 | 58.18 | 225 | 0.50 | 18,190 | 40.81 |
| Waltham Forest | 37,635 | 19,480 | 51.49 | 225 | 0.60 | 17,925 | 47.38 |
| Outer London—South | 212,300 | 136,705 | 64.00 | 1,285 | 0.60 | 74,310 | 34.79 |
| Bromley | 66,035 | 44,310 | 66.69 | 380 | 0.57 | 21,345 | 32.13 |
| Croydon | 57,090 | 36,205 | 63.07 | 380 | 0.66 | 20,500 | 35.71 |
| Kingston upon Thames | 25,015 | 16,610 | 66.00 | 135 | 0.54 | 8,270 | 32.85 |

*Recipients of benefits in London local authorities broken down by method of payment*

| | Total | Bank accounts | Percentage of recipients paid by bank account | Post Office card account | Percentage of recipients paid by Post Office card account | Order book | Percentage of recipients paid by Order book |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Merton | 29,870 | 17,990 | 59.80 | 165 | 0.55 | 11,715 | 38.94 |
| Sutton | 34,290 | 21,590 | 62.57 | 220 | 0.63 | 12,480 | 36.17 |
| Outer London—West and North West | 295,260 | 190,100 | 63.93 | 1,145 | 0.39 | 104,015 | 34.98 |
| Barnet | 56,620 | 37,880 | 66.27 | 175 | 0.30 | 18,565 | 32.48 |
| Brent | 39,965 | 23,465 | 58.34 | 185 | 0.46 | 16,315 | 40.57 |
| Ealing | 50,815 | 32,095 | 62.73 | 235 | 0.46 | 18,485 | 36.13 |
| Harrow | 39,440 | 27,220 | 68.50 | 115 | 0.29 | 12,105 | 30.47 |
| Hillingdon | 43,780 | 27,630 | 62.77 | 200 | 0.46 | 15,950 | 36.24 |
| Hounslow | 34,825 | 21,255 | 60.72 | 130 | 0.37 | 13,440 | 38.40 |
| Richmond upon Thames | 29,820 | 20,565 | 68.43 | 105 | 0.35 | 9,150 | 30.45 |

*Notes:*
1. Figures refer to a snapshot of live accounts in payment on 24 January 2004.
2. The figures relate to number of accounts not claimants, (a customer may be in receipt of more than one benefit)
3. Some bank/building society accounts can be used at a Post Office to access money.
4. For confidentiality reasons, all figures are rounded to the nearest
5. Figures may therefore not sum to the totals shown

*Source:*
IAD Information Centre, 100 per cent. sample

## Care Grants

**Sandra Gidley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much money has been allocated in care grants in each year since 1999 *(a)* in total for England and *(b)* broken down by local authority. [157370]

**Mr. Pond:** The available information for England is in the table.

*Community Care Grant budget and expenditure for England since 1999*

£

| | Initial budget | Contingency Reserve allocation | Total allocation | Expenditure |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1999–2000 | 77.14 | 0.34 | 77.48 | 77.38 |
| 2000–01 | 78.71 | 0.26 | 78.97 | 78.87 |
| 2001–02 | 80.95 | 0.21 | 81.15 | 80.62 |
| 2002–03 | 84.91 | 0.81 | 85.72 | 85.02 |
| 2003–04 | 92.72 | 0.36 | 93.08 | — |

*Notes:*
1. All figures are given in millions.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest £0.01 million.
3. Figures may not sum due to rounding.
4. The Contingency Reserve allocation for 2003–04 is the allocation so far this year.

*Source:*
DWP figures; Social Fund Policy Budget and Management Information System

The information is not available at local authority level.

Initial budgets and contingency reserve allocations are set at Social Fund/Jobcentre Plus district level. Information regarding all district initial budgets and contingency reserve allocations are available in the Library; this includes information regarding the impact of boundary changes made in 2002–03.

## Council Tax Benefit

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people are claiming Council Tax Benefit. [159916]

**Mr. Pond:** The information is not available in the format requested.

As at August 2003, 4,657,400 households were in receipt of Council Tax Benefit in Great Britain.

*Source:*
DWP Data 100 per cent. sample (figures rounded to nearest hundred).

## Ministerial Speeches

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many speeches he made between 9 June 2003 and 1 February 2004; and where a copy of each speech can be obtained. [156148]

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** I and members of the Government make a number of speeches on a wide range of domestic and international issues. Copies of my speeches are available on the Departmental website at www.dwp.gov.uk (contained within the Media Centre then Ministers Speeches).

## Westminster Hall

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make it his policy to have senior Ministers reply to debates in Westminster Hall. [159614]

**Mr. Andrew Smith:** I refer my hon. Member to the Written answer given by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House on 8 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1234W.

## Winter Fuel Payments

**Mr. Crausby:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have requested application forms for winter fuel payments via e-mail in each year since the facility became available. [159851]

**Malcolm Wicks:** During the 2002–03 Winter Fuel Payment exercise there were 250 requests for a Winter

Fuel Payment claim form via e-mail. To date for this winter 2003–04 there have been 410 requests for a Winter Fuel Payment claim form via e-mail.

### Funding (Dorset)

**Jim Knight:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what grants were awarded to local authorities in Dorset by his Department in financial year 2003–04 that fall outside the revenue support grant. [156203]

**Mr. Pond:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Minister for Local and Regional Government on 1 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 750W.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### "Reducing Crime, Changing Lives"

**Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he last met representatives of NAPO to discuss the implications of the Carter Report; and when he next plans to meet NAPO representatives on this subject. [155614]

**Paul Goggins:** As the Minister responsible for the Probation Service I meet at least twice a year with representatives of the relevant trade unions, including National Association of Probation Officers in the Ministerial Trade Union Forum. The last meeting was held on 17 December prior to the publication of Patrick Carter's report and the Home Office response, "Reducing Crime—Changing Lives".

**Mr. Gerrard:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consultation took place, and for what period, on the plans contained in, "Reducing Crime, Changing Lives". [155840]

**Paul Goggins:** "Reducing Crime, Changing Lives" was published on 6 January. The closing date for responses was 3 March.

### "The Old and the New" Report

**Mr. Kilfoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will implement the recommendations of the report The New and the Old from the Life in the United Kingdom Advisory Group. [159239]

**Beverley Hughes:** I refer my hon. Friend to the Written Ministerial Statement made by my right hon. Friend, Baroness Scotland of Asthal on 2 February 2004. *Official Report*, column WS13, and to the related papers deposited in the Library, which set out the steps we are taking to implement the recommendations of the report.

### EU Accession States

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the statement by the Home Secretary on 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 23–36, on immigration from the accession states, what assessment he has made of the impact of the policy on the recruitment of health care professionals to work in the UK. [158585]

**Beverley Hughes:** Relevantly qualified healthcare professionals from the EU accession states will be able to work in the United Kingdom after accession.

All nationals from Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania who find work in the UK will be required to apply to register with the Home Office under the new 'Worker Registration Scheme' as soon as they find work. This should have no impact on the ability of the NHS to recruit health care professionals from EU accession states.

**Glenda Jackson:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) to whom and how often employers will be required to forward the number of EU accession citizens in their employ; whether employers will be permitted to charge the employee for such registrations; and whether employers will be fined if they fail to keep such information up-to-date; [156980]

(2) whether the issuing of a worker's registration certificate will enable a citizen of an EU accession state to look for work in the United Kingdom if employment is not already guaranteed; [156982]

(3) who will issue the registration certificate enabling EU accession nationals to work in the UK; and whether there will be a charge for such a certificate; [156992]

(4) when the work registration certificates enabling EU accession states citizens to work in the UK will begin to be issued; for how long such a certificate will enable the holder to seek work; and whether it will be necessary for such certificates to be re-applied for should the holder move to another part of the UK from that in which their initial employment was found. [156998]

**Beverley Hughes:** My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary indicated in his statement to the House on 23 February 2003, *Official Report* columns 23–25, that, from 1 May, accession country nationals will have free movement across EU borders. They will not be required to apply for entry clearance to travel to the United Kingdom in search of work. With the exception of Malta and Cyprus, citizens of the new member states will need to register with the Home Office when they find a job in the UK, providing information about where and for whom they are working. Employers will be required to satisfy themselves that accession country nationals in their employ apply for and receive registration under this scheme.

The registration scheme will be run by the Immigration and Nationality Directorate. The Directorate is looking into whether all or part of the administrative costs of the scheme could be recovered through charges.

Registration under the scheme will be issued for 12 months, and within that period will be valid for as long as the worker is in the registered employment. The worker should apply to renew the registration if he or she finds a job with a new employer. Registration under the scheme will apply only to workers in the United Kingdom, not to those who are not working.

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what restrictions he plans to introduce to prevent unwanted mass immigration after accession of Eastern European countries to the EU in May. [153097]

**Beverley Hughes:** Based on research and experience of previous accession, the Home Office does not expect migration from the accession countries after May 1 to be at levels which would damage the labour market. Measures to ensure we can both monitor the impact on the labour market and prevent access to work-seeking benefits, child benefit and housing support were announced by my right hon. friend the Home Secretary to the House of Commons on 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 23–25, in which he outlined the regulations the Government will be bringing forward to ensure that income related benefits, housing support and child benefit are not abused.

Accession state nationals who want to work in the UK will be required to register as a worker once they have found a job. This will allow the Government to very closely monitor the numbers of people coming to work in the UK.

In the unexpected event of a large influx of workers to the UK, which threatened the level of employment or standard of living in a particular region or occupation we would impose restrictions on workers.

**Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions have taken place between his Department and its counterparts in the new EU accession states regarding the security of peripheral EU borders. [157576]

**Beverley Hughes:** Home Office Ministers and officials have discussed the security of periphery EU borders with accession state counterparts on many occasions over the past 12 months (and longer), both bilaterally and within the EU framework. These discussions will continue during the lead up to formal accession in May and beyond.

Examples of these discussions include the recent bilateral meetings between my hon. Friend the Member for Don Valley (Caroline Flint) and Polish and Hungarian counterparts; a joint UK-Finnish border management conference attended by all 13 accession and candidate countries; bilateral technical co-operation meetings with Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Malta, Poland and Slovenia; a UK-hosted seminar on justice and home affairs issues attended by all accession states; and UK participation in border control projects in Malta and Poland.

## Foreign Nationals

**Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many foreign nationals entered the UK in each year since 1997. [157583]

**Beverley Hughes:** The latest available information is given in the table.

*Passengers given leave to enter the United Kingdom, excluding EEA nationals: 1997–2002*

| | *Number of journeys[1] (million)* |
|---|---|
| 1997 | 10.9 |
| 1998 | 11.5 |
| 1999 | 12.0 |
| 2000[2] | 13.0 |
| 2001[2] | 12.8 |
| 2002 | 12.6 |

[1] Includes people granted leave to enter the UK in the year shown but who may have been temporarily admitted in previous years.
[2] A change in procedures may have resulted in some under-recording for the fourth quarter of 2000 and the first quarter of 2001.

Data on passengers given leave to enter the United Kingdom are published in the Command Paper "Control of Immigration: Statistics United Kingdom 2002" (Cm6053), obtainable from the House Library, the Stationery Office and via the Home Office website http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/hobpubs1.html.

## Anti-Social Behaviour Orders

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Anti-Social Behaviour Orders have been issued, broken down by *(a)* region of offender and *(b)* age of offender since their inception; and how many of these offenders have since been sentenced to custody. [158842]

**Ms Blears:** Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) were introduced from 1 April 1999 on application to the magistrates court acting in its civil capacity. The Police Reform Act (2002) authorised the magistrates courts and the Crown court to issue ASBOs on conviction, and the county courts (from 1 April 2003), to issue ASBOs on application. Data are given in table A of numbers of ASBOs issued, at all courts, as reported to the Home Office, by court type, area and age, up to 30 September 2003 (latest available).

In table B data are given, by age group and area, from 1 June 2000 up to 31 December 2002 (latest available) on breaches of ASBOs resulting in a custodial sentence.

*Table A: Number of anti-social behaviour orders issued at all courts, as reported to the Home Office, from 1 April 1999 to 30 September 2003, by court type, age and area: England and Wales*

| MCC/Police force area | *Total issued* | *Age 10–17* | *Age 18 and over* | *Unknown[1]* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Magistrates Court* | | | | |
| Avon and Somerset | 45 | 15 | 19 | 11 |
| Bedfordshire | 16 | 5 | 10 | 1 |
| Cambridgeshire | 22 | 13 | 4 | 5 |
| Cheshire | 33 | 14 | 19 | — |
| Cleveland | 23 | 18 | 4 | 1 |
| Cumbria | 28 | 10 | 17 | 1 |
| Derbyshire | 21 | 6 | 12 | 3 |
| Devon and Cornwall | 18 | 7 | 10 | 1 |
| Dorset | 5 | 5 | — | — |
| Durham | 28 | 15 | 13 | — |
| Essex | 4 | 3 | 1 | — |
| Gloucestershire | 9 | 6 | 3 | — |
| GLMCA/Metropolitan Police[2] | 113 | 37 | 56 | 20 |
| Greater Manchester | 240 | 161 | 66 | 13 |
| Hampshire | 37 | 20 | 16 | 1 |
| Hertfordshire | 26 | 16 | 8 | 2 |
| Humberside | 19 | 6 | 11 | 2 |
| Kent | 42 | 25 | 17 | — |
| Lancashire | 56 | 39 | 11 | 6 |
| Leicestershire | 7 | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| Lincolnshire | 7 | 4 | 3 | — |
| Merseyside | 66 | 37 | 21 | 8 |
| Norfolk | 30 | 11 | 7 | 12 |
| Northamptonshire | 9 | 8 | 1 | — |
| Northumbria | 53 | 22 | 23 | 8 |
| North Yorkshire | 13 | 6 | 3 | 4 |
| Nottinghamshire | 26 | 11 | 14 | 1 |
| South Yorkshire | 44 | 19 | 22 | 3 |
| Staffordshire | 38 | 20 | 17 | 1 |
| Suffolk | 27 | 14 | 10 | 3 |
| Surrey | 10 | 6 | 3 | 1 |
| Sussex | 39 | 23 | 12 | 4 |
| Thames Valley | 21 | 7 | 8 | 6 |
| Warwickshire | 25 | 16 | 9 | — |
| West Mercia | 100 | 45 | 50 | 5 |
| West Midlands | 154 | 54 | 74 | 26 |
| West Yorkshire | 82 | 55 | 23 | 4 |
| Wiltshire | 3 | 2 | 1 | — |
| England | 1,539 | 786 | 599 | 154 |
| Dyfed Powys | 11 | — | 11 | — |
| Gwent | 8 | 5 | 3 | — |
| North Wales | 15 | 10 | 5 | — |
| South Wales | 25 | 12 | 13 | — |
| Wales | 59 | 27 | 32 | 0 |

*Table A: Number of anti-social behaviour orders issued at all courts, as reported to the Home Office, from 1 April 1999 to 30 September 2003, by court type, age and area: England and Wales*

| MCC/Police force area | Total issued | Age 10–17 | Age 18 and over | Unknown[1] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| England and Wales MCC/PFA | 1,598 | 813 | 631 | 154 |
| *County Court Group* | | | | |
| *County Court* | | | | |
| London | 1 | — | 1 | — |
| Merseyside | 1 | — | 1 | — |
| England and Wales County Court Group | 2 | — | 2 | — |
| *Crown Court Circuit* | | | | |
| *Crown Court* | | | | |
| Midland | 4 | 2 | 2 | — |
| Northern | 5 | 1 | 4 | — |

*Table A: Number of anti-social behaviour orders issued at all courts, as reported to the Home Office, from 1 April 1999 to 30 September 2003, by court type, age and area: England and Wales*

| MCC/Police force area | Total issued | Age 10–17 | Age 18 and over | Unknown[1] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| North Eastern | 3 | — | 3 | — |
| South Eastern | 1 | — | 1 | — |
| South Eastern Provincial | 2 | — | 2 | — |
| Western | 7 | 2 | 5 | — |
| Wales and Chester | 1 | — | 1 | — |
| England and Wales CC Circuits | 23 | 5 | 18 | — |
| Total all courts England and Wales | 1,623 | 818 | 651 | 154 |

[1] From 1 April 1999 to 31 May 2000 data collected by police force area on numbers issued only.
[2] Including City of London.

*Table B: Number of breaches[1] of an anti-social behaviour order reported to the Home office from 1 June 2000 to 31 December 2002—England and Wales*

| | ASBOs issued | | | | ASBOs breached | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Age | | | | Age | | |
| MCC/Police force area | Total | 10–17 | 18 and over | Unknown | Total | 10–17 | 18 and over | Unknown |
| Avon and Somerset | 25 | 10 | 13 | 2 | 7 | 4 | [2]3 | — |
| Bedfordshire | 8 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 3 | — |
| Cambridgeshire | 5 | 3 | 2 | — | 2 | 2 | — | — |
| Cheshire | 16 | 8 | 8 | — | 7 | 5 | 2 | — |
| Cleveland | 13 | 12 | 1 | — | 7 | 6 | 1 | — |
| Cumbria | 15 | 4 | 10 | 1 | 2 | — | 2 | — |
| Derbyshire | 15 | 5 | 10 | — | 9 | 3 | 6 | — |
| Devon and Cornwall | 11 | 5 | 6 | — | 4 | 1 | 3 | — |
| Dorset | 4 | 4 | — | — | 1 | 1 | — | — |
| Durham | 21 | 12 | 9 | — | 16 | 9 | 7 | — |
| Essex | 2 | 2 | — | — | 1 | 1 | — | — |
| Gloucestershire | 5 | 3 | 2 | — | 1 | 1 | — | — |
| GLMCA/Metropolitan Police[3] | 51 | 23 | 18 | 10 | 17 | 8 | [2]9 | — |
| Greater Manchester | 104 | 73 | 28 | 3 | 30 | 24 | [2]6 | — |
| Hampshire | 15 | 10 | 5 | — | 3 | 3 | — | — |
| Hertfordshire | 16 | 10 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 1 | [2]4 | — |
| Humberside | 16 | 6 | 8 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 1 | — |
| Kent | 36 | 21 | 15 | — | 3 | 3 | — | — |
| Lancashire | 23 | 17 | 6 | — | 10 | 5 | 5 | — |
| Leicestershire | 5 | 4 | 1 | — | 3 | 3 | — | — |
| Lincolnshire | 3 | 2 | 1 | — | 1 | — | [2]1 | — |
| Merseyside | 32 | 23 | 9 | — | 6 | 3 | 3 | — |
| Norfolk | 19 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 3 | [2]5 | — |
| Northamptonshire | 9 | 8 | 1 | — | 1 | — | 1 | — |
| Northumbria | 30 | 17 | 13 | — | 11 | 4 | [2]7 | — |
| North Yorkshire | 7 | 4 | 3 | — | 6 | 2 | [2]4 | — |
| Nottinghamshire | 16 | 5 | 11 | — | 8 | 2 | 6 | — |
| South Yorkshire | 24 | 13 | 11 | — | 8 | 5 | [2]3 | — |
| Staffordshire | 22 | 10 | 11 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 4 | — |
| Suffolk | 9 | 8 | 1 | — | 1 | 1 | — | — |
| Surrey | 6 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 3 | — | [2]3 | — |
| Sussex | 23 | 15 | 7 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 1 | — |
| Thames Valley | 14 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 2 | — | 2 | — |
| Warwickshire | 18 | 12 | 6 | — | 8 | 4 | 4 | — |
| West Mercia | 75 | 34 | 41 | — | 25 | 12 | [2]13 | — |
| West Midlands | 93 | 42 | 36 | 15 | 42 | 25 | 17 | — |
| West Yorkshire | 29 | 21 | 8 | — | 13 | 9 | 4 | — |
| Wiltshire | 1 | 1 | — | — | 1 | 1 | — | — |
| England | 836 | 464 | 323 | 49 | 294 | 164 | 130 | — |
| Dyfed Powys | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Gwent | 4 | 4 | — | — | 3 | 3 | — | — |
| North Wales | 8 | 5 | 3 | — | 5 | 2 | 3 | — |
| South Wales | 7 | 1 | 6 | — | 3 | 1 | 2 | — |
| Wales | 19 | 10 | 9 | 0 | 11 | 6 | 5 | — |
| Total England and Wales | 855 | 474 | 332 | 49 | 305 | 170 | 135 | — |

| MCC/Police force area | Total | Custodial sentence given[4] Age 10–17 | Age 18 and over | Unknown |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Avon and Somerset | 4 | 1 | [2]3 | — |
| Bedfordshire | 2 | — | 2 | — |
| Cambridgeshire | 1 | 1 | — | — |
| Cheshire | 5 | 4 | 1 | — |
| Cleveland | 1 | — | 1 | — |
| Cumbria | 2 | — | 2 | — |
| Derbyshire | 4 | 2 | 2 | — |
| Devon and Cornwall | 2 | 1 | 1 | — |
| Dorset | — | — | — | — |
| Durham | 10 | 3 | [2]7 | — |
| Essex | 1 | 1 | — | — |
| Gloucestershire | 1 | 1 | — | — |
| GLMCA/Metropolitan Police[3] | 11 | 3 | [2]8 | — |
| Greater Manchester | 21 | 16 | [2]5 | — |
| Hampshire | 1 | 1 | — | — |
| Hertfordshire | 2 | | 2 | — |
| Humberside | 2 | 2 | — | — |
| Kent | — | — | — | — |
| Lancashire | 5 | 2 | 3 | — |
| Leicestershire | 1 | 1 | — | — |
| Lincolnshire | — | — | — | — |
| Merseyside | 6 | 3 | 3 | — |
| Norfolk | 1 | — | 1 | — |
| Northamptonshire | 1 | — | 1 | — |
| Northumbria | 3 | — | 3 | — |
| North Yorkshire | 1 | 1 | — | — |
| Nottinghamshire | 4 | 1 | 3 | — |
| South Yorkshire | 3 | 3 | — | — |
| Staffordshire | 4 | 1 | 3 | — |
| Suffolk | — | — | — | — |
| Surrey | 1 | — | [2]1 | — |
| Sussex | 1 | — | 1 | — |
| Thames Valley | — | — | — | — |
| Warwickshire | 1 | — | 1 | — |
| West Mercia | 16 | 6 | 10 | — |
| West Midlands | 25 | 12 | 13 | — |
| West Yorkshire | 6 | 3 | [2]3 | — |
| Wiltshire | — | — | — | — |
| England | 149 | 69 | 80 | 0 |
| Dyfed Powys | 0 | — | — | — |
| Gwent | 1 | 1 | — | — |
| North Wales | 1 | 1 | — | — |
| South Wales | 1 | — | 1 | — |
| Wales | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Total England and Wales | 152 | 71 | 81 | 0 |

[1] Breaches are counted in this table on a persons basis, i.e. multiple breaches (occurring at the same time), or where the order has been breached on more than one occasion, are all counted as one breach.
[2] Includes breaches where the ASBO recipient was a juvenile when the order was given.
[3] Including City of London.
[4] Excluding two persons given a fully suspended sentence and five cases where a sentence of one day in police cells was given.

**John Mann:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the use of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders as a means of fighting prostitution. [159458]

**Caroline Flint:** Anti-Social Behaviour Orders have been used in several parts of England and Wales to tackle the anti-social behaviour resulting from prostitution. They are only one of the tools available to tackle anti-social behaviour, and anecdotal evidence suggests that they are more effective in dealing with the anti-social effects of prostitution when used together with support to help sex workers exit prostitution. Work is currently under way to scope the issues around prostitution and this will consider the effectiveness of all means of dealing with prostitution.

**John Mann:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of those applying for Anti-Social Behaviour Orders in the past year have been registered social landlords. [159459]

**Ms Blears:** The Police Reform Act (December 2002) empowered registered social landlords to apply for Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) directly. Data are collected on the type of applicant only on those orders issued in the magistrates court, acting in its civil capacity, and within the county courts. Orders can also be made following conviction of an offence in the criminal courts—there is no applicant for these orders.

From 1 December 2002 up to 30 September 2003 (latest available), 13 of the 715 applications for ASBOs, as reported to the Home Office, have been made by registered social landlords. All were issued.

**John Mann:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Anti-Social Behaviour Orders have been issued to those under the age of 18 in the past year. [159462]

**Ms Blears:** Information is given in the following table.

*Number of anti-social behaviour orders issued, at all courts, by age and period, as reported to the Home Office, from 1 January 2002 to 30 September 2003 (latest available) England and Wales*

| Age | 1 January 2002 to 30 November 2002 | 1 December 2002[1] to 30 September 2003 |
|---|---|---|
| 10–17 | 205 | 371 |
| 18 and over | 130 | 334 |
| Unknown | 23 | 1 |
| Total | 358 | 706 |

[1] Following introduction of the Police Reform Act (December 2002) data for December 2002 have been included in the first quarter 2003.

**John Mann:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been prosecuted for breach of an Anti-Social Behaviour Order in the last 12 months for which figures are available. [159679]

**Ms Blears:** The available information relating to breaches of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), within England and Wales, covers the period 1 June 2000 to 31 December 2002. Of the total number of 329 persons prosecuted for breach of an ASBO during this period, 305 persons were found guilty.

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Anti-Social Behaviour Orders have been issued by *(a)* Merseyside Police and *(b)* local authorities in Merseyside in each of the last five years. [159596]

**Ms Blears:** Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) were introduced from 1 April 1999 on application, by the Police or Local Authority, to the magistrates' court acting in its civil capacity. The Police Reform Act (2002) authorised the magistrates' courts and the Crown Court to issue ASBOs on conviction, and the county courts (from 1 April 2003), to issue ASBOs on application. Data are given in the table of numbers of ASBOs issued, at all courts, within Merseyside, up to 30 September 2003 (latest available).

Data are collected on the type of applicant on those orders only issued in the magistrates court, acting in its civil capacity, and within the county courts. Orders can also be made following conviction of an offence in the criminal courts—there is no applicant for these orders. Where applicable, data on the type of applicant are given in the table.

*Number of ASBOs, issued within Merseyside, at all courts, by period and applicant, 1 April 1999 to 30 September 2003*

| | Applications by | | | | Issued where the applicant was | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Period | Police | Local authority | County courts | Total | Police | Local authority | County courts | Total | Issued on conviction |
| 1 April 1999 to 31 May 2000[1] | [2] | [2] | [3] | 12 | [2] | [2] | [3] | 8 | [3] |
| 1 June 2000 to 31 December 2000 | 2 | 1 | [3] | 3 | 2 | 1 | [3] | 3 | [3] |
| 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2001 | 0 | 7 | [3] | 7 | 0 | 7 | [3] | 7 | [3] |
| 1 January 2002 to 30 November 2002 | 0 | 22 | [3] | 22 | 0 | 22 | [3] | 22 | [3] |
| 1 December 2002 to 30 September 2003 | 4 | 23 | [3] | 27 | 4 | 22 | 1 | 27 | 0 |
| Total | 4 | 53 | [2] | 71 | 6 | 52 | 1 | 67 | 0 |

[1] From 1 April 1999 to 31 May 2000 data was collected by police force area only on numbers issued or refused.
[2] Not available.
[3] Not applicable.

## Asylum and Immigration

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of provision for *(a)* the processing of asylum applications and *(b)* the housing of asylum seekers in Northern Ireland. [157969]

**Beverley Hughes:** The UK Immigration Service has staff based at Belfast International Airport part of whose responsibility is to screen new asylum applicants encountered in Northern Ireland.

After screening, new applicants are normally interviewed by staff from the Immigration and Nationality Directorate's Asylum Casework Group to determine whether they have a valid claim, as is the procedure elsewhere in the UK.

The number of asylum applications received in Northern Ireland is relatively low and I am confident that the numbers of staff and facilities available for this work is commensurate with the current level of demand.

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive has responsibility for housing those asylum seekers who are supported by the National Asylum Support Service. These asylum seekers are referred to the Housing Executive by the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities. The National Asylum Support Service does not disperse asylum seekers to Northern Ireland and the numbers supported there are low. Accommodation is provided to acceptable standards and is subject to housing inspections.

**Mr. Randall:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many travellers were subject to immigration control at *(a)* Heathrow and *(b)* all other UK ports in each of the last five years for which there are records; and of these, what proportion were referred to medical inspectors (i) at Heathrow and (ii) at other ports. [156845]

**Beverley Hughes:** The figures for travellers subject to immigration control and who were granted leave to enter at *(a)* Heathrow and *(b)* all other UK ports in each of the last five years are as follows.

*Passengers given leave to enter the United Kingdom, excluding European Economic area (EEA) nationals, 1998 to 2002[1]: United Kingdom*

*Number of journeys (million)*

| | Heathrow | Other ports | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1998 | 6.7 | 4.8 | 11.5 |
| 1999 | 6.8 | 5.2 | 12.0 |
| 2000 | 7.4 | 5.6 | 13.0 |
| 2001 | 7.4 | 5.4 | 12.8 |
| 2002[1] | 7.7 | 4.9 | 12.6 |

[1] Provisional.

*Notes:*

1. The data are of the number of journeys made; a person who makes more than one journey is counted on each occasion.
2. Long-standing policy is that any person subject to immigration control who:
(i) mentions health or medical treatment as a reason for coming to the United Kingdom, or appears unwell; or
(ii) is seeking leave to enter the United Kingdom for six months or more and is at high risk of having been exposed to tuberculosis should be referred by the immigration officer to a medical inspector.

The Department of Health does not collect data on the number of referrals for medical inspection. Data supplied by Heathrow and Gatwick health control units indicates the following number of referrals over the previous five years:

| | Heathrow | Gatwick |
|---|---|---|
| 1998–99 | 72,079 | Not known |
| 1999–2000 | 88,079 | 7,705 |
| 2000–01 | 108,170 | 5,845 |
| 2001–02 | 148,619 | 6,960 |
| 2002–03 | 164,655 | 3,745 |

Since these figures relate to financial years and those for travellers calendar years it is not possible to determine the actual proportion of travellers who were referred to the medical inspector.

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether an on site nurse forms part of the service contracted by the National Asylum Support Service from Angel Heights, Newcastle; and whether this contract provides for female support workers as a result of a recent change in clients; [157044]

(2) what payments his Department has made to NHS agencies and services in Newcastle in this financial year in respect of asylum seeker dispersal support. [157045]

**Beverley Hughes:** The Home Office is not responsible for providing funding to NHS agencies to meet the costs of providing medical treatment to asylum seekers who have been dispersed. The National Asylum Support System does not provide on site nurses in any of its dispersal accommodation.

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* successful and *(b)* unsuccessful asylum applications there have been from Ethiopian citizens in the last five years; and how many of the unsuccessful applicants have been deported. [157650]

**Beverley Hughes:** The table shows the number of asylum applications and initial decisions for nationals of Ethiopia (excluding dependants) in 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003. Initial decisions do not necessarily relate to applications received in the same period.

*Applications received for asylum in the United Kingdom, excluding dependants, and initial decisions[1,2,3], by year, nationals of Ethiopia*

*Principal applicants*

| | *1999* | *2000* | *2001*[4] | *2002*[5] | *2003*[5] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Applications received | 455 | 415 | 610 | 700 | 640 |
| *Initial decisions* | | | | | |
| Total initial decisions | 260 | 895 | 1,175 | 705 | 740 |
| *Cases considered under normal procedures* | | | | | |
| Grants of asylum | 20 | 40 | 90 | 50 | 15 |
| Grants of ELR | 5 | 80 | 240 | 170 | 40 |
| Grants of HP | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | — |
| Grants of DL | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | 95 |
| Total refusals | 35 | 355 | 845 | 485 | 590 |
| *Backlog clearance exercise* | | | | | |
| Grants of ELR under backlog criteria[6,7] | 190 | 390 | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Non compliance refusals under backlog criteria[6,8] | 10 | 30 | n/a | n/a | n/a |

n/a = not applicable.

[1] Figures rounded to the nearest five.

[2] Decision figures do not necessarily relate to applications received in the same period.

[3] Information is of initial determination decisions, excluding the outcome of appeals or other subsequent decisions.

[4] Revised figures.

[5] Provisional figures.

[6] Cases decided under pragmatic measures aimed at reducing the pre 1996 asylum backlog.

[7] May include a small number of cases where asylum has been granted.

[8] May include a small number of cases where the application has been refused on substantive grounds.

The table shows the available data, for outcomes of adjudicator appeals at the Immigration Appellate Authority (IAA) for nationals of Ethiopia in 2001, 2002 and 2003. Appeals may relate to initial decisions made in earlier periods. Corresponding information on appeals to the Immigration Appellate Tribunal (IAT) relating to Ethiopian nationals (including appeals made by the Secretary of State) is not available and could be produced only at disproportionate cost by examination of individual case files. Data on the nationality of appeals made in 1999 and 2000 are not available.

*Outcome of appeals[1,2] determined by adjudicators of the Immigration Appellate Authority, excluding dependants, nationals of Ethiopia, 2001 to 2003*

*Number of principal appellants*

| *Appeals determined by adjudicators* | *2001* | *2002* | *2003* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total determined | 265 | 615 | 1,060 |
| *Allowed* | | | |
| Total | 110 | 230 | 325 |
| As percentage of determined | 42 | 37 | 31 |
| *Dismissed* | | | |
| Total | 140 | 340 | 685 |
| As percentage of determined | 53 | 55 | 65 |
| *Withdrawn* | | | |
| Total | 15 | 50 | 50 |
| As percentage of determined | 6 | 8 | 5 |

[1] Provisional figures rounded to nearest 5 (except percentages). Figures may not add up due to independent rounding. Data on appeal outcomes by nationality in this table are derived from Immigration and Nationality Directorate electronic sources.

[2] Figures include cases withdrawn by the Home Office, as well as the appellant.

Deportations are a specific subset of removals alongside persons subject to administrative removal, removal due to illegal entry action or those refused entry at port and subsequently removed.

Estimates of the number of nationals of Ethiopia who had sought asylum at some stage and who were removed from the UK between January 2001 and September 2003 (the latest date for which figures are available) are shown in the table. These figures include persons departing 'voluntarily' after the initiation of enforcement action against them, and persons leaving under Assisted Voluntary Returns Programmes run by the International Organization for Migration. Removals do not necessarily relate to initial decisions made in the same period. Data on the nationality of removals made in 1999 and 2000 are not available.

*Removals and voluntary[1] departures of principal asylum applicants (excluding dependants), nationals of Ethiopia[2,3,4]*

*Number*

| | |
|---|---|
| 2001 | 10 |
| 2002 | 10 |
| January to September 2003 | * |

[1] Includes persons departing "voluntarily" after enforcement action had been initiated against them, persons leaving under Assisted voluntary return programmes run by the International Organisation for Migration, and removals on safe third country grounds.

[2] Figures rounded to the nearest five, with "*" = 1or 2.

[3] Data have been estimated due to data quality issues.

[4] Provisional figures

Information on asylum applications, initial decisions, appeals and removals are published quarterly. The current publication covering the fourth quarter of 2003, and provisional 2003 data, is available on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html. Data on the nationality of removals are published a quarter in arrears. Data for the final quarter of 2003 will be published at the end of May.

### Cannabis

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people in Greater London have been *(a)* fined and *(b)* given a prison sentence for (i) supplying, (ii) trafficking and (iii) possession of cannabis in each of the last five years. [159220]

**Caroline Flint:** The available information is contained in the table.

*Persons[1] fined and sentenced to immediate custody[2] for cannabis related offences in Greater London[3]*

| *Greater London, 1998 to 2002* | *1998* | | *1999* | | *2000* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Offence* | *Persons fined* | *Persons sentenced to immediate custody* | *Persons fined* | *Persons sentenced to immediate custody* | *Persons fined* |
| Supplying or offering to supply (or being concerned in supplying or offering to supply) cannabis | 24 | 66 | 10 | 65 | 6 |
| Possession of cannabis with intent to supply | 42 | 230 | 31 | 192 | 15 |
| Production of or being concerned in the production of cannabis | 75 | 19 | 43 | 23 | 30 |
| Possession of cannabis | 4,044 | 71 | 3,804 | 61 | 3,487 |

| | *2001* | | *2002* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Offence* | *Persons fined* | *Persons sentenced to immediate custody* | *Persons fined* | *Persons sentenced to immediate custody* |
| Supplying or offering to supply (or being concerned in supplying or offering to supply) cannabis | 9 | 36 | 9 | 44 |
| Possession of cannabis with intent to supply | 22 | 106 | 35 | 105 |
| Production of or being concerned in the production of cannabis | 27 | 22 | 34 | 12 |
| Possession of cannabis | 3,238 | 43 | 4,120 | 45 |

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.
[2] Includes unsuspended imprisonment, secure training orders, detention in a young offender institution and detention and training orders.
[3] Includes Metropolitan and City of London police forces.

Statistics for 2003 will be published in the autumn.

### Connexions Service

**Mr. Gerrard:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which staff organisations and trade unions were consulted by Patrick Carter during his inquiry into the Connexions services. [155838]

**Paul Goggins:** Patrick Carter's report "Managing Offenders-Reducing Crime" was an independent review of the correctional services. The Government's response "Reducing Crime-Changing Lives" seeks views from stakeholders on a number of issues relating to the management of offenders.

### Convicted Defendants

**Mrs. Anne Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many convicted defendants there were in the last three years, broken down by ethnic origin; what proportion of convicted defendants were sent to prison, broken down by ethnic origin; and if he will make a statement. [158704]

**Paul Goggins:** Information on the ethnic origin of convicted defendants is only currently available for magistrates courts in six pilot areas. This information was included in "Statistics on Race and the Criminal Justice System 2002" and in earlier years, available on the Home Office website: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/s95race2002.pdf.

### Coroners' Inquiries

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average time taken is to arrange a coroner's inquiry into a death. [155684]

**Paul Goggins:** In 2002, the average time taken to process an inquest, from the time the death was reported to the coroner, until the time the inquest was concluded, was four months. The average time taken for the coroner to issue a certificate permitting a body to be released for burial or other disposal, in cases where an inquest was subsequently held, was seven days.

### Crime Reduction Policy

**Mr. Oaten:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the progress made towards local crime reduction targets in each area participating in the Small Retailers in Deprived Areas scheme. [160202]

**Ms Blears:** In June 2001, the Home Secretary announced funding of £15 million over three years for a project to improve the security of small retailers in the 10 most deprived areas throughout England and Wales.

Individual projects are developed by local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in conjunction with Regional Home Office Directors. Part of this process is to ensure adequate local targets have been set, and systems put in place to measure performance against them.

A detailed evaluation of the scheme is currently under way and will be completed in the autumn. The findings, which will be widely disseminated, will identify effective interventions that have been shown to have a beneficial impact on crime against small retailers. The evaluation will also examine other ways in which the scheme has impacted upon businesses and the surrounding retail environment—such as the fear of crime among business, fear of crime among customers, business viability and partnership working.

### Criminal Prosecutions (Lancashire)

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many *(a)* successful and *(b)* unsuccessful criminal prosecutions were brought for crimes perpetrated in each Lancashire constituency in each of the last three years; [157681]

(2) how many criminal charges were pressed for crimes perpetrated in Chorley in each of the last three years. [157682]

**Paul Goggins:** Statistics on those charged with offences are not collected centrally, nor is it possible to break down the court proceedings data collected centrally to constituency level.

The following table, however, gives the numbers of defendants *(a)* convicted and *(b)* not convicted in the Lancashire Police Force area as a whole:

*Defendants convicted and those not convicted of offences of all types at all courts in the Lancashire police force area, 2000–02*

| | *Defendants convicted* | *Defendants not convicted*[1] |
|---|---|---|
| 2000 | 49,625 | 19,729 |
| 2001 | 48,077 | 19,441 |
| 2002 | 48,259 | 19,781 |

[1] Includes defendants whose proceedings were discontinued, those discharged under Sec 6 MCA 1980, and those whose charges were withdrawn, dismissed or acquitted.

Statistics for 2003 will be published in the autumn.

### Cyclists (Prosecution)

**Mark Tami:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cyclists were prosecuted for failure to comply with legal requirements in respect of road use in the UK in each of the last five years. [156553]

**Paul Goggins:** The number of defendants proceeded against for pedal cycle offences in England and Wales 1998 to 2002 is as follows:

*Defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts for all pedal cycle offences[1], England and Wales 1998 to 2002*

| | *Proceeded against* |
|---|---|
| 1998 | 2,380 |
| 1999 | 1,487 |
| 2000 | 1,023 |
| 2001 | 760 |
| 2002 | 636 |

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

Statistics on court proceedings for 2003 will be published in the autumn.Information for Scotland is a matter for the Scottish Office and that for Northern Ireland for the Northern Ireland Office.

### Disorder Penalty Notices

**Mr. Jenkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many penalty notices for disorder have been issued by police forces during the pilot period. [160061]

**Ms Blears:** Pilots for penalty notices for disorder operated between August 2002 and September 2003 in four police force areas involving five police forces: West Midlands (force wide), Essex (force wide), North Wales (initially in their Central division then force wide from April 2003), Metropolitan (Croydon division) and British Transport Police (West Midlands area). Just over 6,000 penalty notices for disorder were issued during the pilots.

### DNA Investigation Techniques

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when DNA low copy number first became available as a product for use in assisting the investigation of cold calls; and if he will make a statement. [159698]

**Ms Blears** *[holding answer 9 March 2004]:* A DNA low copy number product first became available for investigation of both cold and current cases in January 1999.

### Driving Convictions

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many convictions for *(a)* causing death by dangerous driving, *(b)* dangerous driving and *(c)* careless driving there were in (i) Greater London and (ii) each London borough in each of the last five years. [158408]

**Caroline Flint:** Available information for the years 1997 to 2001 is given in the table. It is not possible from the data collected centrally to identify each London Borough within the geographical area of Greater London.

2002 data will be available in the Spring.

*Findings of guilt at all courts for specific offences, Greater London police[1], 1997–2001*

| *Offence* | *1997* | *1998* | *1999* | *2000* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Causing death by dangerous driving[2] | 16 | 24 | 22 | 23 |
| Dangerous driving[4] | 484 | 419 | 384 | 444 |
| Careless driving[5] | 10,067 | 9,203 | 8,172 | 6,168 |

[1] Figures amended since publication of the Home Office 'Offences relating to motor vehicles England and Wales 2001 Suppiementary tables'.
[2] Offence under the Road Traffic Act 1988, s1 as amended by the Road Traffic Act 1991 s1 and Criminal Justice Act 1993 s67.
[3] Offence under the Road Traffic Act 1988 s2 as amended by the Road Traffic Act 1991 s2.
[4] Offence under the Road Traffic Act 1988 s3, ss 12(1), 26(2), 33(3) and 168; Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 Regs 19,104–107 and 109.

### European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia

**Denzil Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who the Chairperson and members of the Executive Board of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia are. [157297]

**Fiona Mactaggart:** Under the Executive Board of the European Monitoring Centre (EUMC) governing regulation, its Executive Board is composed of the Chairman of the EUMC Management Board, the Vice-Chairman and up to three other members of the Management Board, including the person appointed by the Council of Europe and the representative of the European Commission.

The members of the current Executive Board are Robert Purkiss (Chairman), Petros Stangos (Vice-Chairman), Helene Loow, Joseph Voyame (Council of Europe) and Bernhard Jansen (European Commission).

We understand that a new Executive Board will be elected by the Management Board at its meeting in June.

### Forensic Science Service

**Mr. Grogan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the oral answer of 19 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 1073, on the Forensic Science Service, whether the £20 million to £30 million sum mentioned is *(a)* a one off capital cost and *(b)* a recurring annual revenue cost. [159879]

**Ms Blears** *[holding answer 9 March 2004]:* The £20 million to £30 million is an estimate provided by the independent McFarland Review and refers to the one-off capital investment considered necessary to sustain Forensic Science Service business at current levels.

### Grants

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what grants that fall outside the revenue support grant were awarded by his Department to local authorities in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley in each of the last three financial years. [156513]

**Ms Blears:** The information available is set out in the following table.

*£ million*

| *Lancashire police authority* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* | *2003–04* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Home Office Principal Formula grant | 96.9 | 97.4 | 105.2 |
| Crime Fighting Fund | 1.1 | 3.3 | 5.4 |
| Rural Policing Fund | 0.06 | 0.06 | 0.06 |
| Airwave | 7.2 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| BCU funding | — | — | 1.2 |
| Community Support Officers | — | 0.5 | 0.3 |
| Street Crime Initiative | — | 0.8 | 0.4 |
| Special Priority Payments | — | — | 0.6 |
| DNA Expansion Programme | — | 1.9 | 1.5 |
| Capital grant | 3.7 | 2.5 | 2.3 |
| Premises Improvement Fund | — | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| Arrest Referral—Lancashire Police | — | 0.3 | 0.5 |
| Criminal Justice Interventions Programme (CJIP)—Drug Testing | — | 0.3 | 0.2 |
| Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships[1] | 8.3 | 5.0 | 3.2 |
| Of which: Funding for Chorley | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 |
| Total | 117.26 | 113.06 | 121.86 |

[1] Includes Building Safer Communities Fund, Partnership Development Fund, Communities Against Drugs and Safer Communities Initiative, Funding for CCTV, Violence against women (VAW), Neighbourhood Wardens, Street Wardens and Small Retailers in Deprived Areas and the Reducing Burglary Initiative.

### Gender Dysphoria

**Lynne Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when his Department will publish guidelines on the treatment of prisoners with gender dysphoria. [159028]

**Paul Goggins:** The Prison Service expects to publish these guidelines once the Gender Recognition Bill has become law and it is in a position to include guidance on the implications of this legislation for its policies and practices.

### Identity Cards

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what further consultation is planned with the public regarding identity cards. [156092]

**Beverley Hughes:** Since the six month consultation period on entitlement cards and identity fraud officially ended on 31 January 2003, consultation with the public has been ongoing via the despatch of the Next Steps publication to all those who responded to the consultation exercise, the identity cards website, and the recording of all public correspondence received.

A covering consultation paper will accompany the draft Bill on identity cards, which was announced in the Queen's speech. The paper will enable further consultation with the public as well as specific stakeholder groups on the detail of the Bill. This will be in addition to any pre-legislative scrutiny by Parliament.

During this period, there will also be opportunity to consult on the wider issues around how a scheme may work in practice. A communications strategy will be developed to ensure engagement with the public.

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the work of the Identity Cards Programme Board. [157007]

**Beverley Hughes:** As indicated in "Identity Cards: The Next Steps" (Cm 6020), the Identity Cards Programme Board has been established by the Home Office to co-ordinate and drive forward the different elements of the Government strategy. The board is chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Home Office. Progress at every stage will be monitored and reviewed as further decisions are taken during the implementation. Before decisions are taken on implementation, there will be an intensive phase of feasibility assessment and prototyping so that decision making is soundly based and risks in the programme are kept to a minimum.

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the nature of the proposed national identity database; and what plans he has to use 2D barcodes to store the biometric template on identity cards. [157028]

**Beverley Hughes:** Data held on the National Identity Register will be basic identity information—such as name, address, date of birth, gender, immigration status and a confirmed biometric—and this will be set out in statute. Organisations using the National Register to verify identity will not be able to get to other personal information, for instance health or tax records, via the register.

At present there is no firm decision on the technology which will be used on the card. Technologies will be evaluated in how well they meet our requirements, in particularly in the areas of security, capacity and adherence to international standards.

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the work of the UK Passport Agency pilot scheme, including his assessment of the *(a)* popularity and *(b)* effectiveness of different forms of biometric identifiers. [157029]

**Beverley Hughes:** The UK Passport Service (UKPS) is running a six-month trial beginning in March 2004 to test the recording and verification of facial recognition, iris and fingerprint biometrics. Approximately 10,000 participants will take part in the trial. Results from the trial will help inform the Government's plans to introduce biometrics to support improved identity authentication and help prevent identity fraud.

The objectives of the UKPS biometrics trial include the following:

to test the use of biometrics through a simulation of the passport process

to include exception cases, e.g. people who may have difficulties in enrolment

to measure the process time and hence estimate costs

to assess customer perceptions and reactions

to assess practical aspects of incorporation of biometrics into a biometric database

to identify issues and risks and produce an outline implementation plan.

In relation to the popularity and effectiveness of biometrics in the context of the UKPS's trial, the work is largely based around recommendations from a report in August 2002 by the National Physical Laboratory (NPL) entitled: "Feasibility Study on Use of Biometrics in an Entitlement Scheme", and which is available on the Home Office Identity Cards website at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/identitycards.

UKPS already plans to introduce a passport with a facial image held in a chip from mid 2005. The NPL report was commissioned by UKPS and DVLA to examine the feasibility of using additional biometrics as a means of establishing a unique identity, to support better identity authentication alongside work on the proposed entitlement (now identity card) scheme.

The report discusses the most significant component of the cost of such a scheme as being the time and effort to enrol individuals and collect their biometric data, (especially the impact of exception cases on throughput performance), and that this is one of the least well-understood aspects of biometric technologies. The report recommended further studies in this area.

It is this recommendation which lies behind the objectives of the current trials being conducted by UKPS.

In addition, and as published in "Identity Cards: A summary of findings from the Consultation Exercise on Entitlement Cards and Identity Fraud", UKPS carried out evaluation questionnaires during the demonstrations of iris and fingerprint biometrics in 2002–03. While not fully representative, the sample illustrated a positive attitude towards biometrics. For example, over 85 per cent. wanted to take the opportunity to establish their identity more securely using either fingerprint or iris biometrics, as long as the technology was secure.

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what measures he proposes to deter access to a national identity database for improper reasons; [157031]

(2) how the national identity database will be monitored to detect a potential compromise of its security; [157032]

(3) if he will outline the risk management system proposed for the security of the identity card scheme; [157036]

(4) what measures will be in place under the current identity card proposals to ensure that the identity database is not vulnerable to hackers. [157038]

**Beverley Hughes:** The security and integrity of the database are integral to maintaining trust in the Identity Cards scheme. The specifications and design of the database and its security features have not yet been established but will take into account security advice from the earliest stages and the design process will include threat and vulnerability assessments. Threats which will be assessed will include unauthorised internal and external access to data.

Home Office officials are already working with security experts to ensure that security issues are considered from the start of the database design, and with other government departments which have similar databases with similar security needs, such as the United Kingdom Passport Service.

The Identity Cards Programme takes risk management extremely seriously and has developed its approach to risk management in line with Home Office best practice. The Programme Board and Ministers are considering the Governance arrangements for the ID Cards scheme and will consider what the risk management system should be in order to ensure the security of the Identity Card scheme.

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on whether some categories of individuals have a higher failure rate with certain biometric identifiers; and what measures he plans to overcome this problem. [157034]

**Beverley Hughes:** In his announcement on 11 November 2003, my right hon. Friend, the Home Secretary stated that the Government have decided to begin the process of introducing a national identity cards scheme.

The first stage of the process will include work across Government to develop effective technology, particularly on biometrics, and to introduce systems to ensure that biometric data can be collected, stored and used effectively. This includes a biometric pilot which is being run by the United Kingdom Passport Service (UKPS) to test the recording of face, iris and fingerprint biometric information.

One of the specific objectives of the UKPS pilot is to test biometric enrolment on a sample of people who may have difficulties with enrolment. Data gained from this pilot will inform the design of the Identity Card scheme's enrolment processes and procedures for enrolling those unable to provide certain biometrics.

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it is possible to combine data from the national identity database with other databases or information systems under the current identity card proposals. [157299]

**Beverley Hughes:** As set out in "Identity Cards: The Next Steps" (Cm 6020), the National Identity Register will be built from scratch as people are issued with identity cards and will not rely solely on other sources of data. Before an entry on the National Identity Register is confirmed, it will be checked against other databases such as passports, driving licences and immigration records.

Organisations using the National Identity Register to verify identity will not be able to get to other personal information, for instance health or tax records via the Register.

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what action his Department is taking to prevent functionality creep in relation to identity cards; [158658]

(2) what study he has undertaken, in relation to his policy on identity cards, of the use by the US Administration of social security numbers; [158672]

(3) when a complete specification of requirements of the identity cards database will be available; and to what analysis this specification will be subject. [158710]

**Beverley Hughes:** The Government are aware of concerns about function creep. Our scheme will include safeguards to ensure that there is no extension of functions without proper justification and authorisation. Neither the statutory purposes of the scheme nor the range of information held on the National Identity Register could be extended without Parliament's authorisation.

During the development of the identity cards proposals officials looked at policy and practice in many different countries. The problems in relation to the US Social Security Number were highlighted in the Cabinet Office Identity Fraud Study which was published at the start of our consultation period. This was one of the factors which has led to the government's conclusion set out in "Identity Cards: The Next Steps" that the National Identity Register needs to be established from scratch and that checks on an identity need to be more stringent than those currently in place for passports and driving licences.

The specification of requirements for the database will be drawn up as part of the procurement process. The process will be subject to evaluation to assess how well our requirements are met, particularly in the areas of security, capacity and adherence to international standards. The timing of the procurement process is dependent on the legislative timetable.

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the ease with which encryption methods for identity cards can be upgraded. [159758]

**Beverley Hughes:** There are ongoing maintenance procedures which are a requirement of any encryption scheme. These include but are not limited to key issuing, certificate issuing, certificate revocation and technology upgrade.

Home Office officials are taking advice from cryptography experts within government on the design of the encryption scheme. The necessity for measures to permit maintenance and upgrade of the encryption scheme will be taken into account during the design.

### Kent County Council Act

**Mr. Damian Green:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to extend to the rest of England the provisions of the Kent County Council Act 2001; and if he will make a statement. [159720]

**Ms Blears:** In line with Clause 20 of the Kent County Council Act, the council will be submitting a report on the working provisions of the Act to the Secretary of State no later than 1 December 2004, which will then be laid before Parliament.

The Home Office has also commissioned the University of Kent to evaluate the effectiveness of the legislation and we will also lay a summary of the results of this research before Parliament.

These two reports will allow the government to make an informed decision as to whether we should pursue similar legislation nationally.

### Local Government Finance (Dorset)

**Jim Knight:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what grants were awarded to local authorities in Dorset by his Department in financial year 2003–04 that fall outside the revenue support grant. [156206]

**Ms Blears:** The information is set out in the table.

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| *Police Authority* | |
| Home Office Principal Formula Police grant | 39.7 |
| Crime Fighting Fund | 2.3 |
| Rural Policing Fund | 0.4 |
| Airwave | 0.2 |
| BCU funding | 0.5 |
| Community Support Officers | 0.2 |
| Special Priority Payments | 0.4 |
| DMA Expansion Programme | 0.5 |
| Capital grant | 1.1 |
| Premises Improvement Fund | 0.5 |
| Arrest Referral | 0.1 |
| *Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships* | |
| Building Safer Communities Fund | 0.9 |
| Other[1] | 0.2 |
| Total | 47.0 |

[1] Regional Fund and funding to tackle anti-social behaviour, domestic violence and vehicle crime provided to BCUs and CDRPs and Dorset county council.

### Managed Migration Programmes

**Mr. Nigel Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on how he makes use of the assistance provided by the *(a)* UK

National Recognition Information Centre and *(b)* UK National Reference Point for Vocational Qualifications in the support of Managed Migration programmes. [157365]

**Beverley Hughes:** The criteria for the issue of work permits and for the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme requires Work Permits (UK) to be satisfied that overseas workers possess the skills and qualifications necessary to take up jobs in the UK. To qualify for a work permit the job is expected to require the individual to have either:

(a) UK equivalent degree level qualification; or,

(b) a Higher National Diploma (HND) level qualification which is relevant to the post on offer; or,

(c) an HND level qualification which is not relevant to the post plus one year of relevant full-time work experience at National/ Scottish Vocational Qualification (N/SVQ) level 3 or above; or,

(d) three years full time experience, at N/SVQ level 3 or above, of using specialist skills acquired through doing the type of job for which the permit is sought.

In considering this element of the work permit application Work Permits (UK) will, in some cases, consult the UK National Recognition Information Centre and the UK National Reference Point for Vocational Qualifications to ensure the qualifications and skills obtained overseas meet the work permit criteria.

### Mr. Paul Watson

**Mr. Challen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to ensure that documents requested by the hon. Member for Morley and Rothwell's constituent, Mr. Paul Watson, regarding his criminal record in support of his defence at trial in France are provided swiftly. [156480]

**Paul Goggins** *[holding answer 26 February 2004]:* Officials in the Home Office have liaised with the French authorities and they understand that a letter of request will shortly be issued in Mr. Watson's case. The UK Central Authority at the Home Office will arrange for it to be dealt with as expeditiously as possible once they receive it.

### National Offender Management Service

**Mr. Gerrard:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who the employer for qualified probation officers will be under the National Offender Management Service. [155837]

**Paul Goggins:** In the short term probation officers will continue to be employed by probation boards. Future arrangements have yet to be finalised and will be subject to the usual consultation arrangements with staff and unions.

**Mr. Gerrard:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what role chief officers will have under the National Offender Management Service. [155839]

**Paul Goggins:** In the short term the role of chief officers will remain as it is. Any proposed changes will be subject to the usual consultation arrangements.

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has for the public protection function of the Probation Service to be the subject of contestability under the National Offender Management Service structures. [159811]

**Paul Goggins:** The details of contestability within correctional services will be developed as part of the implementation of the Reducing Crime—Changing Lives reforms. Inter-agency work to protect the public and encourage rehabilitation will remain a crucial element of the work of the National Offender Management Service.

### Naturalisation Application

**Mr. Chope:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the application for naturalisation dated 19 November 2003 by Mrs. Tomes of Christchurch, reference T1072596, will be processed. [159408]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer 5 March 2004]:* Mrs. Tomes application has been processed and a decision was reached on 3 March.

### No Fixed Abode

**Mr. McCabe:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the monetary grant made available to all prisoners on release from custodial sentence is greater if a prisoner states no fixed abode as their address. [157994]

**Paul Goggins:** A higher rate of discharge grant (£94.40) is paid to prisoners on release only if there is a need to seek, obtain and pay for accommodation. It is only paid to prisoners with no accommodation arranged in advance if this arises through no fault of the prisoner. Otherwise the standard rates of discharge grant paid are £46.75 (for prisoners aged 25 and older) or £37 (for prisoners aged 18 to 24).

### Online Passport Applications

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many passport applications have been made online in each year since the service became available. [158044]

**Beverley Hughes:** UK Passport Services (UKPS) online passport application is an electronic service that allows applicants to enter their details on to an electronic passport application form. The form is then pre-populated and sent to the applicant by post for inclusion of their signature, payment and supporting documentation.

UKPS's online service has been available since 13 November 2000. The table shows the number of application forms completed online each year since the service became available.

| | *Number of forms completed* |
|---|---|
| 2000 (13 November until 31 December) | 1,670 |
| 2001 | 46,514 |
| 2002 | 93,156 |
| 2003 | 149,003 |
| 2004 (1 January until 29 February) | 62,046 |

## Police

**Mr. Gordon Prentice:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many days were lost through sickness in *(a)* the Lancashire constabulary and *(b)* police forces of a similar size and displaying similar characteristics in England since 2000; and if he will make a statement. [157798]

**Ms Blears:** The total number of days lost to sick leave, and average days per officer and support staff member, in Lancashire Constabulary, and the most similar forces, in each of the years since 2000 are identified:

| *Force* | *Days lost to sick leave* | *Days per officer* | *Days per staff* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *1999–2000* | | | |
| Avon and Somerset | 54,244 | 11.5 | 11.8 |
| Durham | 22,463 | 10.6 | 9.0 |
| Gwent | 23,509 | 13.2 | 11.2 |
| Hertfordshire | 29,291 | 10.4 | 11.1 |
| Humberside | 27,563 | 9.1 | 9.8 |
| Kent | 54,023 | 10.7 | 11.2 |
| Lancashire | 57,854 | 12.4 | 11.7 |
| South Wales | 70,766 | 15.5 | 18.8 |
| England and Wales | 2,172,859 | 11.6 | 12.1 |
| *2000–01* | | | |
| Avon and Somerset | 60,333 | 13.4 | 12.3 |
| Durham | 26,983 | 13.0 | 10.6 |
| Gwent | 27,218 | 15.4 | 13.1 |
| Hertfordshire | 35,956 | 11.8 | 13.7 |
| Humberside | 26,334 | 8.6 | 11.5 |
| Kent | 59,134 | 11.6 | 11.5 |
| Lancashire | 60,924 | 12.5 | 12.8 |
| South Wales | 69,983 | 16.1 | 14.6 |
| England and Wales | 2,263,075 | 12.2 | 12.6 |
| *2001–02* | | | |
| Avon and Somerset | 61,620 | 13.0 | 12.5 |
| Durham | 25,296 | 11.1 | 11.9 |
| Gwent | 28,870 | 15.6 | 12.0 |
| Hertfordshire | 35,339 | 11.9 | 10.9 |
| Humberside | 27,493 | 8.6 | 10.2 |
| Kent | 61,170 | 11.1 | 11.8 |
| Lancashire | 59,417 | 11.6 | 11.7 |
| South Wales | 60,785 | 12.7 | 14.0 |
| England and Wales | 2,228,478 | 11.5 | 12.0 |
| *2002–03* | | | |
| Avon and Somerset | 60,468 | 11.4 | 12.8 |
| Durham | 25,148 | 10.1 | 12.6 |
| Gwent | 26,508 | 10.5 | 13.2 |
| Hertfordshire | 36,860 | 10.6 | 12.4 |
| Humberside | 25,094 | 7.8 | 8.1 |
| Kent | 65,089 | 10.7 | 12.7 |
| Lancashire | 61,296 | 10.9 | 14.1 |
| South Wales | 54,537 | 10.1 | 13.9 |
| England and Wales | 2,158,146 | 10.4 | 11.7 |

The National Policing plan for 2002, I set a target of 11.5 days for police officers and 12.0 for police staff by the end of 2005–06. Achieving further reductions in sickness absence is one of the principle objectives of the Strategy for a Healthy Police Service.

The Strategy for a Healthy Police has continued to focus forces on the reduction of sickness absence, and provide forces with funding to improve their occupational health, safety and welfare provision further.

Sickness absence figures have improved since the launch of the Strategy, with overall sickness absence now at a national average of 10.4 days per officer per year, and 11.7 per support staff member. The best performing forces have continued to make improvements, but the gap between best and worst performers has also significantly narrowed.

Lancashire has continued to make progress in reducing its sickness absence levels.

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 243W, on police, what the reasons were for the rise in numbers of accidents in which police vehicles were involved in Gloucestershire; and what the approximate cost of this increase was. [159392]

**Caroline Flint:** Unfortunately, the table showing the number of accidents involving police vehicles given in the answer contained some errors. I apologise for this. The correct table is now shown as follows.

We do not keep records centrally on the reasons for every police vehicle accident across the country. The Home Office has, however, consulted the Chief Constable of the Gloucestershire Constabulary, who informs us that all police vehicle accidents in his Force area are carefully monitored. Procedures and policies are kept under review in line with national Association of Chief Police Officers guidelines. Officers driving police vehicles undergo extensive training and the safety of officers and the public is taken extremely seriously.

It is not possible to say exactly why this increase has occurred. The number of police vehicle accidents fluctuates over time, across the country. Gloucestershire Constabulary has increased its number of operational officers and vehicles over recent years. This has increased vehicle mileage to 4,138,830 miles in the last 12 months. Information is not available centrally on the costs of police vehicle accidents. However, a significant number of accidents recorded involve only minor damage with no risk of injury to any party. None of the accidents resulted in fatalities, to either police officers or members of the public.

*Total police vehicle accidents*

| | *1996–97* | *1997–98* | *1998–99* | *1999–20* | *2000–01* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Avon and Somerset | 507 | 477 | 531 | 457 | 394 | 616 | 647 |
| Bedfordshire | 205 | 320 | 161 | 215 | 170 | 167 | 196 |
| Cambridgeshire | 256 | 303 | 238 | 200 | 225 | 183 | 217 |
| Cheshire | 194 | 111 | 142 | 112 | 124 | 175 | 167 |
| City of London | 80 | 62 | 64 | 56 | 90 | 30 | 38 |
| Cleveland | 75 | 86 | 44 | 62 | 92 | [illegible] | 142 |
| Cumbria | 116 | 133 | 87 | 144 | 152 | 182 | 186 |
| Derbyshire | 320 | 383 | 399 | 355 | 379 | 399 | 447 |
| Devon and Cornwall | 250 | 308 | 337 | 347 | 352 | 369 | 449 |

*Total police vehicle accidents*

| | 1996–97 | 1997–98 | 1998–99 | 1999–20 | 2000–01 | 2001–02 | 2002–03 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dorset | 119 | 139 | 129 | 143 | 166 | 188 | 184 |
| Durham | 159 | 142 | 184 | 157 | 182 | 178 | [1]— |
| Dyfed-Powys | 75 | 42 | 40 | 88 | 162 | 198 | 204 |
| Essex | 391 | 396 | 406 | 392 | 446 | 392 | 414 |
| Gloucestershire | 196 | 147 | 163 | 228 | 181 | 124 | 203 |
| Greater Manchester | 957 | 774 | 933 | 981 | 1,108 | 1,050 | 1,038 |
| Gwent | 195 | 182 | 217 | 194 | 179 | 199 | 160 |
| Hampshire | 555 | 594 | 560 | 665 | 622 | 617 | 543 |
| Hertfordshire | 223 | 196 | 197 | 221 | 307 | 310 | 344 |
| Humberside | 188 | 207 | 236 | 162 | 198 | 194 | 150 |
| Kent | 423 | 546 | 448 | 427 | 507 | 506 | 732 |
| Lancashire | 449 | 268 | 160 | 417 | 331 | 244 | 510 |
| Leicestershire | 214 | 173 | 186 | 168 | 161 | 145 | 180 |
| Lincolnshire | 71 | 94 | 185 | 149 | 141 | 114 | 131 |
| Merseyside | 320 | 414 | 262 | 335 | 260 | 325 | 240 |
| Metropolitan Police | 3,783 | 4,045 | 4,645 | 4,643 | 5,375 | 3,657 | 4,910 |
| Norfolk | 192 | 211 | 184 | 221 | 224 | 202 | 231 |
| Northamptonshire | 134 | 139 | 91 | 68 | 147 | 86 | 121 |
| Northumbria | [1]— | 489 | 472 | 510 | 445 | 432 | 513 |
| North Wales | 95 | 48 | 46 | 46 | 77 | 92 | 60 |
| North Yorkshire | 131 | 140 | 140 | 102 | 167 | 117 | 397 |
| Nottinghamshire | 298 | 278 | 225 | 211 | 213 | 240 | 316 |
| South Wales | 597 | 563 | 651 | 663 | 873 | 833 | 917 |
| South Yorkshire | 292 | 357 | 400 | 367 | 279 | 216 | 316 |
| Staffordshire | 557 | 644 | 646 | 527 | 462 | 298 | 306 |
| Suffolk | 136 | 122 | 168 | 143 | 137 | 142 | 119 |
| Surrey | 270 | 108 | 108 | 42 | 148 | 103 | 320 |
| Sussex | 404 | 282 | 223 | 567 | 462 | [1]— | 470 |
| Thames Valley | 888 | 688 | 918 | 1,045 | 1,063 | 1,127 | 992 |
| Warwickshire | 137 | 135 | 123 | 136 | 132 | 135 | 119 |
| West Mercia | 175 | 270 | 260 | 201 | 234 | 202 | 293 |
| West Midlands | 1,503 | 1,367 | 1,210 | 1,220 | 1,286 | 1,360 | [1]— |
| West Yorkshire | 728 | 500 | 453 | 629 | 553 | 619 | 672 |
| Wiltshire | 53 | 63 | 66 | 52 | 60 | 60 | 50 |

*Notes:*

[1] Data not yet submitted by force.

1. The information is provided by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, to whom forces submit statistical returns.
2. All figures are for financial years.
3. The figures for police vehicle accidents include all incidents in which a police vehicle sustains damage, including those where no other vehicle is involved. They encompass a very wide range of incidents from the very serious to the trivial, such as a scratched vehicle in a police yard.

**Mr. Jenkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* officers and *(b)* civilians served in the Staffordshire police force in each year since 1996. [160060]

**Ms Blears:** The information requested is set out in the table.

*Staffordshire Police–strength 31 March 1996 to 31 December 2003*

| | Police officers | Police staff |
|---|---|---|
| 31 March 1996 | 2,209 | 754 |
| 31 March 1997 | 2,211 | 763 |
| 31 March 1998 | 2,292 | 866 |
| 31 March 1999 | 2,238 | 1,004 |
| 31 March 2000 | 2,170 | 858 |
| 31 March 2001 | 2,129 | 935 |
| 31 March 2002 | 2,133 | 1,030 |
| 31 March 2003 | 2,202 | 1,146 |
| 31 December 2003 | 2,253 | Not available |

**Phil Sawford:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many occasions his Department has made available additional funding for police authorities to cover the cost of large scale and expensive investigations in each of the last five years. [157371]

**Ms Blears:** Between 1999–2000 and 2003–04, 45 special grants were paid to 22 police authorities for large scale, exceptionally high cost police operations. Cases were considered in the light of individual circumstances, subject to funds being available in each year.

The majority of payments have been for major public order and security operations. Four special grants have been for major criminal investigations. The table sets out special grant payments made in each year since 1999–2000.

£ million

| Force area | 1999–2000 | 2000–01 | 2001–02 | 2002–03 | 2003–04 to date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cambridgeshire | – | 1.0 | – | [2]4.65 | – |
| Cleveland | – | 1.9 | – | – | – |
| Devon and Cornwall | 0.52 | – | – | – | – |
| Dorset[1] | 1.6 | 0.9 | – | 0.89 | 1.87 |
| Essex[6] | 2.0 | 0.135 | – | – | – |
| Gloucestershire[5] | – | – | – | 0.25 | 4.696 |
| Greater Manchester[3] | – | – | 3.14 | 3.3 | – |
| Kent | 0.67 | – | – | – | – |
| Lancashire[1] | 0.89 | – | 1.89 | 1.5 | 1.08 |
| Lincolnshire[7] | – | – | – | – | 0.5 |
| London, City of | – | – | 1.2 | – | – |
| Metropolitan police | – | 1.0 | 1.0 | – | – |
| North Yorkshire | – | – | 1.0 | – | 0.1 |
| South Yorkshire | 1.0 | 1.0 | – | 1.0 | – |
| South Wales | – | – | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.15 |
| Staffordshire | 0.36 | – | – | – | 0.25 |
| Surrey | – | 0.1 | – | [7]0.28 | – |
| Sussex[1] | – | 1.66 | 1.75 | – | – |
| Warwickshire | 0.15 | – | – | – | – |
| West Midlands | 0.116 | – | – | – | – |
| West Yorkshire[4] | – | – | 2.22 | – | 1.0 |
| Wiltshire[7] | – | 0.87 | – | – | – |
| Total | 7.306 | 8.565 | 12.5 | 12.17 | 9.646 |

[1] Dorset, Lancashire and Sussex regularly receive special grants for the cost of policing the annual Labour and Conservative party conferences.
[2] Includes £3.5 million for the Soham murder investigation.
[3] Policing of the Commonwealth Games and Oldham riot.
[4] Bradford riot policing costs.
[5] Grant to date for policing of RAF Fairford during Iraq war.
[6] Stansted Airport hijack.
[7] Surrey was assisted with the cost of the Amanda Dowler, Deepcut Barracks and SE rapist investigations, Wiltshire with the cost of the Porton Down investigation. Lincolnshire is being assisted with a major fraud investigation.

**Mr. Hurst:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much compensation was paid by police authorities in England and Wales to claimants in respect of assaults by serving police officers in each year from 1990 to 2003. [159721]

**Ms Blears:** Information concerning how much compensation was paid by police authorities in England and Wales to claimants in respect of assaults by serving police officers in each year from 1990 to 2003 is not held centrally either by the Home Office or, I understand, by the Association of Police Authorities. It could therefore be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Hurst:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many successful claimants against police authorities in England and Wales in respect of assault by serving police officers were themselves originally charged with assault or a public order offence in each year from 1990 to 2003; [159723]

(2) how many successful claims against police authorities in England and Wales in respect of assault by serving officers were concluded in each year from 1990 to 2003. [159724]

**Ms Blears:** Information concerning how many successful claims against police authorities in England and Wales, in respect of assault by serving officers, were concluded in each year from 1990 to 2003 is not held centrally by the Home Office or I understand by the Association of Police Authorities. It could therefore be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the percentage change in full-time police officers in Crosby has been since 1997. [160537]

**Ms Blears:** Crosby is part of the Sefton Basic Command Unit (BCU). Information on strength at BCU level is collected annually and reflects the position at the end of March for each year. Information on BCU strength is only available from 2002.

Between March 2002 and March 2003 police strength for the Sefton BCU increased by 0.5 per cent. (from 431 to 433). The deployment of officers to BCUs is a matter for the Chief Constable (Norman Bettison QPM) and within the Sefton BCU deployment of officers is a matter for Divisional Commander.

### Prison Education

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 1 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 722W, on prison education, what security limits internet access for prisoners; and what circumstances permit 31 prisoners to have regular access to the internet. [160225]

**Paul Goggins** *[holding answer 9 March 2004]:* The Prison Service has a duty to protect the public. Integral to this is the restriction of prisoner communications. This is necessary in order to prevent escapes, disorder in prisons, the intimidation of witnesses, or making unwanted or inappropriate contact with victims of crime and/or children, and the conducting of criminal activity from within jails. To allow prisoners generally to have access to the internet would undermine security.

The prisoners who have regular access to the internet have been granted this for the particular requirements of the work at which they are employed. Their allocation to this work is subject to an individual risk assessment. They sign agreements about their use of the internet. They are monitored closely by an information technology (IT) manager and the websites they visit are controlled and subject to audit.

Although no prisoners have access to the internet for education there are schemes provided by the Department for Education and Skills in prisons that seek to give prisoners training in internet IT skills, without open connection to the internet itself.

### Prison Suicides

**Mr. Stinchcombe:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners committed suicide in England and Wales before *(a)* having their mental health assessed and *(b)* receiving treatment for mental health problems, for each of the last five years. [155402]

**Paul Goggins:** The data requested are not collated centrally and could only be provided by examination of individual case records, which would be at disproportionate cost.

Upon reception into prison, all newly received prisoners, plus those who change status, (for example by being convicted), and those transferred from another establishment, are assessed to determine whether they have any immediate physical and mental health needs.

The Department of Health and the Prison Service are working together to implement a revised reception health screening process during 2004. These new arrangements focus particularly on ensuring prompt and effective identification of those individuals with mental health problems, or who may be at risk of suicide/self-harm, so that they can be appropriately treated and cared for.

### Prisoners

**Paul Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what offences female Jamaican nationals were serving prison sentences in the UK in each of the last five years. [153257]

**Paul Goggins:** The number of sentenced female Jamaican nationals in prison in England and Wales, by offence group, is given in the following table. Figures are for the 30 June each year from 1997 to 2003.

Information relating to Scotland and Northern Ireland is a matter for Ministers in the Scottish Parliament and Northern Ireland Assembly.

*Sentenced female Jamaican prisoners by offence, at 30 June, 1999 to 2003*

| | *1999* | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* | *2003* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Violence against the person | 1 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Burglary | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Robbery | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Theft and handling | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Fraud and forgery | 2 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 4 |
| Drugs offences | 129 | 152 | 249 | 425 | 374 |
| Other offences | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Offence not recorded | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

### Research Licences

**Ms Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what licences have been issued since 1997 for carrying out research involving the observation of captured wild rats in a model sewer system. [158099]

**Caroline Flint:** The information requested is not maintained in that form in a central database. A check of work currently licensed under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 has not identified any projects involving observational studies of this type. However, licence authorities under the 1986 Act would not be required for such work if it was unlikely to cause pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm.

### Special Constables

**Mr. Paice:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list, broken down by force and in total, the average number of hours worked per head by special constables in each of the last three years. [159996]

**Ms Blears** *[holding answer 9 March 2004]:* There are no statistics published on the average number of hours worked per head by Special Constables.

### Travel Documents

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures are proposed to ensure that people arriving in the UK are aware of the offence of deliberately losing or destroying travel documents. [159527]

**Beverley Hughes:** We will advise those coming to the United Kingdom of the potential consequences of destroying or disposing of their documentation through our embassies and High Commissions abroad and the foreign media. This will be reinforced by displaying warning notices immediately on arrival at UK ports of entry.

### Work Permits

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many work permits were issued in each year since 1997; and what *(a)* forecasts he has made and *(b)* evidence of need he has collected for each year to 2010. [156087]

**Beverley Hughes** *[holding answer 25 February 2004]:* The total number of work permits issued, including extensions, in the period from 1997 to the third quarter 2003 (the latest date for which information is available) is as follows:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1997 | 44,958 |
| 1998 | 53,961 |
| 1999 | 60,743 |
| 2000 | 88,651 |
| 2001 | 120,823 |
| 2002 | 136,151 |
| 2003 | 108,221 |

The work permit system is designed to be flexible and responsive to the needs of employers and the economy. There are no forecasted targets for the number of work permits issued, although Work Permits (UK) does make

internal planning assumptions about expected volumes of applications, in order to allocate resources to process applications. Work Permits (UK) Business Plan for 2003–2004 makes a planning assumption of 230, 500 applications received. This total includes Sector Based Scheme, Highly Skilled Migrant Programme and Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme applications and extensions.

These planning assumptions are informed by monitoring trends in volumes of applications and consultation with stakeholders, including other government departments on labour market conditions.

However, there is no long-term forecast of expected volumes of applications.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on his assessment of the benefit to the UK of work permits. [157295]

**Beverley Hughes:** The work permit arrangements are a key part of the Government's managed migration strategy, under which the United Kingdom seeks to offer legal routes for the admission of those foreign nationals who possess skills and qualifications that are in short supply here and who will contribute to the economy.

The work permit arrangements offer an efficient and responsive means of ensuring that UK employers are able to recruit overseas workers with the skills that they need, while protecting the interests of resident workers.

### Yarl's Wood Detention Centre

**Mr. Gerrard:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when an annual report was prepared by the independent monitoring board for Yarl's Wood. [157447]

**Beverley Hughes:** The Independent Monitoring Board for Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre produced a first report in spring 2002 covering the period from their first meeting in November 2001 to the temporary closure of the centre on 31 March 2002.

The Board will produce an annual report covering the period from the re-opening of Yarl's Wood at the end of September 2003 to December 2004 by 31 January 2005 in accordance with the Detention Centre Rules.

## HEALTH

### "Agenda for Change"

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 26 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 537W, on "Agenda for Change", to what extent there will be flexibility for individual employers to pay recruitment and retention premiums. [159738]

**Mr. Hutton:** Under the proposed new national health service pay system, "Agenda for Change", NHS employers will be able to pay recruitment and retention premiums to individual postholders or groups of postholders where market pressures would otherwise prevent employers from being able to recruit and retain staff in sufficient numbers. Before paying recruitment and retention premia, NHS employers will need to satisfy themselves that agreed criteria have been met and will need to have consulted with staff representatives, neighbouring employers, strategic health authorities and other stakeholders.

### A and E Departments

**Mr. Hurst:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients were treated in the accident and emergency departments of NHS hospitals in each year from 1990 to 2002. [156014]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The number of patients attending accident and emergency departments in national health service hospitals in England 1989–90 to 2002–03 is shown in the table.

*Attendances at A&E departments, England, 1989–90 to 2002–03*

| | *New attendances* | *Follow-up attendances* | *Total attendances* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1989–90 | 11,207,099 | 2,728,203 | 13,935,302 |
| 1990–91 | 11,204,059 | 2,512,913 | 13,716,972 |
| 1991–92 | 11,035,326 | 2,270,155 | 13,305,481 |
| 1992–93 | 10,993,202 | 2,077,009 | 13,070,211 |
| 1993–94 | 11,364,703 | 1,923,987 | 13,288,690 |
| 1994–95 | 11,942,599 | 1,869,123 | 13,811,722 |
| 1995–96 | 12,461,909 | 1,772,381 | 14,234,290 |
| 1996–97 | 12,483,633 | 1,642,544 | 14,126,177 |
| 1997–98 | 12,793,720 | 1,570,426 | 14,364,146 |
| 1998–99 | 12,811,064 | 1,469,324 | 14,280,388 |
| 1999–2000 | 13,167,495 | 1,461,530 | 14,629,025 |
| 2000–01 | 12,953,432 | 1,339,875 | 14,293,307 |
| 2001–02 | 12,852,702 | 1,191,316 | 14,044,018 |
| 2002–03 | 12,945,413 | 1,100,162 | 14,045,575 |

*Source:*
Department of Health form KH09

### Angiography

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when his Department started collecting the figures for angiography waiting times; and if he will make a statement on the reasons for collecting this data centrally. [158965]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Improving angiography access times forms an important part of the national service framework for coronary heart disease. Strategic health authorities outlined their plans to improve access in the local delivery plans (LDPs). Monitoring against the LDPs started in 2003–04. It is expected data will be of sufficient quality to publish shortly.

Hospital episode statistics which have been used previously outline the length of time someone had waited when treated, not the time someone is waiting.

### Asthma

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients *(a)* over and *(b)* under 45 years were admitted to hospital for asthma in (i) Greater London and (ii) each London borough in the last five years. [158443]

**Mr. Hutton:** The information is not available in the format requested. Information on patients admitted to London hospitals with a primary diagnosis of asthma by

primary care trust of residence for the year 2002 to 2003, has been placed in the Library. Information for previous years by PCT of residence is not available.

### Bereavement Services

**Mr. Fabian Hamilton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he has taken to encourage a co-ordinated approach to bereavement services within his Department. [159966]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** A three year training and development strategy was started in 2003 to enable clinical and other staff to manage bereavement well. This required additional funding of £2.7 million per year paid directly to trusts. An additional £300,000 is spent each year by the Department over the three year period for the central preparation of professional standards, training tools and materials to be used by trusts. Joint protocols have been developed between the national health service and coroners to train staff in procedures for obtaining consent for post mortem examinations and for provision of support at the time of death.

**Mr. Fabian Hamilton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether NHS hospitals have staff specially allocated to provide the newly bereaved with sound information on existing laws and procedures so that they can be supported in making quick decisions about funerals. [159967]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The provision of bereavement counselling services within the national health service trusts is a requirement set by the Chief Medical Officer as part of his recommendations following the Alder Hay Inquiry. Families have the right to be provided with sensitive support and advice from NHS trusts at the time of bereavement, responsive to different religious and cultural beliefs. In order to meet this requirement, a three year training and development programme for all trusts was started in 2003. A survey of all trusts will be undertaken in April 2004 to establish the level of support currently in place.

### Capital Projects

**Mr. Luff:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the implications for the proposed Droitwich Spa one-stop shop of his decision to change the funding arrangements for the project. [157961]

**Dr. Ladyman:** Significant new revenue funding is being made available to support public, private capital investment in the primary care estate based on local prioritisation of development proposals.

The funding arrangements have changed as a result of the new general medical services (GMS) contract which has been negotiated between the NHS Confederation and the General Practitioners Committee.

Previously revenue premises costs were funded via both the non cash limited and cash limited GMS routes. From April 2004 this funding will become resource limited and primary care trusts will manage this in conjunction with those resources in their unified allocation.

The future of the Droitwich Spa development will depend on the priority for investment in this facility relative to other such developments within the west Midland south area.

This will be decided by a planning group compromising all of the primary care trust chief executives within the west Midlands south area.

### Cardiac Care

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people from each primary care trust area in England received cardiac treatment at hospitals in Greater London in the last six years for which information is available. [158410]

**Mr. Hutton:** The information requested for the year 2002 to 2003, has been placed in the Library. Information for previous years is not available.

### Chorley Hospital

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list new health services available at Chorley Hospital since 2000; and how much money has been spent on Chorley Hospital since 2000. [157676]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Chorley and South Ribble Hospital was commissioned as a new district general hospital in 1995–96. Since 2000, there has been approximately £10 million of investment in the following areas:

New medical ward

12 station dialysis unit

new dermatology/diabetes centre

bedside televisions/telephone system

multi-faith prayer room

two new theatres

new clinic for breast services

orthopaedic/fracture clinics

new discharge lounge

new nursery for staff child care

new sterile services unit.

Service developments include:

renal dialysis

extended elective orthopaedic service, serving Chorley and Preston

dermatology service for Chorley and Preston

further facilities for admission of medical patients

plastic surgery outpatients

vascular surgery outpatients

additional orthopaedic clinics

*Source:*
Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic Health Authority.

### Coldeast Hospital, Fareham

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the future use of the Coldeast Hospital Site in Fareham. [160053]

**Mr. Hutton** *[holding answer 9 March 2004]:* The ownership of the Coldeast Hospital site is split between the Secretary of State for Health, Fareham and Gosport Primary Care Trust (PCT) and West Hampshire National Health Service Trust.

Reserved matters planning consent has recently been granted for a total of 253 housing units on those parts of the site owned by the Secretary of State for Health and the Fareham and Gosport PCT.

Options for the sale of the Secretary of State's land are currently being considered. Fareham and Gosport PCT is firming up its plans for the health service needs of both Fareham and Gosport residents and the health campus on the Coldeast site is a key part of those plans.

### Communications Masts

**Andy King:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action the Department has taken to investigate the potential health risks of Tetra masts in residential areas. [159376]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The Stewart Report, in 2000, provided a thorough and comprehensive consideration of the public health concerns associated with mobile phone systems and is available on the web site at www.iegmp.org.uk. The report dealt principally with signals from the widely used mobile phone (GSM) technologies but it did note some contradictory results when examining the biological effects of pulsed radio signals similar to those associated with TETRA (Terrestrial Trunked Radio). While no obvious health effect was suggested, it did recommend a precautionary approach.

The main conclusion about base stations from the Stewart Report was that:

> "the balance of evidence indicates that there is no general risk to the health of people living near to base stations on the basis that exposures are expected to be small fractions of guidelines".

A substantial number of measurements of potential exposures of the public from base station emissions, have now been made by a number of bodies, including the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB)—www.nrpb.org and the Radiocommunications Agency (now part of OFCOM—www.ofcom.org.uk). These measurements include emissions from TETRA base stations. In all cases exposures have been very much lower than the guidelines published by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP).

The latest report from NRPB's Advisory Group on Non-Ionizing Radiation (AGNIR), entitled "Health Effects from Radiofrequency Electromagnetic Fields" was published on 14 January 2004 addressed the base station issue and concluded that: "Exposure levels from living near to mobile phone base stations are extremely low, and the overall evidence indicates that they are unlikely to pose a risk to health."

Following a request by the Home Office to the NRPB, the issue of possible health effects caused by signals from TETRA base stations was comprehensively addressed by AGNIR. It published its report, "Possible Health Effects from Terrestrial Trunked Radio (TETRA)", in 2001. This is available as Documents of NRPB, Volume 12, No 2, 2001, or on the NRPB web site at www.nrpb.org. AGNIR noted that whereas the signals from the TETRA handsets are pulsed, those from TETRA base stations are not pulsed. AGNIR concluded, therefore, that there is no reason to believe that signals from TETRA base stations should be treated differently from other base stations. The AGNIR report also found that exposures of the public to signals from TETRA base stations are small fractions of international guidelines.

TETRA technologies are included within the Mobile Telecommunications and Health Research (MTHR) programme set by the Government 2001—www.mthr.org.uk. An associated programme, specifically on TETRA, is being funded by the Home Office—http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk. A number of projects are already under way, but it will be some time before the results are available.

### Community Pharmacists

**Mr. O'Hara:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of *(a)* patients' need for monitored dosage systems and *(b)* the wide variation in payment mechanisms to community pharmacists for these, including charges to individual patients. [158999]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** No such assessment has been made nationally. However, primary care trusts may make local arrangements to assess need, arrange provision of services and establish a local payment mechanism.

As part of new national community pharmacy contractual framework discussions, we are examining arrangements for the provision of compliance aids of which monitored dosage systems is but one.

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether all the EU accession countries are compliant with the minimum training requirements in *(a)* medicine, *(b)* nursing and *(c)* dentistry as laid down in the relevant EC Directives. [159203]

**Mr. Hutton:** All acceding states are committed to ensuring that the qualifications they award to doctors and nurses responsible for general care and dentists who begin their training on or after the date of accession meet specified minimum requirements. It is for the European Commission, which is closely monitoring their progress, to see that these obligations are met. It intends to update Member States shortly.

### Correspondence

**David Winnick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will reply to the hon. Member for Walsall North's letter of 3 February regarding a constituent, departmental ref.PO1043437. [159635]

**Miss Melanie Johnson** *[holding answer on 8 March 2004]:* A reply was sent to the hon. Member on 2 March 2004.

### Dentistry

**Mr. Swire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the scale of charges to patients using NHS dentists is. [155306]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** National health service dental charges are subject to the National Health Service (Dental Charges) Regulations 1989, as amended. Under the current arrangements, those patients liable to pay a charge are required to make a contribution to the cost of their treatment equal to 80 per cent. of the dentist's item of services fees. These fees and their related patient charges are set out in the Statement of Dental Remuneration available at http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/01/93/20/04019320.pdf. This can also be found in the Statement of Dental Remuneration, Amendment No. 91 a copy of which is available in the Library.

Currently about 24 per cent. of NHS adult patients are exempt from charges or qualify for a reduced charge. Children and certain other groups are exempt from charges.

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when information relating to dentists in Adur, Arun and Worthing was last updated by NHS Direct on the NHS website. [156048]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The Department does not collect information regarding updates on dentists made by NHS Direct. However, I am advised by NHS Direct that primary care trusts have a system in place for updating information about dentists on the NHS website at www.nhs.uk. I understand this was last updated in February 2004 for Adur, Arun and Worthing PCT.

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health which dental surgeries are taking on non-exempt adults in *(a)* West Sussex and *(b)* Adur, Arun and Worthing Primary Care Trust. [156050]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Information on which dental surgeries are taking adults who pay patient charges can be found on the NHS.UK website at www.nhs.uk. The information on the website is provided by primary care trusts (PCTs), and covers all national health service dental providers, not just principals and assistants in the general dental service.

The information on the site as at 2 March 2004 shows a total of 53 dental practices in Adur, Arun and Worthing PCT area, one of which is registering charge paying adults for treatment (four are registering charge exempt adults). For the Western Sussex PCT, 48 dental practices are listed, two of which are registering charge paying adults. The information does change regularly, often daily, and both the website and NHS Direct (which also uses the information) advise members of the public to telephone the dental practice to double check that the information is still accurate.

### Digital Hearing Aids

**Mr. Nigel Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time is for digital hearing aids in *(a)* England and *(b)* Gloucestershire; and if he will make a statement on measures he intends to take to reduce waiting times. [159044]

**Dr. Ladyman:** Information on waiting times for non-consultant led specialities such as audiology is not collected centrally and so we are unable to estimate an average waiting time for digital hearing aids in England. At the end of December 2003, waiting times from referral to fitting at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital were 54 weeks for patients referred by the ear, nose and throat department, 56 weeks for those referred by general practitioners and 112 weeks for patients who self referred for reassessments. These times all include an eight-week period from assessment through to the fitting of the hearing aid.

The Royal National Institute for the Deaf modernisation team is carrying out a number of initiatives to reduce waiting times and new courses have been introduced to increase the number of audiologists available nationally.

### Drug-related Deaths

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made on the target to reduce the number of drug-related deaths in England since 1999. [159775]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** I refer the hon. Member to the response I gave him on 3 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1021W.

### Drugs Trials

**Paul Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to require pharmaceutical companies to publish all results from drugs trials they conduct. [158528]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** There are no plans currently in place to require disclosure of company drug trial results. The Government welcome the pharmaceutical industry's support for the Department of Health's research governance framework for health and social care, which recognises that it is researchers' responsibility to ensure that research findings are opened to critical review through the accepted scientific and professional channels and disseminated promptly once established. The Government encourages the pharmaceutical industry to disclose drug trial results to the maximum extent consistent with regulatory process and intellectual property rights.

### Environmental Protection

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the mechanisms his Department uses to ensure that environmental considerations are taken into account at each stage of the policy formation process. [155430]

**Miss Melanie Johnson** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* The Department has recently reviewed its policy-making processes and is considering how best policy-makers can ensure that all relevant considerations are taken into account when formulating policy.

### EU Accession Countries (Migrants)

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* doctors, *(b)* dentists and *(c)* nurses from the EU accession countries he expects to come to work in the UK after 1 May. [159202]

**Mr. Hutton:** The Department has made no such estimate. Decisions on whether to offer employment to doctors, dentists and nurses from the accession countries are matters for local national health service employers.

### Food Labelling

**Chris Grayling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the European Commission's proposal for a regulation on nutrition and health claims made on foods; and if he will make a statement. [158461]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** In order to inform the United Kingdom negotiating position on this proposal, a full public consultation has been undertaken and an open meeting with stakeholders held. In addition, the Food Standards Agency, the lead Department for the proposal, has had detailed discussions with other Government Departments.

The Government welcomes the European Commission's proposal for harmonising rules on the regulation of nutrition and health claims and will seek, through the negotiation process, to provide adequate protection for consumers whilst minimising effects on the food industry.

### Foundation Trusts

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the reasons are for establishing a risk fund for foundation trust applicants implementing the new financial flows reforms. [154098]

**Mr. Hutton:** The funding will be made available to address the costs of highly complex and specialised cases for first wave national health service foundation trusts applicants for 2004–05 as the methodology to address these costs within the national tariff will not be complete until 2005–06.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health from which budget the funding for the risk fund for foundation trust applicants implementing the new financial flows reforms was transferred; and if he will make a statement. [154142]

**Mr. Hutton:** The funding will be made available from the Department's unallocated provision for 2004–05.

### Free Health Care (Students)

**John Mann:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to extend free *(a)* prescriptions and *(b)* dental care to students undertaking an apprenticeship. [159461]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Free national health service prescriptions are available to everyone under 16. Free NHS dental treatment is available to everyone under 18. Free NHS prescriptions and free NHS dental treatment are available to everyone up to their nineteenth birthday if they are in full-time education. People who have children, or who are disabled and have low earnings may receive tax credits and a tax credit exemption certificate entitling them to free NHS prescriptions and free NHS dental treatment automatically. Otherwise, anyone can apply for help with their health costs through the NHS low income scheme. The extent of any help is based on a comparison between the claimant's weekly income and requirements at the date the claim is received. We have no plans to change the current arrangements.

Patients who need frequent prescriptions may benefit from purchasing a prescription prepayment certificate.

### GPs

**Dr. Murrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* principals and *(b)* non-principals were in general practice in each year since 1990 in terms of (i) whole time equivalents and (ii) total employed. [158759]

**Mr. Hutton:** The information requested has been placed in the Library.

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners were appointed in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough in the last 12 months; how many vacancies there were in that period; and how many general practitioners are in practice in (i) Greater London and (ii) each London borough. [158439]

**Mr. Hutton** *[holding answer 3 March 2004]:* Information on general practitioner vacancies and appointments is not collected at London borough level. Information for the five London strategic health authorities has been placed in the Library.

### Great Ormond Street Hospital

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set up an inquiry into Great Ormond Street Hospital's *(a)* treatment of junior doctors' pay obligations while on rotation and *(b)* handling of junior doctors' working hours. [R] [158545]

**Mr. Hutton:** It is for local national health service trusts to implement national policy by ensuring they have appropriate arrangements in place for dealing with grievances/complaints, in line with national guidance, as part of good employment practice.

Under those arrangements, there is regular monitoring to ensure that rotas are satisfactory and that safe services are provided.

Great Ormond Street, working with staff representative organisations, has these arrangements in place and policies and procedures under which any concerns can be raised and addressed.

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many junior doctors' rotas at Great Ormond Street Hospital are non-compliant with *(a)* the New Deal and *(b)* the EU Working Time Directive; and if he will make a statement. [R] [158547]

**Mr. Hutton:** The Department does not collect this information. However, I am informed by North Central London Strategic Health Authority that:

> Great Ormond Street Trust has 44 separate rotas. 40 are currently New Deal compliant.Great Ormond Street Trust is scoring 87 per cent, overall compliance with the New Deal—above the national average—and continues to make good

progress. 24 rotas are European Union Working Time Directive compliant and plans are in place to convert the others by September 2004, which is the deadline for compliance.

### Health Resource Groups

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment his Department has made of the robustness of the health resource group for specialist services, in advance of the implementation of these groups as a basis for the financial flows reforms. [158502]

**Mr. Hutton:** The Department is carrying out a review of specialised services so as to ensure that providers of these services are fairly reimbursed under the financial flows reforms. We recognise that, for some of these services, case mix adjustment based on current health care resource group classifications (HRGs) may not, by itself, provide sufficient reimbursement to specialised providers. Work is under way to refine HRGs to overcome this problem. We are also looking at other options such as adjustments to tariff for patients who have an exceptionally long stay in hospital. We shall be consulting widely with providers and commissioners of these services to make sure that we find the best way forward for each service.

### Hip Replacements

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the waiting time for hip replacements is at the Royal London Hospital. [159132]

**Mr. Hutton:** The Department of Health does not collect this information by specific procedure.

Data on patients waiting for trauma and orthopaedic elective admission at Barts and the London National Health Service Trust, of which the Royal London Hospital is a part, as at 31 December 2003 (the latest data available), is shown in the table.

*Patients waiting for trauma and orthopaedic elective admission at Barts and the London NHS Trust: position at 31 December 2003*

| | *Patients waiting for admission by months waiting* |
|---|---|
| Less than 3 months | 582 |
| 3 to 5 months | 402 |
| 6 to 8 months | 237 |
| 9 to 11 months | 76 |
| Total | 1,297 |

### Medical Negligence

**Mr. Byers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost to the NHS in respect of *(a)* medical negligence cases and *(b)* other legal claims was in each year since 1992; and what estimate he has made of the potential costs arising from outstanding cases. [159817]

**Ms Rosie Winterton** *[holding answer on 8 March 2004]:* Payments made for medical negligence and other legal claims in each year since 1996 are shown in the table. Information for the period 1992 to 1995 cannot be separately identified.

*£ million*

| | *Medical negligence in year payments* | *Other legal claims in year payments/ receipts* |
|---|---|---|
| 1996–97 | 235 | 22 |
| 1997–98 | 144 | 23 |
| 1998–99 | 221 | 38 |
| 1999–2000 | 373 | 19 |
| 2000–2001 | 415 | 10 |
| 2001–02 | 446 | 4 |

*Note:*
Changes to accounting policies imposed by the HM Treasury over the years mean that these amounts are not directly comparable.
Estimates of potential costs of outstanding cases:
(i) The estimated cost of settling all actual clinical negligence claims and incidents that have occurred but may not necessarily result in claims is £5.25 billion as at 31 March 2002.
(ii) The estimated cost of settling all other legal claims is £113 million as at 31 March 2002.
*Sources:*
*Medical negligence*
NHS (England) Summarised Accounts 1996–97 to 2001–02 (the latest year published, the report for 2002–2003 is yet to be published)
*Other legal claims*
Health authority audited accounts 1996–97 to 1998–99
Health authority audited summarisation forms 1999–2000 to 2001–02
Primary care trust audited summarisation schedules 2000–01 to 2001–02
NHS trust audited summarisation schedules 1996–97 to 2001–02

### Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency

**Paul Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to use public funds to finance the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency. [158524]

**Mr. Hutton:** The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) uses public funds to finance the net costs of its work on medical devices. The MHRA's work on medicines is funded by fees from users, principally pharmaceutical companies, as has been the case for more than ten years.

### Men's Health

**Sandra Gidley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to develop the evidence base required for health practitioners to improve the health of men most at risk of *(a)* heart disease, *(b)* cancer and *(c)* obesity following the cancellation of the Health Development Agency's men's health work programme. [159328]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The evidence base on coronary heart disease (CHD), cancer and obesity has been and continues to be extensively developed by the Health Development Agency (HDA) for both men and women. In particular, in 2002–04 the HDA published evidence briefings on obesity, physical activity, smoking cessation and alcohol. Furthermore, the HDA produced guidance on CHD and cancer in response to and support of the national service frameworks.

In 2004–05, the HDA will be commissioning a consortium of the University of Oxford, the University of Loughborough and the South East Public Health Observatory, as an evidence and guidance collaborating

centre, on physical activity. The HDA is currently involved in producing guidance on the treatment and prevention of obesity in conjunction with the National Institute for Clinical Excellence.

Specifically in relation to men's health, the HDA will be taking men's health forward as a cross-cutting issue. As a result of the work it has undertaken, the HDA will be producing a database of intervention and prevention strategies related to men's health. There are two pieces of commissioned work on the research priorities and a mapping exercise of published and on-going research in the field of men's health.

The HDA is focusing on the complete range of social diversity in the population, including, gender, as well as age, geography, socio-economic grouping and ethnicity. This is consistent with the Wanless II Report, published in February. The range of social diversity is reflected in all aspects of programme development and implementation across the HDA.

A number of publications have been made available from work in this area, as follows:

Health Development Agency (2000). Coronary Heart Disease. Guidance for implementing the preventive aspects of the national service framework. Available at http://www.hda-online.org.uk/documents/chdframework.pdf.

Health Development Agency (2002). Cancer Prevention. A resource to support local action in delivering The NHS Cancer Plan. Available at http://www.hda-online.org.uk/documents/cancer prevention.pdf.

Hillsdown M, Foster C, Naidoo B and Crombie H (2004—forthcoming). The effectiveness of public health interventions for increasing physical activity among adults: a review of reviews. Available at http://www.hda.nhs.uk/evidence/EBBD.html#pub.

Mclean C, (2002). UK Men's Health Review. Available at http://www.hda-online.org.uk/documents/mens health mapping 10–02.doc.

Mulvihill C, Quigley R (2003). The management of obesity and overweight: An analysis of reviews of diet, physical activity and behavioural approaches. Available at http://www.hda.nhs.uk/evidence/EBBD.html#pub.

Naidoo B. Edited by Quigley R, Taylor L and Warm D (2004—forthcoming). The effectiveness of public health interventions to reduce smoking initiation and increase smoking cessation: a review of reviews. Available at http://www.hda.nhs.uk/evidence/EBBD.html#pub.

Waller S, Naidoo B, Thorn B (2002). Prevention and reduction of alcohol misuse: Evidence briefing. Available at http://www.hda.nhs.uk/evidence/EBBD.html#pub. Watson J (2004—forthcoming). Men and health: Report of a Delphi study to scope themes for evidence-based reviews.

## Mental Health

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many acute mental illness beds were available *(a)* for the elderly, *(b)* for children, *(c)* for other age groups and *(d)* in secure units in 2002–03 in the area covered by Newcastle Primary Care Trust; and what the occupancy rates were in each case. [157049]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** In 2002–03, there were no mental illness beds at the Newcastle Primary Care Trust. However, figures for the Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland Mental Health National Health Service Trust for the same period are shown in the table.

| | *Available bed days* | *Occupied bed days* | *Percentage occupancy rate* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mental illness: elderly short stay | 125 | 110 | 80.0 |
| Mental illness: elderly long stay | 125 | 114 | 91.2 |
| Mental illness: children | 20 | 14 | 70.0 |
| Mental illness: children long stay | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mental illness: other ages/secure | 49 | 45 | 91.8 |
| Mental illness: other ages/short stay | 314 | 250 | 79.6 |
| Mental illness: other ages/long stay | 94 | 71 | 75.5 |

*Source:*
Department of Health KH03 Form.

**Dr. Evan Harris:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his Department's total spending on anti-discrimination in mental health work has been over the last two years; and what the planned expenditure is for the next two years. [158558]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The Department conducts its anti discrimination in mental health work through the "Mind out for mental health" campaign. Campaign spending over the last two years is shown in the table.

£

| | *Spending* |
|---|---|
| 2002–03 | 905,662 |
| 2003–04 | [1]824,305 |

[1] Forecast of final outturn.

Decisions on expenditure for mental health anti discrimination work for the next two years have not yet been made.

## Needlestick Injury

**Laura Moffatt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to publish guidelines to NHS staff on needlestick injury. [158690]

**Mr. Hutton:** The Department is in the process of producing new guidance on the Management of Occupational Health and Safety Services in the national health service in response to the National Audit Office Report, "A Safer Place to Work—improving the management of health and safety risks to staff in the NHS". The new guidance will include comprehensive new guidelines on the management of needlesticks. It is due to be published later this year.

## NHS Dentistry

**Mrs. Humble:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made in the recruitment of NHS dentists in Blackpool North and Fleetwood. [157913]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Blackpool Primary Care Trust (PCT) is addressing the issue of recruitment by developing access to services through facilities and staff employed at the Fylde Coast Medical services. Wyre PCT has taken a number of steps to address current vacancies. These include:

a dental surgery within a proposed new primary care centre to be built in 2005;

a golden hello for new practitioners in the area; and

an advert in the February edition of the British Dental Journal.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average distance for people to access NHS dentists is in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley. [157087]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The average direct distances from postcodes in Lancashire and Chorley to the nearest dentist are 0.67 miles and 0.77 miles respectively.

### NHS Financial Reforms

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether there will be a risk fund for all NHS trusts implementing the new financial flows reforms over the next five years. [154146]

**Mr. Hutton:** We do not expect such a fund will be necessary from 2005–06 onwards for either national health service trusts or NHS foundation trusts. This is because methodology to address the costs of highly complex and specialised cases within the tariff is planned to be developed for implementation from 2005–06.

### NHS Funding

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the size of the risk fund needed to implement the national tariff payment by results system across all NHS trusts; and if he will make a statement. [152821]

**Mr. Hutton:** In 2004–05, we are considering allocating up to £50 million to specialist and teaching first wave national health service foundation trusts which are implementing the full transition to payment by results a year ahead of the rest of the NHS. The funding will be made available to address the costs of highly complex and specialised cases for first wave applicants for 2004–05, because the methodology to address these costs within the national tariff will not be ready for implementation until 2005–06. These funds will be available for 2004–05 only.

### NHS Obsolete Equipment

**Tom Brake:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the *(a)* value and *(b)* type of obsolete but working NHS equipment that was discarded in 2003. [158787]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** No assessment has been made of the amount of obsolete but working equipment in the national health service. However the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency is involved in several initiatives to look at how unwanted but working items can be disposed of most efficiently.

### NHS Staff

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research has been commissioned by his Department into the attitudes of staff in the NHS since 1997. [154988]

**Mr. Hutton:** The Department of Health Policy Research Programme has funded research on a range of issues in the national health service which has included components whereby staff's attitudes have been sought across a range of issues. Research containing a significant element on staff attitudes has been commissioned on topics including:

cohort studies of nurses' careers;

cohort studies of doctors' careers;

the attractiveness of the NHS as an employer;

the establishment of the role of nurse consultant;

the establishment of the role of modern matron;

the extension of nurse prescribing;

the retention of women in the primary care nursing workforce after the age of 50;

benchmarking and bowel care in community home settings;

vaccinating health workers against influenza;

labour costs, clinical outcomes and staff attitudes;

health infomatics education for health professionals;

staff satisfaction, patient satisfaction and patient outcomes;

overseas doctors' experiences and expectations of training in the UK;

the attractiveness of the NHS as an employer to potential nursing and allied health professionals staff;

staff involvement in the NHS.

A list of Policy Research Programme projects have been placed in the Library.

In addition, NHS trusts are required to conduct staff opinion surveys and 10 core questions about staff involvement and communications were added to local surveys in 2001 and 2002 and the results fed into performance ratings. From 2003 Commission for Health Improvement took over responsibility for conducting national NHS staff opinion surveys which will assess staff attitudes to a number of areas of their work.

### NHS Trust Documents

**Helen Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1695, on NHS trust documents, whether his Department collects and retains copies of *(a)* Mersey Regional Ambulance Service's lone worker policy and *(b)* the job description of its communications manager; and for what reason it has not obtained a copy of Ms Pearl Browne's report on the management of the Mersey Regional Ambulance Service. [157612]

**Miss Melanie Johnson** *[holding answer 3 March 2004]:* The Department does not routinely collect copies of Mersey Regional Ambulance Service's lone worker policy and the job description of its communications manager. The Pearl Brown report on the management of the Mersey Regional Ambulance Service is a confidential report commissioned solely by the trust and neither the Department nor the Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority had any input to it.

### NHS Trust Finance

**Mr. Lansley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether public dividend capital on the balance sheets of NHS hospital trusts is classified as debt. [159302]

**Mr. Hutton** *[holding answer on 5 March 2005]:* National Health Service trusts account for public dividend capital (PDC) as equity. PDC is a form of public sector financing which does not conform to the standard accounting definitions of equity and debt used in the private sector. It is more akin to an equity stake than a loan, as it is remunerated by dividend rather than fixed or variable interest.

### Nursing

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many nurses have come to the UK from abroad in each of the last five years to work in the NHS; and from which countries. [158975]

**Mr. Hutton:** The information requested is not collected centrally.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council holds information on the number of nurses registering to practise in the United Kingdom each year from overseas. This information can be found at www.nmc-uk.org.

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what marketing his Department is undertaking to attract nurses from abroad to work in the NHS. [158976]

**Mr. Hutton:** The Department has agreements with the Governments of the Philippines, Spain, Indonesia and India to recruit nurses into the national health service. Our embassies market nursing campaigns through websites, conferences and advertising.

In addition, project leads based in the United Kingdom co-ordinate advertising and marketing.

The Department has developed a website, www.nursinguk.nhs.uk, aimed at supporting nurses from abroad who wish to come and work in the NHS.

Information on how to apply independently to the NHS, together with information about registration is available on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HumanResourcesAndTraining/MoreStaff/fs/en.

### Obesity

**Linda Perham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to reduce the incidence of obesity-related illness and death. [156085]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The Government are concerned at the impact of obesity on health and are committed to addressing the current trend in both children and adults. Prevention and management of obesity is already at the heart of the Government's priority areas, including coronary heart disease, cancer and diabetes.

The Government launched their major consultation on public health this month. The Public Health White Paper will provide the overarching framework for all Government efforts to improve public health. The consultation will enable a wide range of stakeholders to contribute to the debate on overweight and obesity. The consultation will also take account of the recommendations from Derek Wanless recent report "Securing Good Health for the Whole Population". The Government will draw up their White Paper in the light of the consultation . This will present real opportunities to progress work on the prevention and management of overweight and obesity. A planned obesity summit will form an important part of the consultation process. Work has already started through the food and health action plan and the activity co-ordination team, which will be of direct relevance to the prevention and management of obesity.

Locally, primary care trusts as local providers and commissioners of services will determine the most appropriate methods to deliver health care to their populations, based on clinical need and effectiveness, as well as local circumstance, drawing on the available evidence. Under the new general medical services contract from April 2004 practices will be required to offer consultation for chronic disease and related health problems (such as obesity), offer relevant health promotion advice to patients and refer patients to other treatment that may be necessary.

There are 10 specialised obesity clinics for adults and seven for children in England. The National Institute for Clinical Excellence's guidance on drugs and surgery is already available. NICE, collaborating with the Health Development Agency, have been tasked by the Department of Health to develop guidance on the identification, prevention and management of obesity and maintenance of weight reduction, due in 2006.

### Patients Choice Scheme

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the qualifying criteria are for patients who wish to take advantage of the patient choice scheme; [159133]

(2) how patients can opt into the patient choice scheme; and if he will list the hospitals in the South East which take on patients under that scheme for each category of treatment; [159134]

(3) how many patients have taken advantage of the patient choice scheme to reduce treatment waiting time. [159135]

**Mr. Hutton:** The London patient choice project and the cardiac choice project offer choice of treatment in an alternative hospital to clinically appropriate patients waiting longer than six months for surgery in the specialties of ophthalmology, orthopaedics, general surgery, ear, nose and throat, urology and cardiac surgery.

In both schemes, eligible patients are contacted by a patient care adviser and offered choice of hospital and appointment.

The cardiac choice scheme is a national scheme which started in July 2002. Since then, 6,089 patients have been offered choice and 3,034, or 51 per cent., have opted for treatment elsewhere.

The London patient choice project is a pan-London scheme which started in October 2002. Since then, 17,133 patients have been offered choice and 10,850, or 63 per cent., have chosen to have treatment at another hospital.

There are seven other choice pilots in England but these are not routinely monitored.

Hospitals in the South East (defined here as London, the South East and East Anglia) which can take patients under the cardiac choice scheme are:

National health service trusts

Papworth Hospital NHS Trust

Barts and the London NHS Trust

Guy's and St. Thomas' NHS Trust

Hammersmith Hospitals NHS Trust

King's College Hospital NHS Trust
Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS Trust
St. George's Healthcare NHS Trust
St. Mary's NHS Trust
University College London Hospitals NHS Trust
Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust
Oxford Radcliffe Hospital NHS Trust
Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust
UK independent sector hospitals
BMI London Independent
BUPA Cambridge
BUPA Chalybeate, Southampton
HCA Harley Street Clinic
HCA London Bridge Hospital
HCA Wellington Hospital
King Edward VII Hospital, Midhurst, Sussex.

There are a number of hospitals outside of the South East which can also take patients under the cardiac choice scheme.

Hospitals in London which can take patients under the London patient choice scheme are:

National health service trusts
Bromley Hospitals NHS Trust
Chelsea and Westminster Healthcare NHS Trust
Epsom and St. Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust
Guy's and St. Thomas' NHS Trust
Hammersmith Hospitals NHS Trust
King's College Hospital NHS Trust
Lewisham Hospital NHS Trust
Mayday Healthcare NHS Trust
Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Trust
North West London Hospitals NHS Trust
Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Trust
St Mary's NHS Trust
University College London Hospital NHS Trust
UK independent sector hospitals
HCA Lister
HCA Portland
HCA Princess Grace.

### Pest Infestations

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many pest infestations he estimates there were in NHS hospitals in each year since 1996 in *(a)* England and *(b)* each strategic health authority. [158542]

**Mr. Hutton:** The information requested is not collected centrally. It is for individual national health service hospitals to make their own arrangements to deal with, or otherwise ensure the prevention of, pest infestations.

The NHS has recently been reminded of the need to ensure that proper control procedures are in place. Action Area Three (Reducing Reservoirs of Infection) of "Winning Ways", the Chief Medical Officer's Report on measures to tackle healthcare associated infections, requires that

"all healthcare settings should aim to eradicate pests such as rats, mice, ants, cockroaches pigeons and flies".

### Physiotherapists

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many vacancies there were for physiotherapists in each NHS region in each year since 1999. [158519]

**Mr. Hutton:** Information on the number of physiotherapy vacancies lasting three months or more is shown in the table. As at March 2003, there were 671 such vacancies in England, which equates to a rate of 4.7 per cent., a fall from 5.2 per cent. the year before.

*NHS hospital and community health services: Three month vacancies for qualified physiotherapy staff in Government Office Regions and England as at 31 March each specified year*

*Three month vacancy numbers*

| | *1999* | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* | *2003* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| England | 425 | 512 | 655 | 715 | 671 |
| North East | 12 | 27 | 31 | 56 | 25 |
| North West | 63 | 78 | 78 | 64 | 45 |
| Yorkshire and the Humber | 33 | 40 | 62 | 81 | 70 |
| East Midlands | 27 | 31 | 40 | 61 | 38 |
| West Midlands | 69 | 66 | 84 | 93 | 71 |
| East Of England | 53 | 75 | 57 | 43 | 98 |
| London | 98 | 101 | 164 | 180 | 175 |
| South East | 48 | 74 | 107 | 77 | 107 |
| South West | 21 | 19 | 32 | 62 | 42 |

*Notes:*
Three month vacancy information is as at 31 March 2003.
Three month vacancies are vacancies which trusts are actively trying to fill, which had lasted for three months or more (whole time equivalents).
*Source:*
Department of Health Vacancies Survey, March 2003.

### Pulmonary Disease

**Mr. Burns:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment he has made of the National Institute for Clinical Excellence guidelines on the management of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in primary and secondary care; and if he will make a statement; [155109]

(2) whether, following the recommendations by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence, he will make it a priority for all hospitals and general practitioner surgeries to have access to *(a)* a spirometer and *(b)* adequate training in the use of spirometry; [155112]

(3) what steps he will take following the recommendations by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence to ensure that all patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease have access to a multidisciplinary healthcare team; [155110]

(4) whether, following the recommendations by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence, he will make it a priority for all hospitals and general practitioner surgeries to have access to non-invasive ventilation for the treatment of people with severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease; [155111]

(5) if, following the recommendations by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence, he will provide funding for pulmonary rehabilitation courses to run in every hospital for all patients who consider themselves functionally disabled by chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. [155113]

**Dr. Ladyman** *[pursuant to his reply, 5 March 2004, c. 1167–68W]:* I regret that my previous response was incorrect, and should have read as follows.

As part of our commitment to improve services for patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) we commissioned the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) to prepare clinical guidelines for the National Health Service in England and Wales for the prevention, diagnosis, management and treatment of COPD. These guidelines were published on 25 February.

Now that the guidelines have been published primary care trusts, in partnership with local stakeholders, will decide what local service improvements need to be made. They have the responsibility for deciding what services to provide for their populations, including those with COPD and other respiratory diseases. They are best placed to understand local health needs and commission services to meet them.

The NHS is currently receiving the largest sustained increase in funding in its history. The total of PCT allocations for the next three years are £45 billion for 2003–04, £49.3 billion for 2004–05 and £53.9 billion for 2005–06. This represents an increase of £12.7 billion or an average of 30.8 per cent. over the three years 2003–04 to 2005–06. PCTs will use these allocations to implement local service improvements, which may include NICE's recommendations on COPD.

### Radiographers

**Dr. Murrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many radiographers there were in the UK in each year since 1990 in terms of *(a)* whole-time equivalents and *(b)* the total employed. [158824]

**Mr. Hutton:** The available information is shown in the table. Between 1997 and 2002, the number of radiographers by headcount employed in the national health service has increased by 11 per cent. Whole-time equivalent radiographers have increased by 10 per cent.

*NHS hospital and community health services: Qualified radiography staff in England by area of work as at 30 September each specified year*

| | *Diagnostic radiographers* | *Therapeutic radiographers* |
|---|---|---|
| | *whole-time equivalent* | |
| 1990 | [1]— | 1,206 |
| 1991 | 7,539 | 1,139 |
| 1992 | 7,777 | 1,152 |
| 1993 | [1]— | 1,186 |
| 1994 | 7,989 | 1,190 |
| 1995 | 8,065 | 1,056 |
| 1996 | 8,527 | 1,174 |
| 1997 | 8,626 | 1,275 |
| 1998 | 8,860 | 1,333 |
| 1999 | 9,009 | 1,358 |
| 2000 | 9,169 | 1,309 |
| 2001 | 9,264 | 1,391 |
| 2002 | 9,489 | 1,374 |
| | | *headcount* |
| 1990 | [1]— | 1,296 |
| 1991 | 8,891 | 1,243 |
| 1992 | 9,210 | 1,267 |
| 1993 | [1]— | 1,320 |
| 1994 | 9,520 | 1,323 |

*NHS hospital and community health services: Qualified radiography staff in England by area of work as at 30 September each specified year*

| | *Diagnostic radiographers* | *Therapeutic radiographers* |
|---|---|---|
| | *whole-time equivalent* | |
| 1995 | 10,294 | 1,252 |
| 1996 | 10,265 | 1,308 |
| 1997 | 10,364 | 1,407 |
| 1998 | 10,645 | 1,473 |
| 1999 | 10,839 | 1,491 |
| 2000 | 11,036 | 1,453 |
| 2001 | 11,163 | 1,543 |
| 2002 | 11,489 | 1,542 |

[1] not available

*Note:*

A new classification of the non-medical workforce was introduced in 1995. Information based on this classification is not directly comparable with earlier years.

*Source:*

Department of Health Non-Medical Workforce Census

### Recruitment Advertising

**Pete Wishart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his Department's expenditure on recruitment advertising was in each of the last three years, broken down by publication; and what proportion of such expenditure was *(a)* to advertise vacant posts and *(b)* in the form of other general recruitment advertising. [155526]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Figures for advertising vacant posts are shown in the table.

| *Year (1 April to 31 March)* | *Recruitment budget spend (£)* |
|---|---|
| 2003 to date | 146,331.25 |
| 2002–03 | 345,229.15 |

The figures shown in the table do not include the Department's agencies. Figures prior to the year 2002–03 are not available.

The figures for general recruitment advertising are shown in the table.

| | *Expenditure (£ million)* |
|---|---|
| 2001–02 | 5 |
| 2002–03 | 4.3 |
| 2003–04 | 4.9 (estimated) |

Details of where advertisements are placed are not centrally recorded, and can be provided only at disproportionate cost. Where advertisements are placed will depend on the nature of the vacancies or target audience.

The Department has a robust external recruitment policy which complies with the rules and requirements of "Minister's Rules for Selection", "The Civil Service Order in Council", Treasury and equal opportunity and employment protection legislation.

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much his Department has spent on recruitment advertising in each year since 1997. [156451]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave the hon. Member for North Tayside (Pete Wishart) today.

### Rheumatoid Arthritis

**Mr. Edwards:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recommendations he has received from the National Institute for Clinical Excellence on making Humira available on prescription in the NHS in England for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis; and if he will make a statement. [159479]

**Dr. Ladyman:** The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) has not yet been asked to produce any guidance on Humira for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis but the suitability of Humira for referral to NICE is under consideration.

### Saxon Square Health Centre

**Mr. Chope:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 26 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 555–56W, on Saxon Square Health Centre (Christchurch), for what reasons it is not in the best interests of the NHS for further negotiations to be held immediately with the head leaseholder; with which NHS trust negotiations are taking place for a transfer of the leasehold; when discussions began; and when he expects them to conclude. [159285]

**Mr. Hutton** *[holding answer 5 March 2004]:* The Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch National Health Service Trust has expressed an interest to occupy this health centre.

Negotiations with the trust commenced in October 2003 and they will be completed as soon as possible. Progress is dependent on the costs to be incurred by the trust to occupy these offices.

Where property is held on a lease, it is usual that the head lessee will only be approached when a fully appraised proposal has been prepared.

### School Nurses

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many school nurse whole-time equivalents were employed in each of the primary care trusts in Greater London for each of the last five years. [158411]

**Mr. Hutton:** The information requested is not held centrally.

### Sexual Health

**Phil Sawford:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of sexually transmitted diseases were treated by the NHS in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available. [158091]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Information on the number of cases of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) treated by the national health service is not routinely collected. However, data is collected on the number of diagnoses of STIs made in genito-urinary medicine clinics. These are shown in the table for the years 1992 to 2002.

*Number of diagnoses of sexually transmitted diseases made in genito-urinary medicine clinics in England: 1992 to 2002*

| | *Male* | *Female* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1992 | 177,064 | 195,218 | 372,282 |
| 1993 | 170,520 | 193,286 | 363,806 |
| 1994 | 178,866 | 212,010 | 390,876 |
| 1995 | 196,943 | 231,567 | 428,510 |
| 1996 | 202,465 | 249,438 | 451,903 |
| 1997 | 216,916 | 264,976 | 481,892 |
| 1998 | 228,963 | 277,945 | 506,908 |
| 1999 | 242,087 | 291,703 | 533,790 |
| 2000 | 260,899 | 309,173 | 570,072 |
| 2001 | 277,636 | 331,090 | 608,726 |
| 2002 | 295,411 | 348,988 | 644,399 |

*Source:*
KC60 statutory returns from GUM clinics.

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to encourage best practice in sexual health promotion among vulnerable communities in London. [159172]

**Mr. Hutton:** Primary care trusts (PCTs) provide sexual health promotion services which meet the needs of their local populations. To support them in this role, in 2003, the Department published good practice guidance for use by PCTs and others on both the commissioning of sexual health services and effective sexual health promotion. These documents include guidance on working with communities most at risk of poor sexual health and HIV. In addition, the Department undertakes nationally funded sexual health promotion, targeting those groups most at risk of HIV, including activities in the London area.

A joint project by the five London strategic health authorities is on-going to develop a framework for modernising sexual health services across London.

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps his Department is taking to increase awareness of sexually transmitted diseases among *(a)* heterosexual and *(b)* homosexual males. [159193]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Through the Department's sexual health promotion work, we are raising public awareness of sexual health nationally through activities such as the Sex Lottery campaign. This targets 18 to 30-year-olds in raising awareness of sexually transmitted infections. Campaign materials include those specifically targeting young men, such as ambient materials in pubs and clubs (including men's washrooms) and advertisements in men's magazines.

The Department is funding the Men's Health Forum to investigate men's perception and attitudes towards chlamydia, the most common sexually transmitted infection, and to identify the best ways to target men (both with information and for screening).

The Department is also currently committing £1 million a year to support the Medical Research Council's sexual health and HIV research programme. Men at increased risk of sexually transmitted infections and HIV are a focus of a number of existing projects, and will be highlighted in future calls for new research, under this programme.

Gay and bisexual men are identified in the sexual health strategy as one of the groups disproportionately affected by poor sexual health. For these men, the

Department contracts the Terrence Higgins Trust to undertake targeted sexual health promotion and HIV prevention, in partnership with community based organisations across the country.

In addition to this national work, primary care trusts are responsible for meeting the sexual health needs of their local populations. The sexual health promotion toolkit (2003) provides guidance and practical advice to those working in the field of sexual health promotion. It includes specific tips and good practice for working with men of all ages to ensure that they are proactively targeted and services are open and welcoming to men.

### Smoking

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 7 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 398W, on smoking, when he will publish the findings of the research on the success of the NHS Stop Smoking Service. [159321]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The Department of Health commissioned a team led by Glasgow University to carry out a comprehensive evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of the national health services stop smoking services.

The first results of this evaluation were published in September 2003. "Bauld L et al. Impact of UK national health service smoking cessation services: variations in outcomes in England. Tobacco Control 2003; 12:296–301". The key finding was that "Well-developed, evidence-based NHS services, reflecting good practice, are yielding positive outcomes." The final results of the studies are due to be published in autumn 2004.

A copy of the research has been placed in the Library.

### Sudden Death (Cardiac Conditions)

**Mr. Baron:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action is being taken to offer treatment to people of all ages who are susceptible to sudden death due to underlying cardiac conditions that if not treated may result in a fatal cardiac arrhythmia. [159826]

**Miss Melanie Johnson** *[holding answer 9 March 2004]:* The Government are committed to ensuring further improvements in these services and are discussing this matter with my hon. Friend the Member for Stockton, South (Ms Taylor) in the context of the Cardiac Risk in the Young (Screening) Bill, which is due for second reading on Friday 12 March.

### Surgical Instruments (Reuse)

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish his Department's guidance on the reuse of surgical instruments after brain biopsies. [158515]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Guidance on the reuse of surgical instruments after brain procedures, including biopsy, on patients known to have, or be at risk of CJD is already published in "Transmissible spongiform encephalopathy agents: safe working and the prevention of infection". This guidance, endorsed by the Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens, is available at the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/CJD/CJDGeneralInformation/CJDGeneralArticle/fs/en?CONTENT ID = 4031067&chk = 4gOe2r. A copy is also available in the Library.

### Waiting Lists/Times

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the last average in-patient waiting time for *(a)* England, *(b)* each region and *(c)* strategic health authority for each year since 1996. [159737]

**Mr. Hutton:** The table shows average (median) waiting times for elective inpatient admissions.

*Average (median) waiting times for elective in-patient admission: England and strategic health authorities: position at 31 December 2003*

| *England/SHA* | *Median waiting times (months)* |
|---|---|
| England | 2.59 |
| Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire HA | 2.67 |
| Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire HA | 2.75 |
| Essex HA | 2.64 |
| North West London HA | 2.46 |
| North Central London HA | 2.70 |
| North East London HA | 2.73 |
| South East London HA | 2.55 |
| South West London HA | 2.55 |
| Northumberland, Tyne and Wear | 2.46 |
| County Durham and Tees Valley | 2.65 |
| North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire HA | 2.58 |
| West Yorkshire HA | 2.52 |
| Cumbria and Lancashire HA | 2.52 |
| Greater Manchester HA | 2.42 |
| Cheshire and Merseyside HA | 2.39 |
| Thames Valley HA | 2.40 |
| Hampshire and Isle of Wight HA | 2.81 |
| Kent and Medway HA | 3.39 |
| Surrey and Sussex HA | 2.74 |
| Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire HA | 2.90 |
| South West Peninsula HA | 3.08 |
| Somerset and Dorset HA | 2.33 |
| South Yorkshire HA | 2.42 |
| Trent HA | 2.40 |
| Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland HA | 2.56 |
| Shropshire and Staffordshire HA | 2.68 |
| Birmingham and The Black Country HA | 2.09 |
| Coventry, Warwickshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire HA | 2.61 |

*Note:*
The figures shown are estimates based on aggregate data, categorised into waiting time bands, and do not reflect shifts in the waiting time profiles within these bands, only between bands. The median is not very sensitive to reductions in maximum waiting times, and it is possible to see a rise in the median, whilst reducing maximum waiting times because of shifts in low time bands. Short-term progress on delivering maximum waiting times (including tackling the longest waiters) will not necessarily translate into a reduction in the median waiting time. Our policy, therefore, is to focus attention on the number of patients waiting the longest, and in each waiting time band.
*Source:*
Department of Health form QF01.

For information on average waiting times for previous years I refer the hon. Member to the response I gave on 4 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 977W.

### Work Force Census

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what reason the publication date of the report on NHS hospital and community health services non-medical work force census, England: 30 September 2003—detailed results as stated on his Department's website was put back from 26 February to 19 March. [158220]

**Mr. Hutton:** Publication was deferred in order to be more helpful to people using the data by publishing detailed information, which would not otherwise have been ready, on the same day as summary information.

### Yellow Card Scheme

**Paul Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will extend the yellow card reporting scheme to allow narrative testimonies from patients. [158529]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is piloting a scheme to allow patients to report suspected adverse drug reaction via NHS Direct. Patients in the catchment area of the South East London NHS Direct site are currently able to contact NHS Direct to report suspected adverse drug reactions, and the scheme is to be extended to other NHS Direct sites in due course.

Following an increase in the number of requests for access to Yellow Card data, an independent review is being undertaken by Dr. Jeremy Metters. The steering committee, set up to assist the review, has consulted widely with key stakeholders. The review is considering whether there can be improved involvement of patients in the scheme, which may include enabling patients to report suspected adverse drug reactions to the MHRA directly. The results of the review are expected to be published later this year.

### York District Hospital

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the children's assessment and treatment area at York District Hospital will be opened. [157523]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** This is a local matter for York Hospitals National Health Service Trust.

# Written Answers to Questions

*Thursday 11 March 2004*

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### Hazardous Waste

22. **Kevin Brennan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will make a statement on the future provision of sites for the disposal of hazardous waste. [160300]

**Mr. Morley:** The Government recognise that implementation of the Landfill Directive will have a significant impact on the disposal of hazardous waste. In particular the ending of co-disposal from 16 July 2004 will lead to a reduction in the number of landfill sites taking hazardous waste. Coupled with the requirements for treatment of hazardous waste prior to landfill, this will lead to better management of hazardous waste and more incentive on producers to minimise the amount of waste produced.

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what support she plans to give to Challenge Fund proposals with regard to waste disposal; and if she will make a statement. [156388]

**Mr. Morley:** The Waste Implementation Programme (WIP) has been established to help push England's waste management practices up the waste hierarchy, and specifically to divert increasing amounts of waste away from landfill. Properly known as the Waste Minimisation and Recycling Fund, the Challenge Fund is managed by WIP and does not provide funding for final disposal facilities. Rather, it provides local authorities with opportunities to pursue schemes that reduce the volume of the household waste stream, and to increase the amount of household waste recycled and composted. From 2005–06, the Challenge Fund will be replaced by a new Waste Management Performance Reward Grant, and Defra is currently consulting on its proposals for the design of this grant.

It is recognised that final disposal will remain an important element in local authorities' waste management plans. This need is addressed through the Environmental, Protective and Cultural Services (EPCS) block funding, which covers waste management among other local authority services. In addition, WIP is managing £355 million of waste PFI credits over the three-year period to 2006, providing the necessary investment in large-scale waste management facilities. WIP's New Technologies work stream is also promoting investment in near-market technologies that will encourage more sustainable ways of disposing of waste.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much hazardous waste can be *(a)* delivered and *(b)* deposited in each month from 16 July at landfill sites that have applied to take only hazardous waste from 16 July. [156411]

**Mr. Morley:** The Environment Agency is undertaking a permitting exercise for sites proposing to take hazardous waste after 16 July 2004. Latest information available indicates that, if all the permits were issued, the monthly capacity from 16 July 2004 would be approximately 95,000 tonnes (derived from expected annual inputs). This figure is for those sites accepting hazardous waste on a "merchant" basis. The amounts delivered would equate to those deposited.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many businesses produced hazardous waste in *(a)* 2002 and *(b)* 2003; and what estimate she has made of the number of businesses producing hazardous waste in each year from 2004 to 2008. [156421]

**Mr. Morley:** Data on this for the years 2002 and 2003 are not yet available. The average number of active special waste producers over previous years (1999 to 2001) was 100,000.

The number of active producers of hazardous waste is expected to rise to 750,000 when the revised European hazardous waste list is fully implemented.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what *(a)* tonnage and *(b)* proportion of hazardous waste will require treatment from 16 July; and what the capacity of existing waste treatment infrastructure is. [156422]

**Mr. Morley:** The tonnage requiring treatment will depend on a number of factors, not least the amount arising. In 2002, some 5 million tonnes of special waste was consigned, and 47 per cent. was specifically consigned to treatment facilities (including recycling and reuse), 39 per cent. to landfill and 4 per cent. to incineration.

From 16 July 2004, all hazardous waste sent for disposal at a landfill will require some form of pre-treatment, unless this is of no practical benefit towards meeting the aims of the Landfill Directive. For hazardous waste, the Government believe that treatments are available that will reduce the mass to be landfilled, as well as the hazards to human health and/or the environment. Any decision that treatments are not available can only be made following a thorough evaluation of the treatment options.

Estimates on available capacity of existing hazardous waste treatment infrastructure were prepared for the Hazardous Waste Forum in September 2003 and posted on the forum's website: http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/hazforum/031021/enviros.pdf

The forum continues to keep this information under review as it becomes aware of changes to waste industry plans.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether it is her policy that there should be no stockpiles of hazardous waste from 16 July. [156424]

**Mr. Morley:** It is Government policy to ensure as smooth a transition as possible of the implementation of the requirements of the Landfill Directive, in particular the ending of the practice of co-disposal of hazardous and non-hazardous waste in the same cell from 16 July,

and to that end to avoid the need for storage of hazardous waste over and above that which normally occurs.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which hazardous waste streams she has identified as the most problematic to treat and manage after 16 July; and what steps she has taken to ensure the safe management of these waste streams. [156426]

**Mr. Morley:** The Government have taken the advice from hazardous waste stakeholders through the Hazardous Waste Forum to identify the following waste streams which warrant particular attention.

Construction and demolition

Contaminated soils

Air pollution controls residues

Waste oils

Wastes from non-ferrous metals industry

Filter cakes from waste treatment

The task force on treatment and capacity is investigating in more detail these waste streams, and has set up two work streams paying particular attention to construction and demolition wastes (including contaminated soils) and waste oils. The task force is assessing the arisings and alternative capacity available, communicating the issues to the industries concerned, and looking at environmentally sound methods of managing the wastes.

In addition, the Environment Agency are identifying the top five waste streams per region, based on potential risk to the environment (quantities and hazardousness) and public health. Cradle to grave audits on these waste streams will be carried out which will include taking targeted enforcement action when appropriate.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much the Environment Agency has spent in the last year for which figures are available on the *(a)* detection and *(b)* prosecution of illegal disposal of hazardous waste; and how much it proposes to spend on these activities in (i) 2003–04 and (ii) 2004–05. [156428]

**Mr. Morley:** The agency spends in the order of £12 million annually on detection and prosecution of illegal waste activities including fly-tipping. Figures relating only to hazardous waste are not available. The amount that the agency spends is driven in part by the level of criminal activity. Between 2001 and 2002 the number of incidents the agency responded to increased by 19 per cent. across England and Wales. However, this masked a 73 per cent. increase in the number of incidents responded to in Thames region alone.

During 2003–04 additional funding has been made available for the development of "Flycapture", a national fly-tipping database, being set up by the Environment Agency. This will allow the collection and collation of summary data on fly-tipping incidents dealt with by the agency and local authorities.

The agency anticipates that its spend in this area will be in the order of £12 million during 2004–05. Spending in future years is subject to a spending review.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she has taken to alert small and medium enterprises to their obligations as producers of hazardous waste. [156430]

**Mr. Morley:** Guidance will be issued at least three months before the implementation of the new regulations for hazardous waste to explain the obligations to be placed on producers. The guidance will be available in both paper and electronic formats to ensure that it is accessible to small and medium sized enterprises and we will be liaising with the Small Business Service and Federation of Small Businesses to ensure that the guidance is both appropriate and helpful to those in such enterprises.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what funding she has allocated for 2004–05 for a campaign to inform waste producers of their obligations under the Landfill Directive. [156434]

**Mr. Morley:** A strategy to inform waste producers of their obligations under the Landfill Directive is an integral part of the Hazardous Waste Forum's Action Plan, published in December 2003. This strategy will receive the necessary funding although no specific budget has been allocated to cover the Government's role in this work. Also, Defra officials will continue to present papers on Landfill Directive issues at industry seminars on waste disposal as part of their normal duties.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much hazardous waste was illegally dumped in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley in each of the last three years; and how many prosecutions resulted. [157262]

**Mr. Morley:** Responsibility for tackling illegal dumping and fly-tipping is shared between local authorities and the Environment Agency. Information on local authority incidents is not held centrally.

With regard to illegal special waste dumping, the Agency responded to 29 (2001), 54 (2002) and 62 (2003) incidents in Lancashire and of these 3 (2001), 1 (2002) and 0 (2003) were in the Chorley District.

*Prosecutions, North West Region (Central Area): 2001–03*

In the Environment Agency's North West Central Area as a whole (which includes Lancashire and Chorley) prosecutions taken were as follows:

Under Section 33 1*(a)* of the Environmental Prosecution Act 1990 (these may include Special Waste):

2001—11

Prosecutions under Regulation 5 (2) *(a)* of the Special Waste Regulations 1996

2002—1

Section 1, Control of Pollution (Amendment Act) 1989

2003—1

### Agency Budgets

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the budget

of the *(a)* Environment Agency and *(b)* Countryside Agency were in each year from 1998–99 to 2005–06 (planned); and if she will make a statement. [156601]

**Alun Michael:** *(a)* The budget for the Environment Agency from 1998–99 to 2003–04 was as follows:

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1998–99 | 593.0 |
| 1999–2000 | 617.9 |
| 2000–01 | 640.3 |
| 2001–02 | 702.8 |
| 2002–03 | 782.5 |
| 2003–04 | 805.2 |

*(b)* The Countryside Agency was established on 1 April 1999. Its budget from 1999–2000 to 2003–04 was as follows:

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1999–2000 | 54.1 |
| 2000–01 | 63.5 |
| 2001–02 | 100.6 |
| 2002–03 | 108.7 |
| 2003–04 | 112.0 |

The budget of the Environment Agency and Countryside Agency for future years will be confirmed in due course.

### Asbestos

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the buildings occupied by her Department's staff, including agencies, which require *(a)* remedial work on and *(b)* the removal of asbestos; what that work will cost; what budgets are available for this work for (i) 2004 and (ii) 2005; and what budget is available for future asbestos surveys. [159364]

**Alun Michael:** No buildings occupied by Defra or its Executive Agencies staff require remedial work to residual asbestos. In 2003–04, £260,000 was spent on surveys and preparation of management plans as required by the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002.

In 2004–05, £200,000 has been allocated to complete the management plans. No further surveys are planned.

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of buildings occupied by *(a)* staff of the Department and *(b)* staff of the Department's executive agencies have been surveyed for the purpose of identifying the presence of asbestos prior to implementation of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002. [159374]

**Alun Michael:** All of them.

### Asgard Systems

**Alistair Burt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what advice was given by the Environment Agency to Mr. Ross Donovan in answer to his letter of 14 February 2001, asking for information on any legislation which a prototype waste to energy plant might need to comply with; and if she will make a statement. [156715]

**Mr. Morley:** On the basis of the information provided to the Environment Agency, the Agency advised Mr. Donovan that the activity did not require a permit under the Pollution Prevention and Control Regulations, but that the registration of the activity as an exempt activity under the Waste Management Licensing Regulations was required. The Agency reached this view based on the Pollution Prevention Control Regulations existing at that time.

**Alistair Burt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the *(a)* meetings, *(b)* correspondence and *(c)* phone conversations between (i) her Department and (ii) the Environment Agency and (A) Mr. Ross Donovan of Biggleswade and (B) Asgard Systems Ltd of Bedford relating to the development of a waste to energy plant by Mr. Donovan. [156716]

**Mr. Morley:** A list of recorded communications with Mr Donovan and Asgard Systems Ltd. relating to the development of a waste to energy plant is provided in the table.

| *Date* | *Type of contact* | *Detail* |
|---|---|---|
| 24 February 2003 | Correspondence | Asgard made an application to the Environment Agency for registration as an exempt activity from Waste Management Licensing |
| 24 July 2003 | Meeting | Mr. Donovan met Environment Agency officials (followed by a letter from the Environment Agency to Mr. Donovan, clarifying that his plant would be subject to the Waste Incineration Directive, according to the Government's Waste Incineration Regulations issued in December 2002) |
| 11 September 2003 | Correspondence | Asgard e-mailed Defra official |
| 11 September 2003 | Telephone conversation | Defra official telephoned Asgard |
| 19 September 2003 | Correspondence | Mr. Donovan e-mailed Defra official |
| 14 November 2003 | Meeting | Defra and Environment Agency officials visited Mr. Donovan and colleagues at prototype plant near Milton Keynes |
| 14 November 2003 | Correspondence | Defra official e-mailed Mr. Donovan |
| 28 November 2003 | Telephone conversation | Defra official telephoned Mr. Donovan |
| 16 December 2003 | Correspondence | Defra official wrote to Mr. Donovan |
| 29 January 2004 | Meeting | Mr. Donovan, his colleagues and Alistair Burt MP met Elliot Morley (Minister for the Environment), and Defra and Environment Agency officials |

**Alistair Burt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will instruct the Environment Agency to conduct an inquiry into the part played by the Agency in the liquidation of Asgard Systems Ltd of Bedford. [156719]

**Mr. Morley:** The Environment Agency has a well established "Complaints and Commendations Procedure" which is used to investigate any complaints against it. If Asgard Systems Ltd. makes a complaint to the Agency, it will undertake an appropriate inquiry according to this procedure.

### Carbon Dioxide Emissions (Aviation)

**Mrs. Spelman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to include aviation in the target of a 60 per cent. reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2050. [158830]

**Mr. Morley** *[holding answer 4 March 2004]:* The Government are committed to putting the UK on a path to a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by some 60 per cent. by 2050. International flights from the UK do not currently count in the national inventories of greenhouse gas emissions as there is no international agreement yet on ways of allocating such emissions between countries. However, the Government's Energy White Paper made it clear that the aviation industry is encouraged to take account of, and where appropriate reduce, its contribution to global warming.

This was restated, and built on, in the recently published Air Transport White Paper which announced a package of measures to reduce the impact of aviation on climate change. This included the Government's intention to press for the inclusion of intra-EU air services in the forthcoming EU emissions trading scheme, and that this will be a priority for the UK Presidency in 2005, with a view to aviation joining the scheme from 2008, or as soon as possible thereafter.

### Batteries

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the environmental consequences of disposing of spent batteries to landfill. [156347]

**Mr. Morley:** The main environmental concerns associated with the landfilling of batteries relate to the potential generation and discharge of leachate into the environment of hazardous substances i.e. cadmium, lead and mercury, all known to be toxic to the aquatic environment and human health. Discharge of these substances to the environment are likely to occur through *(a)* the compaction of weight, leading to substances discharging from the battery and *(b)* percolation of rainfall further leaching these substances into groundwater. It is however worth noting that spent batteries constitute only 0.1 per cent. of the Municipal Solid Waste stream.

The Belgian Government recently commissioned a study Targeted Risk Assessment Report, (TRAR) currently under scientific peer review, to identify the environmental impacts of disposing batteries in landfill.

The TRAR study mainly focused on cadmium containing batteries and concluded that the impact of batteries on landfill leachate could not be judged, based upon current lack of knowledge and methodology. In addition, risks related to the uncertainties of hazardous substances from batteries going to leachate, would require the adoption of risk management measures.

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of batteries were recycled in each European Union country in the last year for which figures are available. [156348]

**Mr. Morley:** Information on percentage of batteries recycled in European Union countries is not readily available for all battery chemistries. Member states have not been required to provide this in the past. However, officials are in the process of acquiring this data.

Portable battery collection rates are available for 2002 and are as follows:

| *Country* | *Collection rate in percentage of sales in 2002* | *Grams per inhabitant* |
|---|---|---|
| Austria | 44 | 179 |
| Belgium | 59 | 228 |
| France | 16 | 69 |
| Germany | 39 | 157 |
| Netherlands | 32 | 116 |
| Sweden | 55 | 193 |
| Spain | 14 | 61 |
| UK | 0.5 | 2 |

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many spent batteries, other than vehicle batteries, are generated each year in the United Kingdom; what quantity of each heavy metal is involved; and what percentage of these batteries are recycled. [156349]

**Mr. Morley:** No studies have been undertaken, so far, to assess the quantities of batteries that enter the waste stream annually in the UK. However, we do know that in 2002, 45.5 per cent. of the annual sales of the 15 European member states, went for final disposal (incineration or landfill) instead of being collected and recycled.

The following quantities of heavy metals are found in each battery.

*Recyclable materials of portable batteries*

| | *Percentage* |
|---|---|
| *Non rechargeable general purpose battery* | |
| Zinc | 20 |
| Manganese | 20 |
| Ferrous Metal | 20 |
| Copper | 10 |
| *Non rechargeable button cell* | |
| Zinc | 26 |
| Silver | 34 |
| Ferrous Metal | 30 |

*Recyclable materials of rechargeable batteries*

| | *Percentage* |
|---|---|
| *Nickel Cadmium* | |
| Cadmium | 15 |
| Nickel | 25 |
| Steel | 35 |
| *Nickel Metal Hydride* | |
| Nickel | 40 |
| Steel | 18 |
| *Lithium Ion* | |
| Acier | 22 |
| Cobalt | 17 |

The European Battery Recycling Association (EBRA) estimated that the UK sent 424 tonnes of nickel cadmium batteries, 45 tonnes of nickel metal hydride and 38 tonnes of zinc carbon, alkali and zinc air batteries for recycling in 2002.

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) if she will make a statement on the preparedness of *(a)* her Department and *(b)* the UK to meet the targets in the draft EU Directive on batteries and accumulators and spent batteries and accumulators; [156362]

(2) what steps she is taking to increase the percentage of batteries other than vehicle batteries that are recovered from the waste stream. [156346]

**Mr. Morley:** The draft Batteries Directive requires member states to achieve collection targets for household batteries (44 per cent.) and household Nickel Cadmium batteries (80 per cent.), and that all automotive and industrial batteries are collected and sent for recycling. At present, the UK is collecting less than one per cent. of household batteries and in 2002, 87 per cent. of the total automotive batteries put on the market were collected and sent for recycling. HMG will be commissioning work, in the near future, to obtain data on the collection and recycling rates of industrial batteries.

The Government welcome the draft Directive. Defra and DTI are already in talks with those stakeholders affected by the proposal and are looking at ways to secure early participation, to enable the UK to successfully meet the collection target within the given timeframe. In addition, both Departments are fully involved in discussions with the Commission and the European Parliament, to ensure that targets for the collection and recycling of household batteries are challenging, but achievable.

### Biofuels

**Mr. Jack:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if she will make a statement on the help given by her Department to each type of biofuels energy in order to encourage the development of this part of the energy sector. [160299]

**Margaret Beckett:** A range of support is available to farmers to grow energy crops. Funding has been provided for open days, conferences, a biofuels leaflet, R&D and reports to support the development of bio-energy. DEFRA works closely with other Government Departments on the development of policy.

### Climate Change

**Mr. Lazarowicz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps she is taking to promote international agreement on measures to respond to climate change. [160297]

**Mr. Morley:** The Government takes every opportunity to promote international action on climate change bilaterally, through the EU and in international fora. Our commitment to the international existing agreements and our Energy White Paper's long-term vision show climate change action and healthy economic growth are compatible.

### Dairy Industry

**Mr. Edwards:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what representations she has received about problems in the diary sector. [160294]

**Alun Michael:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State regularly receives letters from MPs and others on dairy issues. Ministers frequently meet with representatives from all parts of the dairy sector and matters affecting the whole dairy supply chain are regularly discussed at the Forum chaired by my noble Friend Lord Whitty.

### Environment Council

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what position she will be taking at this month's EU Environment Council in respect of *(a)* medium and long-term greenhouse gas reductions and *(b)* the EU Chemicals Directive. [159798]

**Mr. Morley** *[holding answer 8 March 2004]:* The UK successfully pressed for language in the Environment Council Conclusions that established a process under which the EU will develop strategies for further action to tackle climate change post-2012 including medium- and long-term greenhouse gas reduction targets. This will kick-start the process of establishing our position in advance of the international negotiations on future action, which are due to start next year.

Regarding the new EU chemicals strategy (REACH), the Presidency invited the Council to consider its progress report on the work done so far by the ad hoc working group, and in particular the need for further work to be carried out to understand the full impact of the proposed Regulation. There was no substantive debate on the issue. We believe that it is essential that the Environment Council has the opportunity to be fully involved in decisions on REACH and we welcome the formation of the ad hoc working group as a way for both economic and environment ministry expertise to contribute to the discussions. The efforts made by the Presidency to take forward such a complex dossier are to be welcomed.

### Environmental Sustainability

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the cost to local authorities of meeting the Government's recycling targets. [159011]

**Mr. Morley:** Waste Strategy 2000 sets out the Government's targets on recycling and composting. Appendix C to Annex C provides estimates of the cost of various municipal waste management options from 2000 to 2020. The present value of the additional costs to local authorities of reaching the recycling and composting targets, over and above a 'base case' which assumed current levels (in absolute terms) of recycling, composting and energy recovery, with all other waste going to landfill, were estimated at between £3.4 billion and £7.7 billion over the 20 year period.

### GM Crops

**Gregory Barker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what separation distance would be required to keep the contamination of non-GM crops with GM varieties below a level of 0.1 per cent. for *(a)* maize, *(b)* oil-seed rape and *(c)* sugar beet. [154708]

**Mr. Morley:** The European Union has agreed a threshold of 0.9 per cent. for labelling adventitious GM presence in non-GM products. We recognise that there are arguments for a lower threshold to apply particularly in relation to organic production, although no conclusion has been reached on this.

The separation distances needed between fields to limit cross-pollination to 0.1 per cent. (on a whole-field basis) were considered in a review produced for Defra in 2000 by the National Institute of Agricultural Botany (NIAB). This suggested the following distances on the basis of fields of an average size of two hectares or more:

oilseed rape (fully-fertile varieties): 100 metres

sweetcorn maize: 420 metres

forage maize: 290 metres

No distance was estimated in relation to sugar beet because cross-pollination does not affect the composition of the utilised plant tissues (only vegetative parts of the plant are harvested, rather than seeds or fruits). Moreover, beet crops are normally harvested before they flower and farmers usually control any 'bolting' plants that flower prematurely.

The information in the NIAB report needs to be considered further in the light of data from a Defra-funded research report on gene flow from the GM maize crops in the Farm Scale Evaluation (FSE) trials (available at: www.defra.gov.uk/environment/gm/research/epg-1-5-138.htm). This study concluded that in the case of a GM and non-GM maize crop growing alongside each other, the rate of individual GM cross-pollination events (per maize kernel) would be below 0.1 per cent. at a distance of 258 metres into the non-GM crop. A parallel report on gene flow from the FSE oilseed rape crops is in preparation and will be published in due course.

Another relevant Defra-funded research project has studied landscape-scale gene flow in oilseed rape crops (report available at: www.defra.gov.uk/environment/gm/research/epg-rg0216.htm). This does not estimate the separation distances needed for specific cross-pollination thresholds, but it notes that relatively small distances will limit cross-pollination between fully-fertile oilseed rape varieties to around 0.1 per cent. or below, and that pollination from one field to the next is likely to be less than 0.1 per cent. averaged over the field. At present it is difficult to estimate the separation distances that would be needed for a 0.1 per cent. threshold in relation to oilseed rape varieties that are not fully fertile. Further information that is relevant to this will be provided by the report noted above on gene flow from the FSE oilseed rape crops.

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research she commissioned into *(a)* product liability insurance and *(b)* co-existence, with regard to the possible introduction of GM crops. [159406]

**Mr. Morley** *[holding answer 5 March 2004]:* The issues of co-existence and liability have been explored in a report to the Government by the Agriculture and Environment Biotechnology Commission. We will set out our thinking on this shortly. The Government have not commissioned any specific research on insurance but has funded various projects on co-existence-related topics. These studies are published on our website www.defra.gov.uk when finalised.

### Household Waste

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what household recycling levels have been attained in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough in each year since 1997. [158449]

**Mr. Morley:** The information requested is contained in Defra's Municipal Waste Management Survey 2001–02, copies of which are in the Library. Table 5B gives the information requested for London for the financial years 1996–97—2001–02. Annex B gives information for individual London local authorities for the financial years 1998–99—2001–02. Information for the years before 1998–99 was not published at the local authority level. The Management Survey can be downloaded from: http://defraweb/environment/statistics/wastats/mwb0102/index.htm. Further data on London's waste can be found at www.capitalwastefacts.com

The household waste recycling and composting rates for 2002–03 can be obtained from the following website: www.bvpi.gov.uk

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the progress made on pilot schemes for direct and variable charging for collection and disposal of household waste. [158232]

**Mr. Morley:** In its response to the Strategy Unit Report Waste Not Want Not, the Government undertook to carry out further work before a decision is taken on whether to enable local authorities to introduce pilot direct and variable charging schemes for collection and disposal of household waste. In co-operation with the Local Government Association and other stakeholders, and drawing on international experience, work is being undertaken to consider the practicalities of operating such schemes and how potential disadvantages could be overcome.

The Government will consider the results of this work during 2004.

### Oak Disease

**Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on recent steps taken by her Department to combat oak disease. [160277]

**Mr. Bradshaw:** We have recently stepped up inspections of imported plants, doubled checks on nurseries, increased surveys of woodland and heathland around outbreaks. We are also taking special measures to deal with the most worrying outbreaks in two historic gardens in Cornwall.

### Plastic Bags

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what incentives are in place in the UK to discourage the *(a)* production and *(b)* handing out of plastic bags. [158279]

**Mr. Morley** *[holding answer 4 March 2004]:* None at present. Under the Packaging Regulations, businesses have tonnage obligations and they can reduce these, and their costs, by reducing the amount of packaging they handle.

While there are no formal measures in place targeted specifically at plastic bags, the Government fully support the retailers in the introduction of 'bag for life', reusable bags and plastic bag recycling schemes.

### Radon Gas

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to include radon testing in CON29 within the proposed Housing Investment Programme. [159894]

**Keith Hill:** I have been asked to reply.

There are no such plans. Under our proposals for home information packs, the pack is likely to include information on whether the property is located within a radon affected area. Issues of practicality and cost suggest that it would not be appropriate to require radon testing as part of a statutory home information pack scheme. However, this will be considered further by specialist working groups that are being set up to consider the contents of the pack before any final decisions are taken.

### Refrigerators

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many refrigerators were disposed of in each year since 1997 in the United Kingdom; what quantity of ozone depleting substances were on average contained in the coolant and foam from refrigerators being destroyed; and whether these ozone depleting substances are controlled substances within the remit of Article 16 (1) and (2) of Regulation (EC) No. 2037/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council. [158088]

**Mr. Morley:** As EC Regulation 2037/2000 only applied to domestic refrigeration units containing ODS from the 1 January 2002, the Environment Agency does not have accurate figures for fridges disposed of prior to that date.

| *Number of fridges* | *2002* | *2003* |
|---|---|---|
| Disposed (units) in England and Wales | 299,000 | 979,336 |
| Exported for treatment to Germany and the Netherlands and Denmark (units) | 418,000 | 377,168 |

The average quantities of ozone depleting substances contained in the coolant and foam from fridges being destroyed are not collected through the current reporting mechanism. However, the average quantity of controlled substances recovered from the refrigerant and blowing agent that was subsequently destroyed in England and Wales for 2003 was 236.63g per fridge.

CFC contained in fridges are controlled substances under EC Regulation 2037/2000.

## CABINET OFFICE

### Supplier Companies Staffing

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what guidance is issued to Government purchasing staff on requesting from potential supplier companies information about the number of people they employ. [160046]

**Mr. Boateng:** I have been asked to reply.

Procurement Guidance does not recommend that Departments request information from potential suppliers on the number of people they employ. However there is provision under the EC Services Directive (92/50/EEC) for Departments should they wish to do so, to request a

> "statement of the service provider's average annual manpower and the number of managerial staff for the last three years."

## MINISTER FOR WOMEN

### Fertility Treatment

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Minister for Women what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of IVF treatment in the UK; and what the criteria are for IVF treatment on the NHS. [154324]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** I have been asked to reply.

In vitro fertilisation (IVF) has revolutionised the treatment of infertility, allowing couples to have children they would otherwise have been denied. The success rate of IVF has continually increased over the years, as techniques have been refined. Currently the live birth rate per treatment cycle started in the United Kingdom is 22 per cent, (all women) and 25 per cent. (woman under 38).

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) is expected to publish its guideline on the provision of National Health Service infertility services, including IVF, shortly. The Department of Health will consider issues of implementation in light of the recommendations in the NICE guideline.

## CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

### Charities Bill

26. **Hugh Bayley:** To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners what representations the Church Commissioners have made to the Government about the draft Charities Bill. [158943]

**Sir Stuart Bell:** The Church Commissioners and the Archbishops' Council both responded to the Strategy Unit's report on charity law reform and remain in discussion with the Home Office about the likely implications of the proposed legislation for the various parts of the Church of England.

### Lambeth Palace Library

27. **Chris Bryant:** To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners if he will make a statement on the future of Lambeth Palace Library. [158944]

**Sir Stuart Bell:** The Church Commissioners have, in consultation with the other National Institutions of the Church of England, instigated a review of the arrangements for housing and conserving the documentary heritage held by those institutions, and this will consider Lambeth Palace and other libraries. Extensive consultation has taken place and responses are being collated.

### Parish Priest Salaries

28. **Miss McIntosh:** To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners what the total salary cost of parish priests was in *(a)* 1996–97 and *(b)* 2003–04. [158945]

**Sir Stuart Bell:** In 1996 the total stipend cost for parochial clergy (not including Employer's National Insurance contributions) was approximately £130.5 million. In 2003 the figure was approximately £151.8 million.

### Graveyards

**Mr. Gordon Prentice:** To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners how much was spent maintaining church graveyards in each of the last three years. [158940]

**Sir Stuart Bell:** Such information is not held centrally. Responsibility for maintenance of churchyards lies with the Parochial Church Council. Grants may be available from local authorities, since they have a special power to contribute to maintenance. Where a churchyard has been closed by Order in Council, the PCC may transfer the maintenance burden to the local authority.

## INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Afghanistan

**Mr. Ancram:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance the Government are giving to Afghanistan in relation to road reconstruction. [160230]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** Rebuilding Afghanistan's road networks is key to promoting regional trade and revitalising the Afghan economy. The UK contributes to road construction through our funding of the European Commission and the Asia Development bank, both of which are actively involved in major road building in Afghanistan. The Asia Development bank is engaged in several priority road projects, including the rehabilitation of the critically important Kabul-Kandahar-Spin Boldak road. The European Commission has undertaken the reconstruction of the Kabul-Jalalabad-Torkham road, another very important transport route. The travel times on this road have now been cut from six to three hours.

### Departmental Refurbishment

**Ms Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development which companies have contracts for furniture provision for his Department; and what measures have been implemented to ensure that when a product contains wood, it can be shown to come from legal and sustainable sources. [158106]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** DFID does not have contracts for the supply of furniture, but makes use of Office of Government Commerce (OGC) arrangements for pre-tendered goods and services. However, all suppliers used are provided with model specification clauses which set out Government procurement policies and so ensure that all timber used is from legal and sustainable sources. The two main suppliers used are both certified as operating systems that meet the standards set by the Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC).

**Ms Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what construction and refurbishment his Department is undertaking; at what locations; and what measures are being implemented to ensure that all timber used *(a)* on the construction sites and *(b)* in the final projects will come from legal and sustainable sources. [158104]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** We are currently undertaking the refurbishment of our office at Abercrombie House, East Kilbride.

Throughout the project the contractor and the project managers have been informed of Government policy regarding procurement of timber used, and DFID has issued a model specification clause in accordance with the guidelines as issued by Defra. Documentation to support the sourcing of timber from the lead contractor, and also all relevant sub-contractors, is being obtained and independently verified.

### Uzbekistan

**Tom Brake:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what projects his Department is funding in Uzbekistan. [159844]

**Mr. Gareth Thomas:** DFID is currently assisting the Government of Uzbekistan and the World Bank in the design of a new health care reform project; providing organisational capacity-building support to civil society organisations; and providing financial support to small local projects through a small grants scheme. Uzbekistan will also be included in a Central Asia region HIV/AIDS project starting in September this year.

Additionally, the UK provides assistance to Uzbekistan through the EU programme of Technical Assistance to the Countries of the former Soviet Union and Mongolia (TACIS). In calendar year 2002 (the most recent year figures are available) the UK's attributed contribution was £0.96 million.

## SCOTLAND

### Parliamentary Questions

**Mr. Brady:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many days on average his Department took in Session 2002–03 to give a substantive answer to a parliamentary question for ordinary written answer; and what the greatest number of days taken to answer such a question was. [155931]

**Mrs. McGuire:** While records on average processing times for parliamentary questions are not collected, the Department answered approximately 70 per cent. of its Session 2002–03 ordinary written questions on time (five sitting days). Ministers attach great importance to Parliamentary Questions and endeavour to reply within the parliamentary deadlines wherever possible.

### Westminster Hall

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make it his policy to reply in person to debates in Westminster Hall. [159682]

**Mrs. McGuire:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House on 8 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1234W.

## CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### New Opportunities Fund (Crosby)

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much money from the New Opportunities Fund was allocated to Crosby in each year since 1997. [160450]

**Estelle Morris:** The New Opportunities Fund began making grants in 1999. The awards to Crosby are shown in the table.

| | £ |
|---|---|
| 1999 | 0 |
| 2000 | 900,513 |
| 2001 | 155,946 |
| 2002 | 69,425 |
| 2003 | 610,475 |
| To February 2004 | 0 |

### Television Licences

**Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what proportion of BBC licence revenue is derived from notional payments from persons aged over 75 years. [160682]

**Estelle Morris:** In the financial year 2002–03, 14 per cent. of the BBC's television licence fee revenue was derived from payments from the Department for Work and Pensions in respect of free licences issued to people aged 75 or over.

**Mr. Todd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many TV licences were *(a)* issued and *(b)* paid for in each of the last six years; and what the unit cost of the collection process was in each of those years. [159690]

**Estelle Morris:** All television licences have to be paid for, whether by the individual or, in the case of free licences issued to people aged 75 or over, by the Department for Work and Pensions. The total number of licences issued in each of the last six years, the number of free licences issued in each year since their introduction in November 2000 and the gross cost of issue per licence were:

| | *Total licences issued (million)* | *Free licences issued (million)* | *Gross cost per licence (£)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1997–98 | 22.4 | — | 4.88 |
| 1998–99 | 23.0 | — | 5.79 |
| 1999–2000 | 23.2 | — | 4.91 |
| 2000–01 | 23.5 | 3.0 | 5.61 |
| 2001–02 | 23.9 | 3.2 | [1]3.99 |
| 2002–03 | 24.4 | 3.3 | 6.00 |

[1] Licence fee collection costs were significantly reduced in 2001–02 by a rebate from Consignia for non-performance of contractual obligations.

**Mr. Kaufman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what the cost is of the National Television Licensing Authority's Get One or Get Done advertising campaign; who pays for it; which advertising agency is responsible for the campaign; and if she will ask the authority to sever its connection with this agency forthwith; [158578]

(2) who in the National Television Licensing Authority is responsible for its Get One or Get Done campaign; and if she will make representations to the authority for the dismissal of the person or persons responsible; [158579]

(3) what connection the BBC has with the National Television Licensing Authority's Get One or Get Done campaign. [158580]

**Tessa Jowell:** As Licensing Authority, the BBC has statutory responsibility for the administration of the television licensing system. TV Licensing's marketing and communications are carried out by the AMV Consortium under contract to the BBC.

The BBC has indicated that it does not publicise the costs of individual advertising campaigns, for reasons of commercial sensitivity. However, the corporation has confirmed that all such campaigns undergo a series of legal compliance checks before they are approved by the corporation.

The Government have no power to intervene in the everyday management of the television licensing system nor would it be appropriate for it to seek to influence the BBC's choice of contractors, staff or advertising campaigns.

### Television Programme Guidelines

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what procedures are applicable to a company bound by the Independent Television guidelines on the amount of *(a)* political and *(b)* current affairs coverage that fails to meet its requirements; [160128]

(2) how many complaints she has received concerning failures of companies bound by the Independent Television guidelines to meet the appropriate level of *(a)* political and *(b)* current affairs coverage. [160129]

**Estelle Morris:** These are matters for Ofcom.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

### Clerk's Department

**David Winnick:** To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission how many full-time appointments there have been to the Clerk's Department in the last five years; and how many were *(a)* female and *(b)* of an ethnic minority. [160417]

**Sir Archy Kirkwood:** There have been 155 full-time appointments to the Clerk's Department in the five year period up to 10 March 2004, of whom 86 were female (55.5 per cent.). 13 of the 155 have since left the Clerk's Department (six of whom were female). Of the 142 appointees still employed, 80 are female (56.3 per cent.).

House of Commons staff are currently in the process of completing and returning revised ethnicity survey questionnaires. Of the 142 current staff who started within the last five years, approximately half have so far returned their questionnaires. Of these, 5.3 per cent. are from an ethnic minority background. If this proportion holds good for all the staff in this group, approximately eight of them will be from an ethnic minority background.

## TRANSPORT

### British Transport Police Numbers

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many British Transport police officers were based in each British Transport police force area in *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2002–03 and *(c)* 2003–04. [160648]

**Mr. McNulty:** The British Transport police have provided the following information.

| | *Police officers* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Area* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* | *2003–04* |
| Force Headquarters | 110 | 139 | 131 |
| London North | 310 | 311 | 295 |
| London South | 300 | 324 | 314 |
| London Underground | 405 | 476 | 537 |
| North Eastern | 192 | 193 | 201 |
| North Western | 270 | 263 | 258 |
| Midland[1] | 179 | 166 | — |
| South Western[1] | 141 | 127 | — |
| Western[1] | — | 2 | 279 |
| Scotland | 202 | 205 | 207 |
| On secondment | — | — | 29 |
| Total | 2,109 | 2,206 | 2,251 |

[1] Midland and South Western Areas were merged to form Western Area in 2003–04.

### Council Tax (DVLA)

**Mr. Walter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency supplies local authorities with the vehicle registration numbers of people who are in arrears with their council tax payments. [160635]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The DVLA vehicle register is maintained primarily for vehicle taxation and law enforcement purposes and DVLA is registered under the Data Protection Act 1998 to carry out those duties.

The vehicle register is not an open record but information may be released in a number of circumstances. Section 29 (3) of the Data Protection Act exempts from its non-disclosure provisions information required for the assessment or collection of any tax or duty or of any imposition of a similar nature. Under this exemption, local authorities apply to DVLA for keeper details to trace council tax debtors through the registration numbers of their vehicles.

### Motorcycle Training

**Lembit Öpik:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will amend the regulations which enable *(a)* a motorcycle rider to complete compulsory basic training on an automatic machine and progress to ride a geared bike with no further training, *(b)* a novice rider to obtain a motorcycle restricted licence allowing him to ride a more powerful motorbike on the roads without providing proof that he has undertaken training or riding in the previous two years and *(c)* newly qualified motorcycle instructors to train others as instructors; and if he will make a statement. [159470]

**Mr. Jamieson:** We have no plans to make such amendments to the regulations at this time. We shall, however, keep under review the training arrangements for novice riders, and the persons authorised to instruct them, in the light of recommendations made to Government by the Advisory Group on Motorcycling, forthcoming changes to the practical motorcycling test and European proposals to amend motorcycle categories.

**Lembit Öpik:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on his Department's policy on post-test training qualifications for motorcyclists. [159471]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The Driving Standards Agency is working in partnership with trainer and industry interests to create a voluntary rider development scheme to improve safety for motorcyclists who hold a full licence. Consultation with all interested parties is planned for later this year.

### Permanent Equipment (Highways)

**Bob Russell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will require *(a)* the privatised former public utilities and *(b)* other companies providing similar services to pay a site rent to local authorities for permanent equipment located on the public highway. [157559]

**Mr. Jamieson:** We have no plans to require such bodies to pay a rent for locating permanent apparatus on the public highway.

### Resurfacing

**Mr. Chope:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for what reason no regulations have been introduced under section 78 of the New Roads and Streetworks Act 1991 to require statutory undertakings to contribute to resurfacing costs. [159731]

**Mr. Jamieson:** Over recent years research has been undertaken by the Transport Research Laboratory, on behalf of my Department, examining the effect of utility trenching on the long-term performance of roads. Any decision on whether to make regulations under section 78 of the 1991 Act will be taken in the light of this and other evidence collected into the effect on the quality of roads of works carried out by statutory undertakers.

The Traffic Management Bill contains more explicit provision supplementing the general powers in section 78, so that, should a decision be taken that it would be appropriate for utilities and others to contribute towards the cost of putting right any damage caused to roads by works, then these costs can be fairly shared between the relevant parties.

### Road Deaths and Injuries (Crosby)

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the percentage change in *(a)* deaths and *(b)* serious injuries on roads in Crosby has been since 1997. [160544]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The available information relates to the numbers of killed and seriously injured road casualties in the local authority district of Sefton, which includes the constituency of Crosby, and is given in the following table.

| | *1997* | *2002* | *Percentage change* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Killed | 10 | 10 | — |
| Seriously injured | 100 | 88 | −12.0 |

### Roads (Funding)

**Paul Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much money has been spent on road building projects in each of the last five years; and if he will use funds allocated to future schemes to encourage rail travel instead. [155887]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The expenditure on road building projects in England in the last five years is set out in the following table:

*£ million*

| | *Outturn* | | | | *Forecast outturn* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *1999–2000* | *2000–01* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* | *2003–04* |
| Highways agency[1] | 318 | 300 | 427 | 491 | 413 |
| Local authorities outside London[2] | — | — | 94 | 118 | 104 |
| London (TfL)[3] | — | — | 23 | 17 | 10 |
| Total | 318 | 300 | 544 | 626 | 527 |

[1] Highways Agency expenditure is that on major road schemes costing over £5 million. It also includes spend on trunk roads in London until July 2000.

[2] Local Authority spend is the value of Credit Approvals issued to support major local road schemes over £5 million. The Department does not hold figures for road building projects prior to the year 2001 when its database was set up.

[3] London spend is Transport for London's expenditure on major road schemes over £5 million. TfL has been responsible for road improvements in London since July 2000

*Notes:*

1. Road building projects outside of England are the responsibility of the devolved administrations.
2. All figures are rounded to the nearest million.

The 10 Year Plan for Transport provided for a balance of investment between roads, public transport and railways. Future spending is being reviewed as part of Spending Review 2004. In respect of switching funds from road to rail, we would consider this following the outcome of SR2004 and the rail review.

**Mr. Flook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much money has been spent by the Highways Agency on non-motorway roads in *(a)* Somerset, *(b)* Dorset, *(c)* Devon, *(d)* Cornwall, *(e)* North Somerset, *(f)* Wiltshire, *(g)* Bristol, *(h)* Bath and North East Somerset, *(i)* South Gloucestershire and *(j)* Gloucestershire in each year since 1990. [160499]

**Mr. Jamieson:** The Highways Agency started to collect information on expenditure on a county-by-county basis in 2001. Expenditure totals for the years 2001–02, 2002–03 and 2003–04 are therefore shown in the following table. Equivalent figures for earlier years are not available.

*Total spent on non motorways*

£

| *County* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* | *2003–04* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bath and North East Somerset | 1,162,018.27 | 1,631,470.05 | 817,756.63 |
| Bristol | 12,362.45 | 10,157.40 | 11,302.04 |
| Cornwall | 9,654,395.57 | 12,044,323.34 | 10,079,002.14 |
| Devon | 38,596,255.32 | 37,682,602.50 | 35,572,643.94 |

*Total spent on non motorways*

£

| *County* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* | *2003–04* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dorset | 4,272,792.34 | 3,688,271.91 | 4,285,587.89 |
| Gloucestershire | 9,383,633.66 | 21,770,465.06 | 21,619,119.63 |
| North Somerset | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Somerset | 3,914,427.23 | 2,405,165.16 | 3,188,763.41 |
| South Gloucestershire | 326,983.05 | 461,811.81 | 347,131.44 |
| Wiltshire | 10,454,631.81 | 10,294,957.81 | 12,887,648.06 |

The Highways Agency has no roads in North Somerset that are not motorways.

### Transport Spending (Sittingbourne and Sheppey)

**Mr. Wyatt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much public money was spent on transport in the constituency of Sittingbourne and Sheppey between *(a)* 1992 and 1997, *(b)* 1997 and 2001 and *(c)* 2001 to 2004. [159490]

**Mr. McNulty:** Information on transport spending is not collected in the format requested.

### Weight Limits (Lorries)

**Mr. Caton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what plans he has to increase the penalties for lorry drivers breaching weight limits set on smaller bridges for second and subsequent offences; [161008]

(2) what plans he has to increase the penalty for lorry drivers breaching weight limits set on smaller bridges. [161009]

**Mr. Jamieson:** We have no plans to increase the penalties for lorry drivers breaching weight limits on smaller bridges for first or subsequent offences. Weight limits on bridges are notified by traffic signs, and failure to comply with such signs is an offence under section 36 of the Road Traffic Act 1988. The maximum penalty for this offence is a fine not exceeding £1,000 plus a three point endorsement.

## TREASURY

### Unemployment (Jarrow)

**Mr. Hepburn:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the change in the level of unemployment has been in the Jarrow constituency in each year since 1997; [159508]

(2) what the level of youth unemployment was in *(a)* the Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* Tyne and Wear and *(d)* the UK in each year since 1997. [159524]

**Ruth Kelly:** The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

*Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Stephen Hepburn, dated 11 March 2004:*

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Questions about unemployment in the Jarrow constituency. I am replying in his absence. (159508, 159524)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) compiles statistics of unemployment from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) following International Labour Organisation definitions. However, the LFS sample size is too small to give reliable estimates of unemployment in the Jarrow Parliamentary Constituency.

The ONS also publishes data on the number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (ISA). Table 1 gives information on the change in the number of JSA claimants in the Jarrow Constituency for each year since 1997. Table 2 gives information, also for each year since 1997, on the number of the JSA claimants aged between 18 and 24 years in the Jarrow Constituency, the South Tyneside Unitary Authority, the Metropolitan County of Tyne and Wear and in the UK as a whole.

*Table 1: Total number of claimants[1] of Jobseekers Allowance in Jarrow parliamentary constituency: 1997–2003*

*Claimants*

| | *Number of claimants* | *Difference from previous year* |
|---|---|---|
| 1997 | 3,119 | -- |
| 1998 | 2,766 | -353 |
| 1999 | 2,820 | 54 |
| 2000 | 2,625 | -195 |
| 2001 | 2,377 | -248 |
| 2002 | 2,273 | -104 |
| 2003 | 1,986 | -287 |

[1] Annual average.

*Source:*

Jobcentre plus administrative system.

*Table 2: Number of claimants[1] of Jobseekers Allowance aged 18–24 in the areas shown: 1997–2003*

*Claimants*

| | *Jarrow Parliamentary Constituency* | *South Tyneside Unitary Authority* | *Metropolitan County of Tyne and Wear* | *United Kingdom* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1997 | 802 | 1,800 | 11,563 | 406,417 |
| 1998 | 665 | 1,500 | 9,780 | 339,001 |
| 1999 | 654 | 1,458 | 8,903 | 294,124 |
| 2000 | 583 | 1,300 | 8,223 | 261,472 |
| 2001 | 557 | 1,234 | 7,637 | 241,222 |
| 2002 | 523 | 1,169 | 7,466 | 242,930 |
| 2003 | 512 | 1,158 | 7,267 | 249,054 |

[1] Annual average.

*Source:*

Jobcentre plus administrative system.

### Child Trust Fund

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his estimate is of the total cost of the Child Trust Fund for each year from 2004–05 to 2009–10, broken down by *(a)* start-up costs, *(b)* annual administration costs and *(c)* other costs; and if he will make a statement. [156758]

**Ruth Kelly:** I refer the hon. Member to the Regulatory Impact Assessment published with the Child Trust Fund Bill in November 2003, the Explanatory Note that accompanied the publication of the Child Trust Fund Bill on 4 February 2004; and the answers I gave the hon. Member for Tatton (Mr. Osborne) on 4 December 2003, *Official Report*, columns 138–39W.

### Departmental Advertising

**Mr. George Osborne:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) on how many occasions his Department has placed advertisements in Hello magazine; [157965]

(2) what the total cost of his Department's advertising in Hello magazine was in each of the last five years; [157967]

(3) what the cost is of each of his Department's advertisements in Hello magazine for tax credits. [157968]

**Dawn Primarolo:** A small amount of advertising has been placed in Hello! magazine by the Inland Revenue (IR) in recent years in support of its Tax Credits campaigns. This is because analysis of its readership indicated an appropriate percentage of people entitled to claim Tax Credits.

There was no advertising prior to 2002, but in the last three years IR placed:

2002: 4 insertions

2003: 2 insertions

2004: 3 insertions

There have been no advertisements placed in support of other issues or by any other departments responsible to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Like most central Government Departments, the IR buys media space using specialist agencies contracted through the Central Office of Information (COI).

Through its bulk-buying power, COI negotiates significant discounts on rate-card prices. To protect this, and the thus the added value it achieves for taxpayers' money, it maintains commercial confidentiality agreements in which it undertakes not to publicise charges levied by individual publications in single instances.

Media planning and buying for large campaigns such as New Tax Credits is focused purely on the most effective way of reaching the target audience–the publications they read or TV channels they watch, for example.

Overall spends for major campaigns are published regularly, often in response to parliamentary questions or press queries.

### Environmentally Sustainable Procurement

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in what ways environmentally sustainable procurement strategies within the Department have driven innovation in the design and supply of products. [159148]

**Mr. Boateng:** Treasury's procurement has been handled by Inland Revenue since April 2002. Inland Revenue are continuing to develop their environmentally sustainable procurement strategies. It is too early at present to judge whether there is evidence of innovation in the design and supply of products.

### Income Tax (10p Rate)

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many senior citizens in Crosby qualified for the 10p rate of income tax in each year since its introduction. [160581]

**Ruth Kelly:** All income taxpayers benefit from the 10p pence starting rate. The Survey of Personal Incomes estimates there are about 8,000 state retirement pension age taxpayers in the Crosby constituency in 2000–01. Constituency level estimates are not available for earlier years.

### Insurance Premium Tax

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will leave the basic rate of insurance premium tax unchanged in this year's Budget. [160324]

**Ruth Kelly:** As with all taxes, the future rates of Insurance Premium Tax are a matter for the Chancellor to consider as part of the Budget Process.

### Museums

**Miss Kirkbride:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost to public funds of Gift Aid provisions used by the museum sector was in each year since it was introduced, broken down by *(a)* institution and *(b)* amount received. [160422]

**John Healey:** It is not possible to ascertain the amount repaid in Gift Aid in relation to the museum sector. Inland Revenue records do not distinguish amounts repaid to charities according to the type of charity. Information held by the Inland Revenue about the tax affairs of individual businesses could not be disclosed, Exemption 15 of the Open Government Code applies.

### Public Expenditure

**Mr. Cash:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the relationship of the Maastricht criteria to public expenditure levels, with reference to *(a)* the Treasury Red Books since 1997 and *(b)* the Treasury Paper of June 2003 on "Policy Frameworks in the UK and EMU". [160647]

**Ruth Kelly:** The scope of the Maastricht criteria is set out in Annexe A of the EMU study on "Policy Frameworks in the UK and EMU".

Projections for the public finances presented in the 2003 pre-Budget report, show that the UK continues to meet a prudent interpretation of the Stability and Growth Pact, that takes into account the economic cycle, the long-term sustainability of the public finances and the important role of public investment.

Projections of the public finances will be updated, as usual, in the forthcoming Budget.

### Tax Credits

**Mr. George Osborne:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what assessment he has made of the administration of the Child Tax Credit and the Working Tax Credit since 6 April 2003; [158268]

(2) what discussions he has had with officials from the Inland Revenue regarding the administration of the Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit since 6 April 2003. [158269]

**Mr. Rosindell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent discussions he has had with officials from the Inland Revenue regarding the administration of tax credits. [158706]

**Dawn Primarolo:** I have had regular discussions with Inland Revenue officials regarding the administration of Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit since 6 April 2003, including plans for the next stage of tax credits implementation.The process of finalising tax credit awards for 2003–04, and renewing claims for 2004–05, begins in April. We also plan in 2004–05 to bring within Child Tax Credit (CTC) those families with children receiving support for them though Income Support or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (IS/JSA). The process of moving these families into Child Tax Credit will begin in April as planned. Families on IS/JSA already receiving CTC will start to receive support for their children solely through CTC. And new claimants of IS/JSA will no longer be awarded child allowances in those benefits and will receive CTC instead. The automatic phased transfer onto CTC of the remaining families with children within IS/JSA is planned to begin from October, subject to a final review in the summer. Meanwhile, families will continue to receive the same level of support through their benefits as they would from CTC.

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many families in Crosby have received Child Tax Credit. [160442]

**Dawn Primarolo:** The estimated numbers of families receiving Child and/or Working Tax Credits in each constituency at 5 January 2004 are shown in "Child and Working Tax Credit Statistics, Geographical analyses—January 2004", which is on the Inland Revenue website at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/menu.htm.

The estimates are based on a sample of cases and are subject to sampling uncertainty.

## DEFENCE

### Falkland Islands

**Mr. Ben Chapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on local purchase of vegetables and meat by the garrison at Mount Pleasant in the Falkland Islands. [159872]

**Mr. Ingram:** Locally grown salad vegetables are purchased for use at Mount Pleasant Airfield, but the produce available is limited. Local meat has not been procured because, prior to this year, it did not meet the Armed Forces Quality Standard and the Falkland Island abattoir was not EC approved. However, the Falkland Island Development Corporation has recently opened a fully compliant, purpose-built abattoir, and they are working to improve the quality of local lamb and mutton, with a view to supplying to Angliss (UK), the MOD's meat supplier, in the near future. An exploratory visit in January 2004 by Angliss (UK) proved to be most encouraging.

### Armed Forces Dentists

**Dr. Murrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* dental personnel and *(b)* dentists are employed within Her Majesty's Armed Forces, broken down by *(a)* grade, *(b)* whole-time equivalents and *(c)* headcount numbers for each year since 1990. [159673]

**Mr. Caplin:** Figures for all dental service personnel are shown in the table. The figures for officers represent qualified dentists for each service. The tables show figures for each equivalent NATO rank and these are set out. Since there are no part-time dental personnel, the total figure represents both the headcount and the whole-time equivalents.

*NATO Rank Codes and UK Service Designations*

| | *Royal Navy* | *Royal Marines* | *Army* | *Royal Air Force* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| OF-10 | Admiral of the Fleet | — | Field Marshal | Marshal of the RAF |
| OF-9 | Admiral | General | General | Air Chief Marshal |
| OF-8 | Vice Admiral | Lieutenant General | Lieutenant General | Air Marshal |
| OF-7 | Rear Admiral | Major General | Major General | Air Vice Marshal |
| OF-6 | Commodore | Brigadier | Brigadier | Air Commodore |
| OF-5 | Captain | Colonel | Colonel | Group Captain |
| OF-4 | Commander | Lieutenant Colonel | Lieutenant Colonel | Wing Commander |
| OF-3 | Lieutenant Commander | Major | Major | Squadron Leader |
| OF-2 | Lieutenant | Captain | Captain | Flight Lieutenant |
| OF-1 | Sub-Lieutenant | Lieutenant/2nd Lieutenant | Lieutenant/2nd Lieutenant | Flying Officer/Pilot Officer |
| OF(D) | Midshipman | — | Officer Designate | Officer Designate |
| OR-9 | Warrant Officer | Warrant Officer Class 1 | Warrant Officer Class 1 | Warrant Officer |
| OR-8 | — | Warrant Officer Class 2 | Warrant Officer Class 2 | — |
| OR-7 | Chief Petty Officer | Colour Sergeant | Staff Sergeant | Flight Sergeant/Chief Tech'n |
| OR-6 | Petty Officer | Sergeant | Sergeant | Sergeant |
| OR-4 | Leading Rate | Corporal | Corporal | Corporal |
| OR-3 | — | — | Lance Corporal | — |
| OR-2 | Able Rate | Marine | Private (Classes 1 to 3) | Junior Technician/Leading Aircraftman/ Senior Aircraftman |
| OR-1 | — | — | Private (Class 4)/Junior | Aircraftman |

*Note:*
The Royal Navy and the Royal Marines together make up the Naval Service.

*Naval Service*

*Naval Service*[1,2]

| | OF-7 | OF-6 | OF-5 | OF-4 | OF-3 | OF-2 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *(a) Officers* | | | | | | | |
| April 1990 | — | — | 7 | 30 | 19 | 15 | 72 |
| April 1991 | — | 1 | 7 | 27 | 22 | 18 | 75 |
| April 1992 | — | 1 | 6 | 27 | 18 | 20 | 72 |
| April 1993 | — | 1 | 5 | 27 | 20 | 23 | 76 |
| April 1994 | — | 1 | 5 | 22 | 18 | 29 | 75 |
| April 1995 | — | 1 | 5 | 21 | 19 | 24 | 70 |
| April 1996 | — | 1 | 6 | 16 | 19 | 20 | 62 |
| April 1997 | — | 1 | 6 | 12 | 26 | 20 | 65 |
| April 1998 | — | 1 | 5 | 14 | 20 | 24 | 64 |
| April 1999 | — | 1 | 5 | 15 | 23 | 19 | 63 |
| April 2000 | — | 1 | 6 | 15 | 17 | 21 | 60 |
| April 2001 | — | 1 | 6 | 16 | 16 | 23 | 62 |
| April 2002 | — | 1 | 5 | 17 | 17 | 21 | 61 |
| April 2003 | — | 1 | 6 | 14 | 19 | 17 | 57 |
| January 2004 | — | 1 | 7 | 13 | 23 | 13 | 57 |
| *(b) Ratings* | | | | | | | |
| April 1990 | — | 3 | 19 | 40 | 47 | 13 | 122 |
| April 1991 | 1 | 3 | 20 | 41 | 49 | 10 | 124 |
| April 1992 | 1 | 3 | 19 | 38 | 52 | 6 | 119 |
| April 1993 | 1 | 5 | 18 | 41 | 45 | 4 | 114 |
| April 1094 | — | 5 | 17 | 40 | 42 | 4 | 108 |
| April 1995 | — | 4 | 17 | 43 | 36 | 10 | 110 |
| April 1996 | — | 3 | 16 | 41 | 43 | 2 | 105 |
| April 1997 | 1 | 4 | 16 | 35 | 35 | 4 | 95 |
| April 1998 | 1 | 4 | 16 | 34 | 36 | 9 | 100 |
| April 1999 | 1 | 4 | 17 | 34 | 38 | 5 | 99 |
| April 2000 | 1 | 5 | 15 | 28 | 45 | — | 94 |
| April 2001 | 1 | 5 | 14 | 26 | 42 | — | 88 |
| April 2002 | 1 | 5 | 14 | 40 | 33 | — | 93 |
| April 2003 | 2 | 6 | 13 | 35 | 42 | — | 98 |
| January 2004 | 2 | 5 | 14 | 32 | 48 | — | 101 |

[1] All Naval Service Officers in the tables are qualified dentists

[2] The ratings figures comprise of hygienists and dental surgical assistants

*Note:*

Officers at OF-6 and above in the Naval Service are no longer practising dentists.

— denotes zero

*Army*

The figures in the tables are for the Royal Army Dental Core (RADC) which contains all dental personnel within the Army

*Army*[1,2,3]

| | OF-7 | OF-6 | OF-5 | OF-4 | OF-3 | OF-2 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *(a) Officers* | | | | | | | |
| April 1990 | — | 3 | 27 | 51 | 64 | 52 | 197 |
| April 1991 | 1 | 2 | 30 | 56 | 60 | 45 | 194 |
| April 1992 | 1 | 2 | 30 | 52 | 64 | 34 | 183 |
| April 1993 | — | 3 | 24 | 57 | 53 | 41 | 178 |
| April 1994 | — | 3 | 23 | 51 | 59 | 32 | 168 |
| April 1995 | — | 3 | 20 | 47 | 56 | 28 | 154 |
| April 1996 | — | 2 | 19 | 57 | 41 | 26 | 145 |
| April 1997 | — | 1 | 18 | 52 | 39 | 29 | 139 |
| April 1998 | — | 1 | 17 | 50 | 40 | 32 | 140 |
| April 1999 | — | 1 | 16 | 45 | 38 | 41 | 141 |
| April 2000 | — | 1 | 17 | 46 | 31 | 49 | 144 |
| April 2001 | 1 | 1 | 19 | 45 | 31 | 52 | 149 |
| April 2002 | 1 | 2 | 18 | 46 | 33 | 41 | 141 |
| April 2003 | 1 | 2 | 19 | 41 | 40 | 48 | 151 |
| January 2004 | 1 | 2 | 17 | 40 | 47 | 47 | 154 |

| | OR-9 | OR-8 | OR-7 | OR-6 | OR-4 | OR-3 | OR-2/OR-1 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *(b) Soldiers* | | | | | | | | |
| April 1990 | 9 | 17 | 24 | 64 | 31 | 27 | 18 | 190 |
| April 1991 | 9 | 17 | 25 | 55 | 28 | 24 | 21 | 179 |
| April 1992 | 8 | 17 | 21 | 54 | 33 | 24 | 15 | 172 |
| April 1993 | 8 | 19 | 25 | 69 | 64 | 67 | 50 | 302 |
| April 1994 | 8 | 16 | 23 | 50 | 66 | 55 | 45 | 263 |
| April 1995 | 6 | 12 | 26 | 44 | 59 | 51 | 45 | 243 |
| April 1996 | 9 | 10 | 23 | 48 | 63 | 48 | 41 | 242 |
| April 1997 | 6 | 11 | 24 | 44 | 53 | 46 | 49 | 233 |
| April 1998 | 4 | 14 | 22 | 43 | 49 | 44 | 38 | 214 |
| April 1999 | 5 | 12 | 24 | 45 | 45 | 50 | 38 | 219 |
| April 2000 | 5 | 13 | 24 | 46 | 54 | 51 | 33 | 226 |
| April 2001 | 5 | 15 | 21 | 42 | 65 | 50 | 42 | 240 |
| April 2002 | 5 | 13 | 22 | 40 | 69 | 49 | 47 | 245 |
| April 2003 | 6 | 15 | 22 | 38 | 70 | 55 | 59 | 265 |
| January 2004 | 7 | 14 | 21 | 44 | 68 | 52 | 51 | 257 |

[1] All Army officers in the table are qualified dentists, however as at 1 January 2004 there were 15 officers within the RADC who had an unallocated trade.

[2] The soldiers figures are a mixture of hygienists, dental technicians, support specialists and other dental personnel.

[3] Officers at OF-7 are no longer practising dentists.

— denotes zero

*Royal Air Force*

*Royal Air Force*[1,2,3]

| | OF-7 | OF-6 | OF-5 | OF-4 | OF-3 | OF-2 | OF-1/OF(D) | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *(a) Officers* | | | | | | | | |
| April 1990 | — | 3 | 13 | 36 | 36 | 32 | — | 120 |
| April 1991 | — | 3 | 11 | 33 | 44 | 29 | — | 120 |
| April 1992 | — | 3 | 13 | 29 | 48 | 28 | — | 121 |
| April 1993 | 1 | 2 | 14 | 31 | 44 | 27 | — | 119 |
| April 1994 | 1 | 2 | 12 | 29 | 48 | 22 | 1 | 115 |
| April 1995 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 32 | 47 | 19 | — | 110 |
| April 1996 | 1 | 2 | 8 | 32 | 44 | 17 | — | 104 |
| April 1997 | 2 | 2 | 9 | 20 | 43 | 11 | — | 87 |
| April 1998 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 22 | 38 | 8 | — | 80 |
| April 1999 | 1 | 2 | 10 | 24 | 36 | 12 | — | 85 |
| April 2000 | 1 | 3 | 8 | 32 | 25 | 9 | — | 78 |
| April 2001 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 35 | 19 | 11 | — | 76 |
| April 2002 | — | 2 | 7 | 31 | 21 | 12 | — | 73 |
| April 2003 | — | 1 | 8 | 28 | 19 | 10 | — | 66 |
| January 2004 | — | 1 | 10 | 23 | 26 | 16 | — | 76 |

| | OR-9 | OR-7 | OR-6 | OR-4 | OR-2 | OR-1 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *(b) Airmen* | | | | | | | |
| April 1990 | 7 | 22 | 45 | 48 | 27 | 147 | 296 |
| April 1991 | 7 | 23 | 46 | 49 | 26 | 146 | 297 |
| April 1992 | 7 | 23 | 46 | 52 | 17 | 157 | 302 |
| April 1993 | 7 | 24 | 44 | 51 | 9 | 153 | 288 |
| April 1994 | 6 | 23 | 42 | 51 | 12 | 149 | 283 |
| April 1995 | 4 | 22 | 47 | 52 | 17 | 141 | 283 |
| April 1996 | 4 | 14 | 44 | 42 | 14 | 126 | 244 |
| April 1997 | 4 | 13 | 45 | 39 | 7 | 110 | 218 |
| April 1998 | 4 | 14 | 43 | 36 | 4 | 103 | 204 |
| April 1999 | 3 | 14 | 41 | 38 | 2 | 97 | 195 |
| April 2000 | 4 | 14 | 36 | 39 | 2 | 97 | 192 |
| April 2001 | 4 | 18 | 33 | 44 | 4 | 99 | 202 |
| April 2002 | 4 | 16 | 32 | 48 | 3 | 89 | 192 |
| April 2003 | 6 | 17 | 25 | 51 | 0 | 91 | 190 |
| January 2004 | 6 | 17 | 27 | 48 | 0 | 105 | 203 |

[1] All RAF officers in the table are dentists.

[2] The Airmen figures are a mixture of hygienists, administrative staff, and technicians and nurses

[3] Officers at OF-6 and above are no longer practising dentists. However there may be service personnel between OF-3 to OF-5 who although being qualified dentists may not be practising due to being posted on staff appointments.

— denotes zero

### Armed Forces Personnel (Overseas)

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many personnel from other countries are serving in the *(a)* Army, *(b)* Royal Navy and *(c)* Royal Air Force; and from which countries they come. [156134]

**Mr. Caplin:** The number of foreign nationals serving in the Army at 1 January 2004 is 5,540. The following table gives a more detailed breakdown.

| *Nationality* | *Officers* | *Soldiers* |
|---|---|---|
| Irish Republican | 25 | 175 |
| Australian | 35 | 40 |
| Barbadian | [1]— | 5 |
| British Commonwealth | 5 | 10 |
| Cameroon | 0 | 10 |
| Canadian | 20 | 45 |
| Dominican | 0 | 10 |
| Fijian | [1]— | 1,720 |
| Gambian | 0 | 55 |
| Ghanaian | [1]— | 395 |
| Grenadian | 0 | 45 |
| Guyanese | 0 | 10 |
| Indian | 10 | 25 |
| Jamaican | [1]— | 870 |
| Kenyan | 5 | 60 |
| Malawi | 0 | 55 |
| Maltese | [1]— | 5 |
| Mauritian | 0 | 15 |
| New Zealander | 25 | 45 |
| Nigerian | [1]— | 45 |
| Pakistani | [1]— | 5 |
| Seychellois | 0 | 5 |
| Sierra Leone | [1]— | 20 |
| South African | 35 | 445 |
| Sri Lankan | [1]— | 10 |
| St. Lucia | [1]— | 215 |
| St. Vincent | 0 | 285 |
| Tongan | 0 | 5 |
| Trinidadian | [1]— | 60 |
| Ugandan | 0 | 20 |
| Zambian | [1]— | 10 |
| Zimbabwean | 25 | 485 |
| St. Helenian | 0 | 25 |
| Nepalese | 10 | [1]— |
| Not known/stateless | 35 | [1]— |

[1] Denotes less than five

The following nationalities have less than five officers and/or less than five soldiers:

Antiguan
Bangalee
Belizean
Botswana
Cypriot
Malaysian
Namibian (formally South West African)
Papuan
Singaporean
St. Kitts
Swazi
Tanzanian
West Indian
Falkland Islander
Gibraltarian
Montserrat Islander
American
German West
Iranian
Iraqi
Pacific Islander
Rhodesian
Swiss

For the Naval Service and RAF some information on 'not British' personnel is held but data are not accurate enough to provide a reliable estimate.

### Challenger 2

**Hugh Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment has been made of the operational effectiveness of Challenger 2 main battle tanks when crews are wearing individual protective equipment against nuclear, biological and chemical attack. [159266]

**Mr. Ingram** *[holding answer 5 March 2004]:* The effect on the operational effectiveness of Challenger 2 tanks when their crew members are wearing individual protective equipment against nuclear, biological and chemical attack depends on a number of related and variable factors. These include the ambient temperature and the effectiveness of the crew cooling system; the length of time the equipment has been worn at high protection state; the amount of prior training undertaken by the crew; their physical fitness levels; and the psychological stresses imposed during battle. The requirement to operate Challenger 2 tanks in individual protection equipment is reflected in annual training.

### Correspondence

**Mr. Davidson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he will write to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Pollok with the answer he undertook to provide on 20 November 2003. [151197]

**Mr. Ingram:** I replied to my hon. Friend today.

### Hawk Trainer

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Hawk advanced jet trainers have been procured; and when delivery will take place. [158261]

**Mr. Ingram:** Following the announcement last summer of our intention to procure Hawk 128 to meet our Advanced Jet Trainer requirement, detailed contractual negotiations with BAE SYSTEMS are continuing. Subject to a satisfactory conclusion, we are planning on placing an order for 20 aircraft with options for up to a further 24. The first aircraft would be delivered during 2008.

### Iraq

**Mrs. Liddell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make an assessment of the contribution of United Kingdom forces to the delivery of humanitarian aid in Iraq. [143725]

**Mr. Ingram:** Enabling the delivery of humanitarian aid has been a key priority for UK forces since the end of major combat operations on 1 May 2003.

In the period immediately after major combat operations ended UK forces cleared mines and other dangers in the waterway leading to Umm Qasr port and made safe the port area itself, opening the most important route into Iraq for humanitarian aid.

Since then UK forces have delivered limited amounts of aid themselves and, when requested, have provided assistance to Non-Governmental Organisations working on humanitarian programmes in Iraq.

**Mr. Woodward:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the humanitarian projects that United Kingdom forces have *(a)* completed and *(b)* not yet completed in Iraq since 1 May 2003. [147156]

**Mr. Ingram:** United Kingdom forces have undertaken over 700 reconstruction projects in Iraq since the end of major combat operations. For a list of projects I refer my hon. Friend to my letter reference: D/MIN(AF)/5234N dated 10 March a copy of which is available in the Library of the House in response to question number 137519 from the hon. Member for Moray (Angus Robertson).

**Mr. Swayne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what force protection measures are in place to protect the operatives of non-governmental organisations and humanitarian organisations within the UK sphere of military operations in Iraq. [150226]

**Mr. Ingram:** The UK does not routinely provide force protection to humanitarian or non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Such organisations are directly responsible for assessing the risks to their staff. UK local commanders do discuss security and other practical issues with them on a regular basis.

The coalition as a whole is working to secure conditions in which UN agencies, NGOs, humanitarian organisations and the Iraqi people are able to go about their business.

**Tom Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much has been paid to Iraqi families following the death of a member of their family while being held in British military custody. [158032]

**Mr. Ingram:** UK Authorities have paid £1,875 to an Iraqi family following a death in custody.

**Sir Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the status of UK forces in Iraq will be after 31 July; what legal mandate will govern their presence and operations; and if he will make a statement. [158147]

**Mr. Ingram** *[holding answer 9 March 2004]:* The status of UK forces in Iraq and the legal mandate that will govern their presence and operations after the handover of authority to an Iraqi government remain under consideration.

**Adam Price:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether techniques of sensory deprivation have been used on Iraqi detainees by members of the British armed forces. [158860]

**Mr. Ingram:** Members of the armed forces may only use blindfolds on apprehended individuals for reasons of operational security, such as movement through military sensitive areas. No other forms of sensory deprivation are permitted.

### Nuclear Submarines

**Mr. Charles Kennedy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what arrangements are in place for providing compensation to the *(a)* residents and *(b)* businesses of Skye and Wester Ross in the event of a nuclear incident involving a nuclear submarine using the Z Berths at Aultbea and Broadford; and if he will make a statement. [159625]

**Mr. Ingram:** The Government underwrite the nuclear risks associated with the consequences of the operation of its nuclear submarines. The indemnification of these risks is not limited either financially or geographically and depending on the location and type of incident, would cover the local residents and businesses on the Isle of Skye and at Wester Ross.

### Government Contracts (Scotland)

**Angus Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many procurement contracts were placed by his Department with companies based in Scotland in financial year *(a)* 2002–03, *(b)* 2001–02 and *(c)* 2000–01; what the (i) most expensive and (ii) least expensive contracts were; and what the total value of contracts was. [159245]

**Mr. Ingram:** Details of procurement contracts directly placed by the Department with companies based in Scotland in each of the financial years requested is detailed in the following table:

| | *Financial year* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *2000–01* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* |
| Number of new contracts let | 724 | 604 | 600 |
| Total value of these contracts | £250 million | £1.2 billion | £850 million |
| Most valuable new contract let | £59 million | £395 million | £418 million |

It is not possible to provide meaningful data on the least valuable contracts let in each of these years because certain types of MOD contract are set up with a nominal value (normally £1) under which goods or services are then 'called-off' and paid for during the contract term.

**Angus Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many research contracts were placed by his Department with research institutions based in Scotland in fiscal year *(a)* 2002–03, *(b)* 2001–02 and *(c)* 2000–01; what the total value of these contracts was; and what the total value of research contracts placed within the UK was. [159246]

**Mr. Ingram:** The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost (Exemption 9 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information).

### Temporary Staff

**Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many staff the Department employs on a temporary basis through employment agencies; what

percentage this is of total staff employed; and how much the Department paid employment agencies to supply temporary staff in *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2002–03 and *(c)* 2003–04 to the most recent date for which figures are available. [158250]

**Mr. Caplin:** This information is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

### Tomahawk Cruise Missiles

**Dr. Julian Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of ship-borne Tomahawk cruise missiles. [158138]

**Mr. Ingram** *[holding answer 4 March 2004]:* The Tomahawk Land Attack Missile (TLAM) is a conventionally armed land attack missile. TLAM represents a major step forward in capability, enabling precision attacks at long range against selected targets. The missile's effectiveness is not affected by the platform from which it is launched.

### Westminster Hall

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make it his policy to have senior Ministers reply to debates in Westminster Hall. [159615]

**Mr. Caplin:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him on 8 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1234W by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House of Commons.

## PRIME MINISTER

### Geoff Mulgan

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Prime Minister how many hours Mr. Geoff Mulgan has spent working on the Big Conversation Project; and if he will make a statement. [160603]

**The Prime Minister:** Civil Servants act in accordance with the Civil Service Code.

For information on the Big Conversation, I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Rutland and Melton (Mr. Duncan) on 4 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 113W.

### Sir David King

**Mr. Tam Dalyell:** To ask the Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the implications of the findings of the Chief Scientist on climate change published in the journal *Science* in January. [160418]

**The Prime Minister:** The article in *Science* was based on analysis which the Chief Scientific Adviser first set out in his Zuckerman Lecture in October 2002. His conclusion was that the evidence for man-made climate change was convincing and that this cannot be ignored. The Government share that view.

This analysis underpinned the rationale behind the Energy White Paper, (CM5761) which sets out a programme to put the UK on a path to reduce the UK's carbon dioxide emissions by some 60 per cent. by 2050. It also underpins the UK's support for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol which are a vital first step to avoiding dangerous climate change. The UK has also been at the forefront of efforts to secure global action on climate change.

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Prime Minister with reference to the memorandum from Mr. Ivan Rogers to Sir David King, relating to public pronouncements on climate change, which wider policy aims would be adversely affected were Sir David King to grant interview requests from the media. [160599]

**The Prime Minister:** David King is on the record many times outlining the importance of climate change to the media, including on his recent visit to the United States where he took part in a press conference and chaired a workshop that the media attended.

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Prime Minister what *(a)* representations were received from and *(b)* discussions took place with the US authorities on Sir David King's public statements on climate change between their publication and the issuing of the memorandum to Sir David King by Mr. Ivan Rogers, on media requests for an interview. [160600]

**The Prime Minister:** The Government regularly have discussions with the US Government, at many levels, on a wide range of international issues including on climate change. As with previous Administrations, it is not the practice of this Government to make public details of discussions with foreign Governments.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Charities

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on legislative provisions on the monitoring and policing of companies registered as charities in Northern Ireland; and if he will propose amendments to Northern Ireland legislation to bring it into line with the rest of the United Kingdom in this regard. [158560]

**Mr. Spellar:** Only charities based in England and Wales are registered. The provisions for the monitoring and policing of charities which are also limited companies are the same as for those which are not.
In Northern Ireland:

the Inland Revenue deal with charitable status for tax purposes;

the PSNI can investigate any criminal offence alleged by or in connection with a charity;

the PSNI license street and house-to-house collections; and

the Department for Social Development can look at any dispute not involving criminal activity.

In Northern Ireland, most complaints about collections or criminal activity fall to the Police Service of Northern Ireland. The Department for Social Development will consider non-criminal complaints but, like the Charity Commission for England and Wales, cannot interfere in a charity's affairs where the trustees have acted properly (for example, where there is a dispute between trustees as to which of a number of equally legitimate policies should be pursued) or

consider cases which concern disagreements between trustees or between trustees and members which can and should be settled by the trustees themselves (for example, over the details of the employment of particular staff or selection of beneficiaries).

The Government are currently considering proposed changes to the charities legislation in England and Wales and elsewhere with a view to deciding whether changes to the existing Northern Ireland charity legislation would be desirable. Any proposed changes will, of course, be the subject of public consultation as well as consultation with interested bodies.

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what plans he has to introduce a charity commissioner for Northern Ireland; [158888]

(2) what plans he has to bring the law governing charities in Northern Ireland into line with that in England and Wales. [158889]

**Mr. Spellar:** In Northern Ireland the systems for dealing with charities are different from those in England and Wales:

the Inland Revenue deal with charitable status for tax purposes;

the PSNI can investigate any criminal offence alleged by or in connection with a charity;

the PSNI license street and house-to-house collections; and

the Department for Social Development can look at any dispute not involving criminal activity.

In Northern Ireland, most complaints about collections or criminal activity fall to the Police Service of Northern Ireland. The Department for Social Development will consider non-criminal complaints but, like the Charity Commission for England and Wales, cannot interfere in a charity's affairs where the trustees have acted properly (for example, where there is a dispute between trustees as to which of a number of equally legitimate policies should be pursued) or consider cases which concern disagreements between trustees or between trustees and members which can and should be settled by the trustees themselves (for example, over the details of the employment of particular staff or selection of beneficiaries).

The Government are currently considering proposed changes to the charities legislation in England and Wales and elsewhere with a view to deciding whether changes to the existing Northern Ireland charity legislation, including the option of establishing a Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, would be desirable. Any proposed changes will, of course, be the subject of public consultation as well as consultation with interested bodies.

## Civil Service

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the pay dispute in the Northern Ireland Civil Service. [159558]

**Mr. Pearson:** Extensive negotiations over several months did not result in an agreed pay deal for the 11 Departments of the Northern Ireland Administration this year. Management Side presented an offer worth 3.67 per cent. on 5 November. As this could not be agreed, and Trade Union Side declined to negotiate within the 3.67 per cent. envelope, we took the decision to proceed to pay the award and communicated this to staff and Trade Union Side on 27 November. I have made clear to Trade Union Side that the 3.67 per cent. deal is the maximum that can be paid. We are however exploring other reasonable means of resolving the dispute. Meetings with Trade Union Side took place on Thursday 19 February and Monday 8 March, and a further meeting is being arranged.

Members of the NI Civil Service working in the Northern Ireland Office are subject to separate pay negotiations involving three Unions: NIPS A, PCS and the PDA. A formal offer of 3 per cent. was made to the Unions but was rejected. NIO intend to proceed to pay the award at the end of March.

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what annual pay rises have been awarded to *(a)* the Northern Ireland civil service and *(b)* senior civil servants in Northern Ireland in each year since 1997. [159559]

**Mr. Pearson:** The annual pay rises awarded to *(a)* the Northern Ireland civil service and *(b)* senior civil servants in Northern Ireland in each year since 1997 are as follows:

*Percentage*

| | *Civil servants below the SCS* | *Senior civil servants* |
|---|---|---|
| 2003 | 3.67 | 5.37 |
| 2002 | 5.5 | 4.38 |
| 2001 | 4.85 | 4.4 |
| 2000 | 4.5 | 4.4 |
| 1999 | 3.97 | 4.3 |
| 1998 | 3.2 | 5.5 |
| 1997 | 3.2 | 4.5 |

## Cormorants

**Mr. Donaldson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what measures he is taking to control cormorants and their predation on fish-stock. [160595]

**Angela Smith:** In Northern Ireland all wild birds are protected under the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985. Cormorants are also protected under the EC Birds Directive (1979). If there is a specific local problem with cormorants seriously damaging fish stocks, my Department will consider applications for a licence to control the birds at the point of damage.

Any such a licence will require the licensee to report on activities authorised by it to the Department.

**Mr. Donaldson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many licences to cull cormorants have been issued in each of the last 10 years; and how many cormorants have been culled in each of the last 10 years. [160596]

**Angela Smith:** The figures requested are set out as follows. The licences are issued for the purpose of protecting fisheries, and the number culled is based on reports received from the licensees as a condition of their licences.

| | *Number of licences issued* | *Number of cormorants reported culled* |
|---|---|---|
| 1995 | 19 | 82 |
| 1996 | 20 | 107 |
| 1997 | 21 | 87 |
| 1998 | 21 | 99 |
| 1999 | 23 | 76 |
| 2000 | 16 | 77 |
| 2001 | 20 | 70 |
| 2002 | 31 | 93 |
| 2003 | 13 | 56 |
| 2004[1] | 2 | 10 |

[1] Up to 1 March 2004

**Mr. Donaldson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his estimate is of the number of cormorants in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [160597]

**Angela Smith:** The following figures are winter peak counts for cormorants in Northern Ireland. The total is made up from both breeding birds and winter visitors.

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1994–95 | 1,475 |
| 1995–96 | 2,058 |
| 1996–97 | 1,785 |
| 1997–98 | 2,194 |
| 1998–99 | 3,229 |
| 1999–2000 | 2,761 |
| 2000–01 | 2,477 |

The data have not yet been validated for 2001 onwards.

**Mr. Donaldson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate *(a)* the number and *(b)* the percentage of salmon smolts returning seawards on the River Bush that were taken by cormorants in each of the last 10 years. [160598]

**Angela Smith:** No estimates of the levels of salmon smolt predation by cormorants have been made on the River Bush in the last 10 years. Previous studies carried out during the 1980s indicated that predation levels could be in excess of 50 per cent. of the wild smolt runs at that time.

### Education Jobs Evaluation

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether non-teaching staff in the voluntary grammar and integrated education sector will be included in the job evaluation scheme being funded and carried out by the Department of Education in Northern Ireland. [159590]

**Jane Kennedy:** Job evaluations in the voluntary grammar school and grant-maintained school sectors are a matter for individual schools, as the employing authorities. The Department of Education will be discussing with representatives of these sectors the implications of job evaluations in Education and Library Boards, and any consequent budgetary pressures will be considered in light of the resources available and the associated circumstances.

### Electoral Register

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to locate electors missing from the latest electoral register; and if he will make a statement. [158887]

**Mr. Spellar:** Electoral registration is primarily a matter for the Chief Electoral Officer. However, individuals who are eligible and are not on the register can still have their names added to the register under the system of rolling registration. The Electoral Commission will shortly be embarking on a major publicity drive to encourage this.

The Electoral Office and the Electoral Commission are working closely together to encourage potential electors to register. It is planned to focus on groups who are traditionally under-represented on the register, such as young people, those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with literacy problems or whose first language is not English.

The Commission is also funding a call centre to deal with queries on the electoral process including registration. Rolling registration forms are widely available, including electronically from the Electoral office website.

### Means-Tested Benefits

**Lady Hermon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what benefits to which pensioners are entitled in Northern Ireland are means-tested; what steps he is taking to reduce the number of means-tested benefits in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [159668]

**Mr. Spellar:** Pensioners in Northern Ireland are eligible to claim state pension credit and housing benefit which are income-related or means-tested benefits.

The Government's policy is to focus help on the poorest pensioners. Income-related benefits are an integral part of a complementary mixture of social security provision alongside contributory and universal benefits. There are no plans to reduce the number of means-tested benefits available to people in Northern Ireland.

### New Deal

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have participated in the Preparation for Employment programme element of New Deal 25 + in Northern Ireland in each year since its inception. [159564]

**Jane Kennedy:** The Preparation for Employment programme was introduced in Northern Ireland in April 2001 as the main element of provision within the New Deal 25+.

The number of people who have participated in the Preparation for Employment programme and the former Intensive Activity Period, which it replaced, are as follows:

| | Number |
|---|---|
| November 1998 to March 1999 | 130 |
| 1999–2000 | 6,690 |
| 2000–01 | 3,441 |
| 2001–02 | 2,633 |
| 2002–03 | 3,176 |
| April 2003 to December 2003 | 1,408 |

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost per participant is of the Preparation for Employment programme element of New Deal 25 +. [159565]

**Jane Kennedy:** The cost per participant on the Preparation for Employment programme element of New Deal 25+ ranges from £2,910 to £4,372, depending on the duration of participation i.e. 20 or 26 weeks and outcomes achieved.

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what sanctions are applied to those who refuse to participate in the Preparation for Employment programme element of New Deal 25 Plus. [159566]

**Mr. Spellar:** The New Deal is founded on the principle of rights and responsibilities. The Preparation for Employment Programme element of New Deal 25 Plus is mandatory for those aged 25 to 49.

The sanction for a first failure to comply with the requirements of the Preparation for Employment Programme is the loss of jobseeker's allowance for two weeks. The sanction for a second failure to comply which occurs within 12 months of the imposition of the first sanction is the loss of jobseeker's allowance for four weeks. The sanction for a third or subsequent failure to comply which occurs within 12 months of the imposition of the previous sanction is the loss of jobseeker's allowance for 26 weeks.

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to extend participation in the Preparation for Employment programme element of New Deal 25+ to those aged over 49 years. [159567]

**Jane Kennedy:** The Preparation for Employment programme element of New Deal 25+ is currently available to all unemployed jobseekers aged 25 or over when they have been in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) for 18 months, or for 18 out of the last 21 months. Those aged 50 or over, who meet the JSA eligibility criteria, are able to participate in the programme on a voluntary basis. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will shortly commence a two year pilot, in selected areas of GB, requiring mandatory participation in the Preparation for Employment programme for those eligible JSA claimants aged 50 or over. The Department for Employment and Learning will examine the recommendations arising from the evaluation report of the pilot, when it is available, with a view to implementing them in Northern Ireland.

## Non-UK Residents

**Mr. Dismore:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the number of people resident in Northern Ireland who hold nationality from countries other than the UK. [156555]

**Mr. Pearson:** The closest approximation to the requested data derives from the Labour Force Survey in Northern Ireland, which collects information on nationality and country of birth. The most recent results indicate that between September and November 2003 there were an estimated 48,000 persons resident in Northern Ireland who were born outside the UK and held nationality from countries other than the UK. In addition, people born in Northern Ireland generally have the right to hold both British and Irish citizenship.

## Prison Statistics

**Mr. Clifton-Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list for each of the detention centres and prisons *(a)* how many places there were, *(b)* how many prisoners are occupying them and *(c)* how many prisoners share cells. [159958]

**Jane Kennedy:** As of 4 March 2004, the number of places available and the number of prisoners occupying them is as shown in the following table. The number of prisoners who share cells is difficult to establish as that figure changes on a daily basis and therefore the figures shown represent the approximate number of cells currently capable of being shared.

| | Maghaberry | Magilligan | Hydebank Wood |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of cells available | 753 | 352 | 212 |
| Number of prisoners occupying cells | 716 | 348 | 196 |
| Approximate number of cells currently capable of being shared | 129 | 12 | [1]0 |

[1] In Hydebank Wood, no cells are capable of being shared although dormitories can accommodate a number of inmates.

## Punishment Beatings

**Mr. McGrady:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many punishment beatings have been reported in the past two months, broken down by constituency; and how many there were in the same period in 2003. [158636]

**Jane Kennedy:** The information requested is as follows.

*Security situation statistics for Northern Ireland by District Command Unit number of casualties as a result of Paramilitary Style Assaults*

| DCU | January 2004 | February 2004 | January 2003 | February 2003 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| North Belfast | — | — | 1 | — |
| South Belfast | 2 | 1 | — | — |
| East Belfast | — | 1 | 1 | — |
| West Belfast | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Newtownabbey | 1 | — | 1 | 3 |
| Carrickfergus | 2 | — | 1 | — |
| North Down | 4 | — | — | — |
| Castlereagh | — | — | — | 1 |
| Lisburn | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Antrim | 1 | 1 | 1 | — |
| Ards | — | — | 1 | — |
| Larne | — | — | — | 1 |
| Ballymena | — | — | — | — |
| Coleraine | — | — | — | — |
| Ballymoney | — | — | — | — |
| Moyle | — | — | 1 | — |
| Fermanagh | 1 | — | — | — |
| Strabane | — | 1 | — | — |
| Limavady | — | — | — | — |

*Security situation statistics for Northern Ireland by District Command Unit number of casualties as a result of Paramilitary Style Assaults*

| DCU | January 2004 | February 2004 | January 2003 | February 2003 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Omagh | — | — | — | — |
| Magherafelt | — | — | — | — |
| Foyle | 1 | 1 | — | 1 |
| Banbridge | 1 | — | — | — |
| Craigavon | — | — | — | — |
| Downpatrick | — | — | — | — |
| Newry and Mourne | — | — | — | — |
| Cookstown | — | — | — | — |
| Armagh | — | — | — | — |
| Dungannon and South Tyrone | — | 1 | — | — |
| Total for Northern Ireland | 15 | 8 | 9 | 8 |

*Note:*
2004 statistics are provisional and may be subject to minor amendment.

### Ulster Scots

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what criteria he uses to measure demand for the Ulster Scots language to be a subject option on the education curriculum; [159538]

(2) what he considers to be an appropriate level of demand to merit the inclusion of the Ulster Scots language in the curriculum; [159562]

(3) if the system used by the Department of Education in Northern Ireland for measuring demand for Ulster Scots is scientifically based and quality assured; [159540]

(4) what steps the Department of Education has taken to seek the views of the public on the issue of demand for Ulster Scots language; [159541]

(5) what criteria he uses to measure demand for the Ulster Scots language to be a subject option on the education curriculum; whether the system used to measure demand is *(a)* scientifically based and *(b)* quality assured; what margin of error there is in the measurements of demand; what steps he has taken to seek the views of the public on such demand; and if he will publish the results of (i) surveys and (ii) measurements of demand for the Ulster Scots language in Northern Ireland; [159560]

(6) what equality impact assessment he has carried out on his policy on the inclusion of the *(a)* Irish and *(b)* Ulster Scots languages in the school curriculum. [159563]

**Jane Kennedy:** To merit consideration of the inclusion of the Ulster Scots language in the curriculum would require a demand from a significant number of schools. As part of a recent widespread public consultation on the proposals for a revised statutory curriculum all consultees had the opportunity to comment on the content of the proposed curriculum and the potential equality impact of the detailed proposals. No such demand was evident during the consultation.

### Unionist Paramilitary Groups

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on recent meetings with Unionist parties which discussed methods of curbing the activities of Unionist paramilitary groups. [158778]

**Mr. Paul Murphy:** In our discussions with all political parties, including those involved in the review of the operation of the Belfast Agreement, we have emphasised the need for an end to paramilitary activity, as set out in paragraph 13 of the Joint Declaration. We believe all parties must use any influence they have in order to bring this about.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### Benefits Appeals

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* successful and *(b)* unsuccessful appeals were made against decisions on (i) disability and (ii) sickness benefits in each year since 1997 in Greater London. [158460]

**Maria Eagle:** This is a matter for Christina Townsend, Chief Executive of the Appeals Service. She will reply to the hon. Member.

*Letter from Christina Townsend to Mr. Simon Hughes, dated 11 March 2004:*

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question regarding the number of successful and unsuccessful appeals against decisions on disability and sickness benefits since 1997 in Greater London.

The information is not available for Greater London. However the available information is outlined in the table. The Appeals Service regional sites based at Nottingham, Sutton, and Birmingham deal with parts of Greater London.

I hope this reply is helpful.

*Successful and Unsuccessful appeals against decisions made on disability and sickness benefits by year (1998–2003)—Figures from regional sites at Nottingham, Sutton and Birmingham*

| | Cleared at Hearing | Cleared in favour of appellant | Cleared against appellant | Other decisions | Decision upheld |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *2003* | | | | | |
| *Nottingham* | | | | | |
| *Sickness* | *8,025* | *3,550* | — | *105* | *4,370* |
| *Disability* | *17,520* | *8,495* | *5* | *375* | *8,645* |
| *Sutton* | | | | | |
| Sickness | 2,760 | 1,680 | — | 5 | 1,070 |
| Disability | 5,360 | 3,570 | 5 | 15 | 1,775 |
| *Birmingham* | | | | | |
| Sickness | 4,960 | 1,935 | — | 15 | 3,010 |
| Disability | 10,275 | 4,720 | 40 | 75 | 5,440 |
| *2002* | | | | | |
| *Nottingham* | | | | | |
| Sickness | 5,730 | 2,230 | — | 70 | 3,430 |
| Disability | 16,300 | 8,060 | 15 | 290 | 7,935 |
| *Sutton* | | | | | |
| Sickness | 4,465 | 2,335 | — | 15 | 2,115 |
| Disability | 7,390 | 4,790 | 5 | 25 | 2,575 |
| *Birmingham* | | | | | |
| Sickness | 3,775 | 1,510 | — | 15 | 2,250 |
| Disability | 9,835 | 4,690 | 35 | 65 | 5,045 |
| *2001* | | | | | |
| *Nottingham* | | | | | |
| Sickness | 4,380 | 1,490 | — | 50 | 2,840 |
| Disability | 17,545 | 8,375 | 15 | 240 | 8,915 |
| *Sutton* | | | | | |
| Sickness | 4,195 | 2,200 | — | 25 | 1,965 |
| Disability | 9,665 | 6,260 | 5 | 55 | 3,340 |
| *Birmingham* | | | | | |
| Sickness | 2,970 | 1,120 | 5 | 15 | 1,830 |
| Disability | 10,055 | 4,415 | 25 | 75 | 5,535 |

*Successful and Unsuccessful appeals against decisions made on disability and sickness benefits by year (1998–2003)—Figures from regional sites at Nottingham, Sutton and Birmingham*

| | Cleared at Hearing | Cleared in favour of appellant | Cleared against appellant | Other decisions | Decision upheld |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *2000* | | | | | |
| *Nottingham* | | | | | |
| Sickness | 6,325 | 2,185 | 15 | 65 | 4,065 |
| Disability | 11,910 | 5,820 | 40 | 165 | 5,885 |
| *Sutton* | | | | | |
| Sickness | 5,565 | 2,860 | – | 40 | 2,660 |
| Disability | 6,295 | 3,965 | 5 | 70 | 2,255 |
| *Birmingham* | | | | | |
| Sickness | 3,190 | 1,135 | 5 | 15 | 2,030 |
| Disability | 7,430 | 3,300 | 45 | 50 | 4,035 |
| *1999* | | | | | |
| *Nottingham* | | | | | |
| Sickness | 530 | 200 | 10 | 15 | 300 |
| Disability | 10,245 | 4,920 | 90 | 180 | 5,055 |
| *Sutton* | | | | | |
| Sickness | 320 | 155 | 5 | 10 | 150 |
| Disability | 6,305 | 3,635 | 25 | 85 | 2,560 |
| *Birmingham* | | | | | |
| Sickness | 235 | 60 | 20 | 5 | 150 |
| Disability | 7,040 | 3,055 | 75 | 75 | 3,840 |
| *1998* | | | | | |
| *Nottingham* | | | | | |
| Sickness | 395 | 180 | 5 | 10 | 205 |
| Disability | 7,610 | 3,995 | 70 | 95 | 3,445 |
| *Sutton* | | | | | |
| Sickness | 260 | 120 | 10 | – | 125 |
| Disability | 4,015 | 2,110 | 30 | 65 | 1,810 |
| *Birmingham* | | | | | |
| Sickness | 260 | 65 | 20 | 5 | 165 |
| Disability | 4,575 | 1,915 | 90 | 50 | 2,520 |

*Appeals figures notes:*
Sickness Benefits means—Severe Disablement Allowance; Personal Capability Assessment (non IB); Incapacity Benefit
Disability Benefits means—Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit; Disability Working Allowance; Disability Living Allowance; Disabled Persons Tax Credit; Attendance Allowance
Figures for 1997 have not been included, as they are not available for the full year and as result would be inconsistent with other years.
All figures are subject to change as more up to date data becomes available.
Figures for the latest months may rise significantly as information feeds through to the Appeals Service.
Figures are rounded to the nearest five except for the National Live Load, which is rounded to the nearest hundred.
'–' denotes data equal to nil or negligible.
Incapacity Benefit data is not available before 2000 due to a change in methodology. The live load figures for Sickness Benefits and Disability Benefits as at August 2003 were 2,715,800 and 4,228,100 respectively. These figures cannot be broken down to those for Appeals Service regional office areas to give the number of appeals cleared as a percentage of the live load.
*Source:*
100 per cent. download of the Generic Appeals Processing System.

### Disability Discrimination Act

**Mr. Goodman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what measures his Department is taking to prepare *(a)* businesses and *(b)* service providers for the implementation of the parts of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 which come into effect later this year. [160692]

**Maria Eagle:** We are making significant changes to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) on 1 October 2004 to improve access to employment and to goods and services for all disabled people in this country. Employers with fewer than 15 staff will be covered by the employment duties for the first time. Service providers will also be under new duties to make reasonable adjustments to physical barriers which prevent disabled people accessing their services.

We are taking action on three fronts to prepare employers and service providers for these changes:

undertaking targeted campaigns using a range of press, broadcast and web-based media to raise awareness of the new duties;

directly mailing around a million individual small businesses to explain their responsibilities under the DDA and the business benefits of making adjustments for disabled people; and

running another Access All Areas award to encourage the spread of best practice among service providers.

This activity complements the Disability Rights Commission's Open4All campaign, which is targeted at small service providers.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Burglary

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were *(a)* charged, *(b)* prosecuted and *(c)* found guilty of burglary in Greater London in each year since 1997; how many of these were under (i) 16, (ii) 18 and (iii) 21 years; and how many of those found guilty were given (A) custodial and (B) non-custodial sentences, broken down by age group. [159219]

**Paul Goggins:** The available information is contained in the table and relates to offenders proceeded against at the magistrates courts and found guilty and sentenced at all courts for burglary of all types in Greater London, 1997 to 2002.

Statistics on court proceedings for 2003 will be published in the autumn.

*Persons proceeded against at magistrates courts and those found guilty and sentenced at all courts for offences of burglary[1] by age and outcome*
*Greater London[2] 1997 to 2002*

| | Number of persons | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Persons proceeded against | Persons found guilty at all courts | Persons sentenced | Sentenced to immediate custody | Given non-custodial sentences |
| *1997* | | | | | |
| All ages | 5,547 | 3,551 | 3,609 | 1,815 | 1,794 |
| of whom: | | | | | |
| Aged 10–15 | 493 | 288 | 289 | 51 | 238 |
| Aged 16–17 | 830 | 539 | 551 | 159 | 392 |
| Aged 18–20 | 1,143 | 769 | 781 | 363 | 418 |
| *1998* | | | | | |
| All ages | 5,534 | 3,408 | 3,611 | 1,880 | 1,731 |
| of whom: | | | | | |
| Aged 10–15 | 507 | 296 | 299 | 35 | 264 |
| Aged 16–17 | 763 | 487 | 487 | 154 | 333 |
| Aged 18–20 | 1,037 | 646 | 699 | 353 | 346 |
| *1999* | | | | | |
| All ages | 5,309 | 3,313 | 3,358 | 1,739 | 1,619 |
| of whom: | | | | | |
| Aged 10–15 | 479 | 276 | 275 | 30 | 245 |
| Aged 16–17 | 670 | 424 | 424 | 138 | 286 |
| Aged 18–20 | 998 | 646 | 640 | 324 | 316 |

*Persons proceeded against at magistrates courts and those found guilty and sentenced at all courts for offences of burglary[1] by age and outcome*
*Greater London[2] 1997 to 2002*

| | *Number of persons* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Persons proceeded against* | *Persons found guilty at all courts* | *Persons sentenced* | *Sentenced to immediate custody* | *Given non-custodial sentences* |
| *2000* | | | | | |
| All ages | 5,355 | 3,290 | 3,367 | 1,966 | 1,401 |
| of whom: | | | | | |
| Aged 10–15 | 403 | 216 | 214 | 34 | 180 |
| Aged 16–17 | 687 | 406 | 408 | 127 | 281 |
| Aged 18–20 | 908 | 595 | 615 | 335 | 280 |
| *2001* | | | | | |
| All ages | 5,374 | 3,148 | 3,189 | 1,768 | 1,421 |
| of whom: | | | | | |
| Aged 10–15 | 454 | 224 | 224 | 35 | 189 |
| Aged 16–17 | 689 | 378 | 376 | 105 | 271 |
| Aged 18–20 | 814 | 452 | 436 | 246 | 190 |
| *2002* | | | | | |
| All ages | 5,782 | 3,364 | 3,261 | 1,790 | 1,471 |
| of whom: | | | | | |
| Aged 10–15 | 448 | 238 | 238 | 21 | 217 |
| Aged 16–17 | 664 | 352 | 352 | 112 | 240 |
| Aged 18–20 | 802 | 432 | 423 | 232 | 191 |

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.
[2] Metropolitan and City of London police force areas.

## Correspondence

**Miss Widdecombe:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to reply to the letters of 31 July 2003 and 24 November 2003 from the hon. Member for Maidstone and the Weald about Mrs. Rosa Wiles. [157997]

**Beverley Hughes:** Our records show that I wrote to the right hon. Lady on 4 August 2003 in response to a previous letter of 23 July 2003. The right hon. Lady's office confirmed this reply dealt with the points raised in the right hon. Lady's letter of 31 July 2003 and that a further reply was not required. Although there was no record of the right hon. Lady's letter of 24 November 2003 having been received by the Home Office your office sent a copy and I wrote to the right hon. Lady on 11 March.

**Mr. Kaufman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he intends to reply to the letter to him dated 28 January from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. J. Hussain. [158696]

**Mr. Blunkett:** I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 11 March.

**Mr. Gerald Kaufman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) when he intends to reply to the letter to him dated 15 January from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. A. Nicholls; [159987]

(2) when his Department will reply to the letter to him from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton dated 15 January with regard to Mr. A. Nicholls. [160489]

**Mr. Blunkett:** The Minister of State wrote to my right hon. Friend on 11 March.

## Corruption

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department intends to establish a specialised authority to combat corruption in line with Article 36 of the UN Convention Against Corruption. [158356]

**Caroline Flint:** The UK is already in compliance with article 36 of the UN Convention against Corruption which stipulates that each State Party shall ensure the existence of a body or bodies or persons specialised in combating corruption through law enforcement. There are persons specialised in combating corruption in a number of law enforcement authorities which have responsibility for investigating or prosecuting corruption offences, such as the CPS and the Metropolitan Police.

## Curfew Orders

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many curfew orders have been made in Chorley in each of the last five years. [157114]

**Paul Goggins:** The information requested is contained in the table and relates to offenders sentenced to a curfew order for all offences in the Chorley Petty Sessional Area (PSA) and at the Crown court when committed from the Chorley PSA, in the years 1998 to 2002.

*Persons[1] sentenced to a curfew order[2] for all offences in the Chorley PSA, 1999 to 2002*

| | *Sentenced to a curfew order* |
|---|---|
| 1999 | — |
| 2000 | 5 |
| 2001 | 8 |
| 2002 | 11 |

[1] These data are on the principal offence.
[2] Curfew orders were introduced nationally in December 1999

Statistics on court proceedings for 2003 will be published in the autumn.

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* home and *(b)* child curfew orders have been made in (i) Greater London and (ii) each London borough in each of the last five years. [159218]

**Paul Goggins:** It is not possible, from the statistics collected centrally, to identify persons released from custody on Home Detention Curfew orders by area.

The available information is contained in the table and relates to juveniles aged 10–17 sentenced to a curfew order for all offences in the Greater London area, each borough in outer London and each magistrates court in inner London (it is not possible from the statistics collected centrally to identify boroughs in inner London). The figures include curfew orders imposed at the Crown Court when committed for trial or sentence from the courts/boroughs shown.

*Number[1] of juveniles aged 10–17 sentenced to a curfew order for all offences in Greater London[2] and each London borough—1998 to 2002[1]*

| | Sentenced to a curfew order | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Magistrates court/borough* | *1998* | *1999* | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* |
| *Inner London magistrates courts[2]* | | | | | |
| Bow Street | — | — | — | — | — |
| Camberwell Green/Tower Bridge | — | — | 1 | 6 | 24 |
| Guildhall Justice Rooms | — | — | — | — | — |
| Greenwich/Woolwich | — | — | — | — | — |
| Highbury Corner | — | — | — | — | — |
| Horseferry Road | — | — | — | 1 | — |
| Marylebone | — | — | — | — | — |
| South Western | — | — | 3 | 30 | 56 |
| Thames | — | — | 11 | 33 | 36 |
| West London | — | — | 5 | 16 | 46 |
| *Outer London boroughs* | | | | | |
| Barking and Dagenham | — | — | — | 4 | 11 |
| Barnet | 1 | — | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Bexley | — | — | — | — | 5 |
| Brent | 9 | 5 | — | 3 | 2 |
| Bromley | — | — | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Croydon | — | — | — | 1 | 12 |
| Ealing | 1 | 1 | — | 1 | 6 |
| Enfield | 1 | 3 | 8 | 5 | 9 |
| Harringey | — | — | 1 | 5 | 13 |
| Harrow | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| Havering | — | — | — | — | 2 |
| Hillingdon | — | 3 | 2 | 9 | — |
| Hounslow | — | — | 4 | 2 | 10 |
| Kingston-upon-Thames | — | — | — | 1 | 1 |
| Merton | — | — | — | 4 | 13 |
| Newham | — | — | — | 2 | 13 |
| Redbridge | — | — | — | 1 | 5 |
| Richmond-upon-Thames | — | — | — | 3 | 5 |
| Sutton | — | — | — | 1 | 7 |
| Waltham Forest | — | — | — | 9 | 6 |
| Total | 13 | 13 | 42 | 142 | 292 |

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.
[2] Information held centrally does not allow a breakdown of cases by borough in the inner London area.

Statistics on court proceedings for 2003 will be published in the autumn.

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many home curfew orders have been made in *(a)* Ribble Valley and Fulwood and *(b)* Lancashire in each of the last five years. [156501]

**Paul Goggins:** The available information is contained in the table and relates to persons sentenced to a curfew order for all offences at all courts in the Lancashire police force area, 1998 to 2002. It is not possible to separately identify the areas of Ribble Valley and Fulwood in the statistics collected centrally.

*Number of persons[1] sentenced to a curfew order for all offences at all courts in the Lancashire police force area[2], 1998 to 2002*

| | *Sentenced to a curfew order* |
|---|---|
| 1999 | 1 |
| 2000 | 58 |
| 2001 | 61 |
| 2002 | 195 |

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis
[2] Curfew orders were introduced nationally in December 1999

Statistics on court proceedings for 2003 will be published in the autumn.

### Litter Abatement Orders (Merseyside)

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many occasions local authorities in Merseyside have issued a litter abatement order to landowners in each of the last five years. [159598]

**Alun Michael:** I have been asked to reply.

Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, Principle Litter Authorities can serve litter abatement notices" on the occupier of land or, if unoccupied, on the owner of the land. "Litter abatement orders" can be served by a magistrates' court should any person be aggrieved by the defacement of litter or refuse on relevant land and highways make a complaint.

The information collected by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs indicates that Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St. Helens or Wirral local authorities have not issued any litter abatement notices to landowners during the last five years.

### Looked-After Children

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many looked-after children aged 10 or over were cautioned or convicted for an offence in each year since 1994; and what the figures were for all children. [158068]

**Paul Goggins:** Figures on looked after children aged 10 or over who were convicted or subject to a final warning or reprimand have been collected annually since 2000 for those children who have been continuously looked after for at least 12 months. These figures, provided by the Department for Education and Skills, cover England only, and are shown in the following table:

*Offending by children who had been looked after continuously for at least 12 months, years ending 30 September 2000 to 2002—England*

*Number[1] of children*

| | *Number of looked after children aged 10 or older at 30 September* | *of which: Number convicted or subject to a final warning or reprimand during the year* |
|---|---|---|
| *Number* | | |
| 2000 | 25,700 | 2,800 |
| 2001 | 27,000 | 2,800 |
| 2002 | 28,200 | 2,700 |
| *Percentage* | | |
| 2000 | — | 10.8 |
| 2001 | — | 10.4 |
| 2002 | — | 9.7 |

[1] Numbers shown are rounded to the nearest 100.

National figures for 2003 are due to be published in April.

Similar information for Wales is not available

The following table shows the number of all children found guilty or cautioned (given reprimands or final warnings from June 2000) in England and Wales:

*Children aged 10–17 cautioned and found guilty at all courts for all offences[1]. England and Wales 1994–2002*

| | *Children cautioned* | *Children found guilty* | *Total* | *Proportion of total children in age group (percentage)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1994 | 124,654 | 62,062 | 186,716 | 3.8 |
| 1995 | 120,561 | 67,864 | 188,425 | 3.7 |
| 1996 | 113,065 | 74,675 | 187,740 | 3.6 |
| 1997 | 104,520 | 79,151 | 183,671 | 3.5 |
| 1998 | 109,725 | 86,506 | 196,231 | 3.7 |
| 1999 | 103,978 | 90,280 | 194,258 | 3.7 |
| 2000 | 97,541 | 91,423 | 188,964 | 3.5 |
| 2001 | 98,042 | 95,530 | 193,572 | 3.6 |
| 2002 | 86,589 | 94,546 | 181,135 | 3.3 |

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis

Statistics for 2003 for England and Wales will be published in the autumn.

### No Fixed Abode

**Mr. McCabe:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of whether the monetary grant made available for prisoners on release from custodial sentence offering no fixed abode as an address acts as an incentive to give no fixed abode as their address; and whether paedophiles giving no fixed abode on release avoid immediate listing on the Register of Sex Offenders. [157995]

**Paul Goggins:** A higher rate of discharge grant is paid to prisoners on release only if there is a need to seek, obtain and pay for accommodation. It is only paid to prisoners with no accommodation arranged in advance if this arises through no fault of the prisoner.

The Prison Service undertook a large-scale survey in March and April 2003 of sentenced prisoners nearing release. 29 per cent. said they did not have accommodation arranged on release, compared to 33 per cent. in a similar survey undertaken in November and December 2001.

Registered sex offenders are subject to the notification requirements of the Sex Offenders Act 1997. They are required to provide the police with their home address within three days of their release from prison. Where an offender does not have a home address (which is his sole or main residence in the UK), he is required to provide the police with an address of premises in the UK which he regularly visits.

### Oakington Immigration Centre

**Mr. Lansley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what has been the cost of policing arising from *(a)* the activity at, and *(b)* escapes from the immigration centre at Oakington, Cambridgeshire. [157353]

**Ms Blears:** The Chief Constable has informed me that the costs of policing activity incurred by the force over the period 1 January 2002 to 1 March 2004 was:

(a) £950 for responding to 83 calls to assist at the Oakington immigration centre.

(b) £3,250 to deal with 31 incidents involving escapees from the centre.

### Operation Artemis

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the likely cost to the police of Operation Artemis. [160086]

**Caroline Flint:** There was no cost to the police from Operation Artemis. Operation Artemis was a French-led European Union operation to the Democratic Republic of the Congo to support the United Nations Mission present in the country and to provide a secure environment under which the interim administration could function.

It was deployed for a short period from June 2003 until 15 September 2003 and was a military mission with no civilian police involvement.

### Police Officers

**Mr. Edward Davey:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers there were in each *(a)* London borough and *(b)* Metropolitan police division in each year since 1992, in terms of (i) budgeted establishment and (ii) officers in post. [158839]

**Ms Blears:** The deployment of officers to territorial divisions is an operational matter for the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis (Sir John Stevens). The information requested has been provided by the Commissioner in tabular form. Table 1 sets out the position in the MRS between 1992 and 1998. Table 2 continues with figures for a revised structure in 1999 and 2000. Table 3 sets out the position following the boundary changes on 1 April 2000. These tables have been placed in the Library.

The structure of Metropolitan Police territorial divisions and Borough Operational Command Units over the period 1992 to 2003 has changed. Figures are not therefore strictly comparable year on year as a result of boundary and organisational changes in the Metropolitan Police Service (MRS). In particular organisational changes were made following boundary changes on 1 April 2000 with the Essex, Hertfordshire and Surrey forces. The current territorial areas, introduced in 2000, are not therefore compatible with the previous force structure.

### Prisons

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether all prisons issue prisoners with a plastic sack marked HM Prison Service to contain their belongings on discharge; and what assessment he has made of alternatives to this practice. [156033]

**Paul Goggins:** Plastic sacks stamped with the Prison Service logo are used to store prisoners' property while they are in custody. The Prison Service has made it clear that their use for prisoners' property on discharge is not acceptable. Since October 2002 the Prison Service has made available to prisons plain nylon barrel bags for use for prisoners' property on discharge. These have been well received by prisoners and staff.

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his estimate is of the average weekly hours of purposeful activity in *(a)* privately run prisons and *(b)* state run prisons; and if he will make a statement. [156829]

**Paul Goggins:** During this financial year, to the end of January prisoners undertook an average of 23 hours of purposeful activity per week in public sector prisons and 26.3 hours in contracted out prisons.

*Note:*
These figures are provisional and have been taken from establishment purposeful activity returns for the financial year 2003 to present.

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners are housed in modular temporary units, broken down by prisons. [159278]

**Paul Goggins** *[holding answer 5 March 2004]:* The number of prisoners accommodated in Modular Temporary Units (MTUs) is not held centrally. I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave her on 10 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1431 for the capacity of MTUs across the prison estate, broken down by establishment.

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many sites are being assessed as potential new sites for prisons. [159279]

**Paul Goggins** *[holding answer 5 March 2004]:* The Prison Service is actively seeking potential sites suitable for the development of prison establishments. The details of any individual sites cannot be disclosed for commercial reasons.

### Women Prisoners

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action he has taken to implement the results of the research commissioned from Prisoners' Families on enabling women prisoners to keep in touch with their families. [159311]

**Paul Goggins:** The work carried out by Action for Prisoners' Families will continue to inform the development of family policy and practice at Cookham Wood and other women's prisons.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Trading Standards

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information the Office collects on the on-line submission of complaints to trading standards offices. [158900]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** The Department of Trade and Industry and the Office of Fair Trading do not collect statistics about the on-line submission of complaints to trading standards Departments. However, ConsumerComplaints.org.uk is a site developed with DTI support, which enables consumers to complain on-line. The complaint is automatically directed to the appropriate Trading Standards Department. Individual trading standards Departments use computer systems that are able to generate reports on how complaints are received. This would include a report on the number of complaints received on-line, compared to other methods.

### Bankruptcies

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many companies went bankrupt in *(a)* Huddersfield and *(b)* the UK in each year since 1997. [160042]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** Company Insolvency data for Huddersfield are not separately identifiable. Compulsory insolvencies are only broken down by Official Receivers Office. Huddersfield county court comes under the jurisdiction of the Official Receivers Office at Leeds, which also has responsibility for Bradford, Dewsbury, Halifax, Harrogate, Keighley, Leeds, Otley, Pontefract, Skipton, Wakefield and Todmorden. Company Insolvency Figures for the UK are provided in the following table:

*Company insolvencies in the UK 1997 to 2003*

| | *1997* | *1998* | *1999* | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* | *2003* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| England and Wales | 12,610 | 13,203 | 14,280 | 14,317 | 14,972 | 16,305 | 14,184 |
| Scotland | 477 | 566 | 572 | 583 | 602 | 788 | 631 |
| Northern Ireland | 113 | 99 | 103 | 136 | 100 | 102 | 143 |
| UK total | 13,200 | 13,868 | 14,955 | 15,036 | 15,674 | 17,195 | 14,958 |

### Biomass Electricity Project, Winkleigh

**Mr. Burnett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the requests for payment from *(a)* her Department and *(b)* the South West Regional Development Agency in respect of the proposed Biomass Electricity Generation project at Winkleigh, Devon. [157145]

**Mr. Timms** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]:* The Department received an application for grant assistance of £11.50 million for this project under the Bioenergy Capital Grants Scheme in October 2002. The project was given a grant offer of £11.50 million in February 2003. No payments have yet been made, under this grant.

In parallel, the South West of England Regional Development Agency has received an application for support totalling £623,900 in respect of this project. Project funding has been authorised and to date £384,391 has been paid (mainly for land acquisition) leaving £239,509 to be paid as other elements of the project are completed.

### British Nuclear Fuels

**Dr. Jack Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many workers who transferred from AEA Technology to British Nuclear Fuels on 2 December 2003 lost pension benefits as a

result; for what reasons they are required to pay increased contribution rates for pensions in their new jobs; and if she will make a statement. [159886]

**Mr. Timms** *[holding answer 10 March 2004]:* The staff that transferred on 1 December 2003 have until the end of May to decide which pension option they would like to take up out of those presented to them as part of the flexible transfer process.

As a minimum, transferring staff retained the value of their existing AEA Technology ("AEAT") pension fund. This existing pension fund had diminished during employment with AEAT but on transfer the funds were augmented via a mechanism involving AEAT, BNFL and employee's contributions. The Government Actuary's Department considered that the value of pension benefits arising from the augmented funds to represent a fair and equitable transfer of benefits under the stated Government guidelines on transfer of pension benefits within the public sector.

Transferring staff contribution rates are the same as those that they would have been required to make under their previous employment with AEAT if the transfer had never occurred.

**Mr. Watson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with BNFL about their overseas contracts. [160017]

**Mr. Timms:** BNFL operates within a Governance Framework agreed by the Department as shareholder. Within this framework, BNFL is required to seek departmental agreement to specific contracts subject to certain criteria. On behalf of the Secretary of State, officials have regular discussions with BNFL regarding their overseas contracts in this context.

### Correspondence

**Mr. Chope:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when the hon. Member for Christchurch will receive a substantive response to his letter of 18 December 2003 about the employment of non-UK labour in the construction industry and the Posting of Workers Directive. [157590]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** As set out in the reply to the hon. Member for Christchurch, these are very important issues upon which the Government are seeking to obtain the full facts. I will write to him when I have further information to provide.

### Employment Rights Advice Booklets

**Lynne Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the expected annual cost savings to her Department are of its decision to cease production of hard copy prints of most of its employment rights advice booklets. [159683]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** We anticipate savings in the region of £380,000 per annum.

**Lynne Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 1 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 630W, to the hon. Member for Northampton, North (Ms Keeble), on employment rights leaflets, which leading customers of her Department's information service were consulted in relation to the decision to cease production of hard copy prints of most of the service's employment rights advice booklets. [159685]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** Ceasing production of hard copy documents was one of the recommendations of a review on how our information on employment rights could be better focused on users needs. A practitioner group was set up as the means of consultation. Listed are the groups invited to be part of that group:

CBI

Trade Unions Congress

Small Business Council

Commission for Racial Equality

NACAB

British Retail Consortium

Parents at Work

Equal Opportunities Commission

MaternityAlliance

Amicus

EEF

ACCA

West Midlands Employment and Low Pay Unit

Construction Confederation

British Hospitality Association

Canary Wharf Group PLC

Leo Abse and Cowen

LG Electronics

ACAS

Disability Rights Commission

CIPD

British Chambers of Commerce

Federation of Small Business

An Employment Law Consultant

**Lynne Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 1 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 630W, to the hon. Member for Northampton, North (Ms Keeble), how many end users were surveyed during her Department's recent review of its information service; and how these end users were selected. [159686]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** The review was conducted on the basis of consultation with users groups. A survey was not undertaken.

**Lynne Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many paper copies of each of her Department's employment rights booklets were ordered by customers in the most recent annual period for which information is available. [159687]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** I refer the hon. Member to the following list.

| *Employment Rights Publication* | *Annual issues up to 5 September 2003* |
|---|---|
| Industrial action ballots and notice to employers. PL962 (Rev 1) | 1,202 |
| Written statement of employment particulars. PL700 (Rev 5) | 12,587 |
| Trade Union political funds: a guide for trade unions, their members and others. PL868 (Rev 3) | 752 |
| Industrial action and the law: a guide for employees, trade union members and others. PL869 (Rev 4) | 2,302 |
| Industrial action and the law: a guide for employers, their customers and suppliers and others. PL870 (Rev 4) | 1,135 |
| Family emergency? your right to time off. PL506 | 9,224 |
| Argyfwng teuluol? eich hawl I gael amser I ffwrdd | 121 |
| Benefit repayment: a guide for employers required to repay state benefit previously claimed by an employee who has won an employment tribunal award. PL720 (Rev 4) | 1,771 |
| Trade union executive elections: a guide for trade unions, their members and others. PL866 (Rev 3) | 516 |
| Time off for public duties. PL702 (Rev 4) | 3,230 |
| Unjustifiable discipline by a trade union: a guide for trade unions, their members and others. PL865 (Rev2) | 1,002 |
| Access to workers during recognition and derecognition ballots. PL500 | 555 |
| Guarantee payments. PL724 (Rev 2) | 4,030 |
| Union membership: rights of members and non-members. PL871 (Rev 7) | 2,724 |
| Hawliau mamolaeth: arweiniad I gyflogwyr a gweithwyr. PL958 (Diw 7) | 158 |
| Suspension from work on medical or maternity grounds under health and safety regulations. PL705 (Rev4) | 1,402 |
| Trade union funds and accounting records: a guide for trade unions, their members and others. PL867 (Rev 3) | 732 |
| *Family emergency? Your right to time off (audiotape). PL506* | 74 |
| *Time off for dependants: a guide for employers and employees (audiotape.* | 60 |
| Contracts of employment: changes, breach of contract and deductions from wages. PL810 (Rev 6) | 18,420 |
| Sunday shop and betting work: employees' rights. PL960 (Rev 1) | 1,567 |
| Contractau cyflogaeth: newidiadau, torri contract a thynn'u ol o gyflog. PL810 (Diw 6) | 0 |
| Disclosures in the public interest: protections for workers who 'blow the whistle'. PL502 (Rev 2) | 3,444 |
| Rights to notice and reasons for dismissal. PL707 (Rev 13) | 10,256 |
| Adoptive parents: rights to leave and pay when a child is placed for adoption in the UK (PL518) | 2,848 |
| Working fathers: rights to paternity leave and pay. A guide for employers and employees. PL517 | 20,935 |
| Transfers of undertakings: a guide to the regulations. PL699 (Rev 6). | 10,886 |
| Dismissal: fair and unfair. A guide for employers. PL714 (Rev 10) | 15,551 |
| Hawliau unigol gweithwyr: arweiniad i gyflogwyr a gweithwyr. PL716 (Diw 9) | 159 |
| Parental leave: a guide for employers and employees. PL509 | 12 |
| Parental leave: a short guide. PL510 | 235 |
| Unfairly dismissed? PL712 (Rev 17) | 8,621 |
| Pay statements: what they must itemise. PL704 (Rev 5) | 4,640 |
| Maternity rights: a guide for employers and employees. PL958 (Rev 7) | 3,310 |
| *Employment agencies: know your rights. PL511* | 1,518 |
| Industrial action and the law: citizen's right to prevent disruption. PL943 (Rev 1) | 1,331 |
| Rights to notice and reasons for dismissal (audiotape version). PL707 (Rev 13) | 138 |
| PL833 (REV 6) Redundancy Consultation and Notification | 10,810 |
| Limits on payments and awards. PL827 (Rev 8) | 6,148 |
| Maternity leave changes: a basic summary. PL507 (Rev 3) | 21,833 |
| Adoptive parents rights to leave and pay: a basic summary. PL515 (Rev 1) | 14,154 |
| Paternity leave and pay: a basic summary. PL514 (Rev 1). | 23,814 |
| Flexible working the right to request: a brief summary. PL516 (Rev 1) | 24,298 |
| Continuous employment and a week's pay: rules for calculation. PL711 (Rev 8) | 7,431 |
| Redundancy entitlement statutory rights: a guide for employees. PL808 (Rev 6) | 28,733 |
| *Individual rights of employees: a guide for employers and employees. PL716 (Rev 10)* | 7,477 |
| Maternity rights: a guide for employers and employees. Babies due on or after 6 April 2003. PL958 (Rev 9) | 15,273 |
| Picketing. PL928 (Rev 1) | 1,090 |
| The payment of union subscriptions through the check-off: a guide for employers, trade unions and their members, taking account of legislation up to and including the Deregulation (Deduction from Pay of Union Subscriptions) Order 1998. PL944 (Rev 1) | 594 |
| Employment Rights (Dispute Resolution) Act 1998: a guide to its provisions | 345 |
| Time off for dependants: a guide for employers and employees | 8,441 |
| Offsetting pensions against redundancy payments: a guide for employers. RPL1 | 293 |
| Example form of a written statement of employment particulars. PL700A (Rev 1) | 5,065 |
| A short guide to the working time regulations | 16,096 |
| Your guide to the working time regulations: workers and employers. July 2003 | 7,537 |
| Working Time Regulations Rheoliadau Amser | 0 |
| Your rights if your employer is insolvent: a guide for employers, employees and others. PL 718 (Rev 7) | 45,215 |
| National minimum wage: a short guide for young workers. (Somali) | 18 |
| The minimum wage and 'therapeutic work'. | 0 |
| A detailed guide to the national minimum wage (October 2001 edition). PL501 | 6,361 |
| Isafswm cyflog cenedlaethol: canllaw byr I gyflogeion. (A short guide to the national minimum wage) | 145 |
| Isafswm cyflog cenedlaethol: canllaw byr I gyflogwyr. (A short guide to the national minimum wage) | 96 |
| National minimum wage: a short guide for employees | 14,303 |
| National minimum wage: A short guide for employees (Bengali) | 254 |
| National minimum wage: A short guide for employees (Chinese) | 190 |
| National minimum wage: A short guide for employees (Greek) | 207 |
| National minimum wage: A short guide for employees (Gujarati) | 270 |
| National minimum wage: A short guide for employees (Hindi) | 248 |
| National minimum wage: A short guide for employees (Punjabi) | 259 |
| National minimum wage: A short guide for employees (Somali) | 162 |

| *Employment Rights Publication* | *Annual issues up to 5 September 2003* |
|---|---|
| National minimum wage: A short guide for employees (Turkish) | 205 |
| National minimum wage: A short guide for employees (Urdu) | 218 |
| National minimum wage: A short guide for employees (Vietnamese version) | 219 |
| National minimum wage: a short guide for employers | 12,467 |
| National minimum wage: A short guide for employers (Bengali) | 173 |
| National minimum wage: A short guide for employers (Chinese) | 133 |
| National minimum wage: A short guide for employers (Greek) | 120 |
| National minimum wage: A short guide for employers (Gujarati) | 170 |
| National minimum wage: A short guide for employers (Hindi) | 173 |
| National minimum wage: A short guide for employers (Punjabi) | 174 |
| National minimum wage: A short guide for employers (Somali) | 121 |
| National minimum wage: A short guide for employers (Turkish) | 120 |
| National minimum wage: A short guide for employers (Urdu) | 130 |
| National minimum wage: A short guide for employers (Vietnamese) | 173 |
| National minimum wage: a short guide for young workers. PL 519 | 190 |
| National minimum wage: A short guide for employees (Arabic) | 163 |
| National minimum wage: A short guide for employers (Arabic) | 123 |
| The minimum wage and therapeutic work. National minimum wage information note. PL508 (Rev 1) | 564 |
| The minimum wage and therapeutic work (Large print) | 0 |
| The minimum wage and therapeutic work (Braille) | 11 |
| The minimum wage and therapeutic work (Audio cassette) | 33 |

*Notes:*
1. Publications in italics will remain in hard copy format.
*Source:*
Extract from DTI Publications Full Title Usage Report 5 September 2003.

**Lynne Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the *(a)* most regular users of her Department's distribution service and *(b)* the total number of employment rights booklets ordered by each such user in the most recent annual period for which information is available. [159688]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** The following is a list of the organisations ordering the largest number of publications for the year ending 29 February 2004. Figures are for all booklets ordered by the organisation and not by subject matter.

Annual figures on employment rights booklets ordered by organisations are not readily available and would not be cost effective to produce.

*Top 100 organisations ordering the highest number of publications from the DTI distribution centre*

| *Address number* | *Organisation* | *Total order quantity*[1] |
|---|---|---|
| 558138 | Bright Star Fireworks UK Ltd. | 500,000 |
| 414998 | Amey | 135,000 |
| 326772 | Redundancy Payments Service | 111,515 |
| 563898 | TNT Fireworks UK Ltd. | 100,000 |
| 443440 | Lewisham Fire Station | 85,650 |
| 471697 | Clearview Imaging Services Ltd. | 69,125 |
| 473215 | The Portergate | 66,971 |
| 480222 | Trading Standards | 59,695 |
| 8813 | Edinburgh RPO | 58,948 |
| 206669 | Cosmic Fireworks | 51,000 |
| 439799 | Quality Mark Scheme Helpdesk | 50,876 |
| 1315868 | The Insolvency Service | 48,003 |
| 181100 | Strathclyde Fire brigade HQ | 45,010 |
| 582195 | Department of Trade and Industry | 40,980 |
| 607992 | SGB Youngman | 40,000 |
| 518183 | IWM 2003 Exhibition and Conference | 34,172 |
| 562459 | Invest UK and Itu telecom World | 33,193 |
| 295514 | Renault Printing Co Ltd. | 30,000 |
| 562496 | HM Customs Excise | 30,000 |
| 483912 | Employment Tribunals Service | 25,020 |
| 9106 | ROSPA Info Centre | 22,751 |
| 343898 | Anton Group | 20,000 |
| 139891 | Department of Trade and Industry | 20,000 |

[1] 31 January 2003 to 1 February 2004

**Energy Services Working Group**

**Brian White:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which members of the energy efficiency industry she has appointed to her Energy Services Working Group. [160097]

**Mr. Timms:** The Energy Services Working Group has now completed its work and submitted a final report to Ministers on 23 January. John Chesshire of the Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes was a member of the Group. Other members, apart from Government officials, were Nick Eyre of the Energy Saving Trust and representatives of all the major energy suppliers. Minutes of the meetings of the Group, together with papers presented to it and the interim and final reports are available on the DTI website at: www.dti.gov.uk/energy/environment/energy_efficiency/eswg/shtml

**EU Emissions Trading Scheme**

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what impact she expects the EU emissions trading scheme to have on electricity prices. [158850]

**Mr. Timms:** The impact of the EU emissions trading scheme will depend on the price of carbon in the market and the extent to which this is passed through by generators. The Department has based its estimates on a carbon price in a range from €5–25/tonne of $CO_2$. In the first phase of the scheme at least, from 2005 to 2007, the Department believes that the carbon price is more likely to be towards the bottom of the range. The electricity price increase corresponding to a carbon price of €5/tonne is estimated to be 3 per cent. for domestic customers and 6 per cent. for industrial customers.

The Department commissioned ILEX Consulting to undertake work on the implications of the emissions trading scheme on the power sector. Their report can be found at: www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/ilex_report.pdf

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the impact of her Department's interpretation of the EU emissions trading scheme on UK competitiveness. [158851]

**Mr. Timms:** The Department has considered carefully the implications of the EU emissions trading scheme for UK competitiveness in decisions on the overall cap. The expected impacts on energy costs and their effects on trade and the regions and countries of the UK have been published in the following document: www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/euetsimplications.pdf

We will keep this under review as national allocation plans of other member states become clearer.

### Household Fuel Expenditure

**Brian White:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the average proportion of household expenditure spent on household fuel was in *(a)* 1975, *(b)* 1980, *(c)* 1985, *(d)* 1990, *(e)* 2000 and *(f)* 2003. [160096]

**Mr. Timms:** The average proportion of household expenditure spent on fuel in *(a)* 1995, *(b)* 1980, *(c)* 1985, *(d)* 1990, *(e)* 2000 and *(f)* 2003 is set out in the following table.

| | *Household expenditure on fuel (Percentage)* |
|---|---|
| 1975 | 5.5 |
| 1980 | 5.6 |
| 1985 | 6.2 |
| 1990 | 4.5 |
| 2000–01 | 3.1 |
| 2002–03 | 2.9 |

*Source:*
ONS–Family Expenditure Survey, 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, 2000–01.
Expenditure and Food Survey from 2001–02.

### Internet Access

**Lynne Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many workers she estimates *(a)* are unable to use and *(b)* do not have direct access to the internet. [159699]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** The DTI's International Benchmarking Study (DBS) measures the use of ICT by business and is produced annually. The IBS 2003 found that:

(a) 77 per cent. of ICT using organisations are completely or mostly content with their in-house ICT skills.

(b) 10 per cent. of businesses do not have internet access.

IBS results are weighted to reflect employee distribution. A copy of the 2003 study (URN 03/147) is available from the Libraries of the House.

### Miners' Pension Funds

**Michael Fabricant:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she or one of her Ministers will meet ex-miners from the Lichfield constituency in London to discuss current arrangements for miners' pension funds in the next four months. [160043]

**Mr. Timms:** Issues relating to the current arrangements for the miners' pension funds are matters for the Schemes' Trustees.

### Nanotechnology

**Michael Fabricant:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the Government's policy is on nanotechnology; and if she will make a statement. [159740]

**Ms Hewitt:** The global market for nanotechnology is forecast to exceed $1,000 billion within the next decade and it is vital that the UK is a strong player in this market. My noble Friend the Minister for Science announced our investment of £90 million in our Micro and Nanotechnology Manufacturing Initiative in July 2003 to help industry harness the commercial opportunities offered by nanotechnology. £50 million will be spent on collaborative R&D projects and £40 million on a new network of micro and nanotechnology facilities. This will help business build on the UK's excellent track record in small-scale science and win a share of this developing market. This activity will build on the substantial and wide ranging investment we are already making through the Research Councils. We expect to invest a further £100 million in our science base for nanotechnology based research over the next few years.

In addition in December 2003 I launched the "Innovation Report: Competing in the global economy: the innovation challenge, December 2003". This report describes a range of new DTI products to support technological innovation which are already being applied to support UK interests in nanotechnology.

It is the policy of this Government to be open about our approach to new technologies, to acknowledge uncertainties and to ensure that the public are engaged in the decision making process. To address any potential concerns the Government commissioned the Royal Society and the Royal Academy of Engineering to carry out an independent study to make sure we are able to benefit from the advances that nanotechnology promises with the right regulatory safeguards and protections in place. The study will also be used to inform policy on what safeguards might be required over and above existing legislation and guidance.

### Nirex

**Mr. Simon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the impact on long-term radioactive waste management of *(a)* the continued ownership of Nirex by the nuclear industry, *(b)* the ownership of Nirex by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and *(c)* a Nirex independent of the nuclear industry. [159666]

**Mr. Timms:** The Government have established the independent Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) to advise it by the end of 2005 on the long-term management of the UK's higher activity wastes. Consideration of the arrangements for managing these wastes before receiving that advice would be premature.

**Mr. Watson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what meetings her Department has held with *(a)* BNFL and *(b)* British Energy to discuss the budget for Nirex. [160010]

**Mr. Timms:** The Department is in regular contact with BNFL and British Energy on a range of issues, including their shareholdings in Nirex.

### Nuclear Decommissioning Authority

**Mr. Watson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether any income accrued by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority from *(a)* the commercial reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel and *(b)* Magnox power generation will be returned to the (i) decommissioning and (ii) clean-up of nuclear sites. [160009]

**Mr. Timms:** Yes. All such income will be received by Government and credited to the Nuclear Decommissioning Funding Account that will record the sums available to the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA). Commercial income credited to the Account will be separately identified.

**Mr. Chaytor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on plans to establish a Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. [160286]

**Mr. Timms:** Proposals to establish the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority were set out in the 2002 White Paper, 'Managing the Nuclear Legacy: A strategy for action', and are provided for in the Energy Bill, due to begin Report stage in the other place on 18 March.

The Bill will be introduced in this House as soon as the legislative timetable permits. We hope the Bill will receive Royal Assent by July, and our goal remains to have an operational NDA in place by April next year.

**Mr. Tynan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent discussions she has had regarding the establishment of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. [160288]

**Mr. Timms:** The Government continue to engage in their proposals to establish the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) with a broad range of stakeholders, including industry, the regulators, local and regional government organisations, trades unions, Non-Governmental Organisations, suppliers and members of the public. Legislation to establish the NDA is under discussion in the other place.

**Mr. Watson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) whether the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority will accept new contracts for the commercial reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel once it assumes control of Thorp; [159586]

(2) what long-term future she envisages for the commercial reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel in the UK. [159587]

**Mr. Timms:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for South Down (Mr. McGrady) on 11 September 2003, *Official Report*, column 385W.

### Post Office

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of proposals for post office closures have been halted as a result of public consultation in the *(a)* West Midlands and *(b)* UK. [159895]

**Mr. Timms:** Decisions on post office closure proposals following public consultation are an operational matter for Post Office and I have asked the Chief Executive to reply direct to my hon. Friend.

**Mrs. Calton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent assessment she has made of the *(a)* consultation and *(b)* decision-making process involved in the Post Office Network Reinvention programme. [160592]

**Mr. Timms:** In the light of concerns expressed by Members of Parliament, and following discussions with Post Office Ltd. and Postwatch, I announced changes to the consultation arrangements for urban reinvention post office closure proposals in my written statement of 5 February. Following public consultation, decisions on post office closures are an operational matter for Post Office Ltd.

**Mr. Wyatt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures she can introduce to stop Tesco closing post offices as a result of the takeover of one-stop convenience stores, with particular reference to the one-stop convenience store in Chalkwell Road, Sittingbourne. [159793]

**Mr. Timms** *[holding answer 8 March 2004]:* None. Any decision by Tesco to remove a post office from one of its T&S convenience stores is a commercial matter for the company. Tesco has however committed to giving six months notice of its intention to do so to Post Office Ltd., allowing it the opportunity to find alternative partners to continue to offer post office services in close proximity to the existing location, and to working with all parties to seek a smooth changeover process for customers in the area.

I understand that Tesco has recently given notice of its intention to discontinue post office services from its Chalkwell Road, Sittingbourne store and that Post Office Ltd. is now actively engaged in seeking an alternative location in the vicinity.

### Postwatch

**Mr. Bill O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the total amount of money allocated to Postwatch is in 2002–03. [159602]

**Mr. Timms:** The total amount of money allocated is £8.19 million.

**Mr. Bill O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the duties are of Postwatch; and to whom it is responsible. [159603]

**Mr. Timms:** The Consumer Council for Postal Services also known as Postwatch was established to represent the user interests in postal services. Its functions are laid down in the Postal Services Act 2000; and it is responsible to the Secretary of State.

### Product Safety

**Mr. Carmichael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many deaths were caused by products classified by her Department as unsafe in each of the last 10 years. [159978]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** This information is not available.

**Mr. Carmichael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how many products were banned from sale on safety grounds in each of the last 10 years; [159979]

(2) how many of the products banned from sale on safety grounds were recalled by the manufacturer in each of the last 10 years. [159980]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** In 1996 the Department made emergency regulations under section 11(5) of the Consumer Protection Act 1987 to ban the supply of certain fireworks to the general public. This ban was carried forward in permanent regulations—The Fireworks (Safety) Regulations 1997—which banned the sale of a range of fireworks.

In 2003 the Department issued prohibition Notices under the 1987 Act against six suppliers of Yo Balls because the posed a risk of strangulation to children.

In neither case were the affected products recalled by their manufacturers. However, the publicity surrounding the bans will have alerted consumers to the dangers presented by these products.

**Mr. Carmichael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what representations she has received from *(a)* consumers organisations and *(b)* industry on the EU Directive on General Product Safety; [159981]

(2) for what reason the Government has not yet implemented the EU Directive on General Product Safety; and if she will make a statement. [159982]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** The Department invited views from consumer organisations, industry and the enforcement community on a number of policy issues concerning transposition of the revised General Product Safety Directive in an initial public consultation during the period from November 2001 to March 2002. A copy of the consultation document and a summary of the responses is available on the Department's website at www.dti.gov.uk/ccp/archive/pdf/gpsdcon.pdf and www.dti.gov.uk/ccp/archive/pdf/gpsdsumm.pdf respectively.

The consultation identified differing views on key issues in complex policy areas including how to handle mandatory product recall, on which we have held a number of stakeholder meetings. We want to ensure that the system we employ for recalling products will have the confidence of all parties and be effective in providing better protection for consumers from dangerous products.

### Rover Task Force

**Brian Cotter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the cost of the Rover Task Force Modernisation and Diversification programme has been to the Small Business Service in each of the last five years. [156682]

**Ms Hewitt:** The Rover Task Force was established early in 2000, led by the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, the right hon. Member for North Tyneside (Mr. Byers). The Task Force considered how both the region's automotive supply chain could be supported, and how the region's manufacturing base could be helped to modernise and diversify.

A package of funding for business support and regeneration of £129 million was agreed. £31 million of that figure was administered by the SBS as part of the Modernisation and diversification programme. The funding package of the Rover Task Group is invested in the automotive supply chain. No funding is provided direct to MG Rover itself.

To date a total of 1,600 businesses have been assisted by the Taskforce and 3,000 jobs have been safeguarded or created.

### Temporary Staff

**Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many staff the Department employs on a temporary basis through employment agencies; what percentage this is of total staff employed; and how much the Department paid employment agencies to supply temporary staff in *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2002–03 and *(c)* 2003–04 to the most recent date for which figures are available. [158248]

**Ms Hewitt:** The number of temporary staff engaged by DTI fluctuates through the year, but on average we have approximately 450 temporary staff per annum, which represents 9 per cent. of our current workforce. The cost of employing these agency staff over the last three financial years was 2001–02 £4,865K, 2002–03 £6,654K and 2003–04 £5,223K.

### Tesco

**Mr. Stinchcombe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) if she will recommend to the Office of Fair Trading that it judges the Tesco Adminstore merger on the basis of Tesco's share of the overall grocery market; [160460]

(2) if she will direct the Office of Fair Trading to refer Tesco's proposed acquisition of Adminstore to the Competition Commission on the grounds of public interest considerations of the socio-economic consequences of further consolidation of the grocery market; [160461]

(3) if she will recommend that the Office of Fair Trading refer Tesco's proposed acquisition of Adminstore to the Competition Commission. [160462]

**Mr. Sutcliffe:** The independent competition authorities (the Office of Fair Trading and the Competition Commission) are responsible under the Enterprise Act 2002 for decision making in merger cases against a specific competition-focused test. The Office of Fair Trading announced on 5 March that it was not referring to the Competition Commission the anticipated acquisition by Tesco Plc of 45 grocery stores from Adminstore Ltd. It would not have been appropriate for Ministers to try to influence the Office of Fair Trading in carrying out its independent function by seeking to direct it in any aspect of its consideration of this case.

The Enterprise Act does not allow my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to intervene on existing or new public interest grounds in cases where the OFT has already announced its decision on reference to the Competition Commission.

## HEALTH

### Acute Mental Illness Beds

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many acute mental illness beds were available for *(a)* the elderly, *(b)* children and *(c)* other age groups in Lancashire Mental Health Trust in each of the last three years; and how many were in secure units. [157674]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The Lancashire Care National Health Service Trust was formed on 1 April 2002. Data are not available for this trust prior to that date. The available data, for the year 2002–03, are shown in the table.

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| *Mental illness: children* | |
| Short stay | — |
| Long stay | — |
| *Mental illness: elderly* | |
| Short stay | 227 |
| Long stay | 170 |
| *Mental illness: other ages* | |
| Secure unit | 70 |
| Short stay | 393 |
| Long stay | — |

*Source:*
Department of Health returns.

### Ambulances

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 24 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 328W, on ambulances, whether the periodic refresher training refers to *(a)* specialist driving training and *(b)* other forms of training relevant to the job of ambulance technician. [158492]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Individual national health service trusts are responsible for ensuring that staff receive any training necessary to maintain driving proficiency standards. In addition, maintaining staffs proficiency in all other aspects of their work is also the responsibility of every trust.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 24 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 328W, on ambulances, if he will place in the Library copies of the proficiency standards and national syllabus. [158521]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** A copy of the driver training manual has been placed in the Library.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 24 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 329W, on ambulances, whether there is a mandatory requirement for specialist driver training at an accredited driver training school. [158618]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The training of their staff is a matter for each individual national health service ambulance trust. We would expect them to take account of national recommendations and requirements. Driver instructors are trained and qualified to a United Kingdom standard approved by the Institute of Healthcare Development.

### Asthmatics (Aspirin)

**Mr. Jenkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action his Department is taking to highlight the risk to asthmatics from taking aspirin. [160072]

**Dr. Ladyman:** All licensed aspirin products available over the counter currently have label warnings and/or patient information leaflets advising patients with previous asthma (especially after taking aspirin) not to take the product or to consult their doctor before use.

Labels and patient information leaflets advise patients with known allergy to aspirin not to take aspirin containing products.

### Infant Formula

**Sandra Osborne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures are being taken to tighten the implementation of the World Health Organisation code in the United Kingdom to prohibit aggressive Infant Formula marketing strategies. [157999]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** In line with the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, advertising of infant formulas directly to the general public is already prohibited by the Infant Formula and Follow-on Formula Regulations. Enforcement of these regulations is carried out by local authorities.

### Community Care (Delayed Discharges etc.) Act

**Mr. Burns:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much money Essex Social Services Department had to pay in fines under the Community Care (Delayed Discharges etc.) Act 2003 from when it came into operation to 29 February. [160275]

**Dr. Ladyman:** Essex Social Services Department arranged local investment agreements with the national health service in line with levels of delay for September 2003 and will only pay charges once they exceed this level of investment.

### Dementia

**Lynne Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the cost of providing free domestic and residential nursing and personal care for people suffering from *(a)* Alzheimer's Disease and *(b)* other forms of dementia. [160111]

**Dr. Ladyman:** Since April 2003, anyone in a care home with Alzheimer's or another form of dementia who requires care from a registered nurse will have received either direct national health service nursing care from the community nursing service or NHS funded nursing care.

The estimated cost of providing free personal care for people with Alzheimer's (approximately 30 per cent., of care home residents) would be somewhere in the region of

£500 million. The estimated cost of providing free personal care for people with dementia, including Alzheimer's (around 60 per cent. of care home residents), would be somewhere in the region of £1 billion.

### Dentistry

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received regarding NHS dentists who only accept NHS registrations of children if their parents register privately; and if he will make a statement. [154435]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Information is not collected on the number of dentists accepting only certain categories of patients. However, very few dental practices have only children registered as national health service patients.

Dentists working in the general dental service are self-employed independent contractors providing dental services. Under current arrangements dentists can practice wherever they like, as there are no restrictions. They are free to accept as many or as few NHS patients as they wish and can alter their NHS commitment without reference to the primary care trust (PCT). They can quite legally accept only certain categories of patients (for example, children).

Under the provisions in the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003, PCTs will assume responsibility for dental services in this area. With these new responsibilities will go the financial resources currently held centrally, which by 2005–06 are expected to total nearly £1.5 billion. The new arrangements will give the NHS greater control locally enabling it to match services to local need. They will underpin a modernised, high-quality primary dental service provided through new contracts between PCTs and dental practices and properly integrated with the rest of the NHS.

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps his Department is taking to encourage more applicants for dentistry degrees. [157697]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Dentistry is already a popular choice for A-level students, with nearly two applications received for every place available in dental schools. In 2003 the NHS Careers service was extended to provide information to the public on careers in dentistry and, earlier this year, we published a new NHS Careers brochure, "Dental Care in the NHS", which has been distributed to schools, further education colleges, youth employment advisers and other agencies working with young people. Copies will be placed in the Library.

### Disability Discrimination Act

**Mr. Goodman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures his Department is taking to prepare health service providers for the implementation of the parts of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 which come into effect later this year. [160693]

**Dr. Ladyman:** National health service organisations are responsible for their own compliance with the new (and existing) provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act. The Department of Health is, however, working in partnership with the Disability Rights Commission on a range of measures to support the NHS in assessing and improving progress on disability access. These measures include, for example, ensuring that core practical guidance is readily available to the NHS and contributing to the development of health sector-specific guidance being produced by the Disability Rights Commission.

### Food Supplements

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* public and *(b)* professional consultation has been undertaken on which vitamins and supplements are used regularly in the UK in connection with preparing for the EU's Food Supplements Directive. [158569]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** During negotiations on Directive 2002/46/EC on food supplements and when drafting the Food Supplements (England) Regulations 2003, the Food Standards Agency consulted publicly with a wide range of stakeholders. The results of those consultations are summarised in the Regulatory Impact Assessment accompanying the Regulations, which is available in the Library.

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how his Department has contributed to the discussions at EU level on vitamins and supplements being placed on the EU's positive list. [158570]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Directive 2002/46/EC on food supplements includes in its Annexes 'positive lists' defining the vitamins and minerals that may be included in food supplements as well as the range of forms (chemical sources) of vitamins and minerals which may be used in such products. Substances on the positive lists have been assessed for safety and bio-availability by the former Scientific Committee for Food and more substances may be added to the lists following submission of dossiers of information supporting their use.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) secured a valuable meeting between representatives of United Kingdom food supplements manufacturers and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) on 14 October 2003 to discuss dossier requirements, and has disseminated EFSA's advice to interested parties. Furthermore, the FSA has expressed its willingness to provide further advice to industry on dossier production if required.

### Illegal Drugs

**Mrs. Iris Robinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the possible link between illegal drug use and the development of psychosis later in life; and if he will make a statement. [152364]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Recent research of note in this area has explored whether there is any causative link between early cannabis use and later development of psychosis, but such a link has not been conclusively proven. However, the recent epidemiological research on the issue of earlier use of cannabis and risk of later development of schizophrenia, 'schizophrenic symptoms' and 'schizophreniform disorder' has shown a stronger association than was previously evident from

published studies. The British Medical Journal editorial accompanying the publication of key research papers in November 2002 concluded that:

> "whether the use of cannabis triggers the onset of schizophrenia or depression in otherwise vulnerable people or whether it actually causes these conditions in non-predisposed people is not yet resolved."

While a number of illegal drugs, particularly amphetamines and cocaine (and to a lesser degree cannabis), are well-recognised in causing short-lived psychotic symptoms and signs there is no conclusive proof of causation of psychosis in later life. It is difficult to exclude confounding factors in carrying out such long-term research on, where such drug use would also be only one of a number of risk factors. It is also difficult to differentiate the role of such drugs in possibly precipitating psychosis in a pre-disposed individual from causation in someone not otherwise pre-disposed.

The Department has commissioned the National Addiction Centre to review the evidence regarding the harmful effects of drugs of abuse and this is published as a Department of Health document, Dangerousness of drugs (2003). This describes a wide range of harmful effects of illegal drugs. A copy is available in the Library.

It is widely recommended by clinicians that anyone at risk of psychosis should avoid any drugs that can cause acute psychotic symptoms.

The Department continues to monitor research in this area and has a range of expert advisors to continue to inform policy.

### Low Fat Diets

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research his Department has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on low fat diets free from animal products. [156810]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The Department has not commissioned or evaluated research on low fat diets free from animal products. The Oxford cohort of the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition (EPIC-Oxford) has been supported by Cancer Research UK, the Medical Research Council and the Europe Against Cancer Programme of the Commission of the European Community. Findings from EPIC-Oxford data have shown that diets free from animal products are associated with lower levels of obesity than diets which include meat. The Medical Research Council spent £17.1 million in 2001–02 on nutrition research.

### Mental Health

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 2 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 688W, on mental health, how many of the 700 carer support workers are *(a)* new staff and *(b)* existing staff with expanded or adapted roles; and if he will make a statement. [154987]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** The commitment to recruit 700 carer support workers by 2004 to increase the breaks available for carers, and to strengthen carer support networks is part of the Priorities and Planning Framework 2003–06 which identified the targets set for services in the three year period.

Recruitment is a local responsibility. We cannot say whether the 700 carer support workers will all be additional to existing national health service staff. Guidance on developing carer support services was published in 2002.

### Nebulisers

**Mr. Hurst:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the availability of nebulisers for NHS patients on prescription. [159722]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Nebulisers are not available on national health service prescription. It is long-standing policy that such items should be loaned to patients from specialist NHS services.

### Nursing Homes

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he plans to continue the use of lay assessors in the monitoring of quality of nursing and care homes. [160219]

**Dr. Ladyman:** This will be a matter for the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI), a new non-departmental public body, which will be operational from 1 April 2004. The CSCI will be reviewing how it works with lay assessors in due course.

### Parliamentary Questions

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many parliamentary questions have been tabled to his Department since 1 January 2003, broken down by *(a)* ordinary written and *(b)* named day; what percentage in respect of *(a)* were answered within 10 working days; and what percentage in respect of *(b)* were answered by the specified date. [157747]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** Between 1 January 2003 and 27 February 2004, 8,058 ordinary written and 1,458 named day parliamentary questions were tabled to the Department of Health.

Using the information readily available the average time taken to answer an ordinary written parliamentary question was 15.5 calendar days; and approximately 30 per cent. of named day parliamentary questions received an answer by the specified date.

The Department strives to answer right hon. and hon. Members' questions in a timely and helpful fashion and is currently seeking to improve performance.

### Patient Forums

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* assessment he has made and *(b)* representations he has received on the impact of benefits rules on the participation of disabled people in patient forums. [158508]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** We have not received any representations about the impact of the benefit rules on the participation of disabled people in patients forums and no assessment of the impact has been made.

### Processed Meals

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research his Department has commissioned into the level of consumption of processed meals; and if he will make a statement. [157594]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The Department has not commissioned research into the level of consumption of processed meals. The National Diet and Nutrition Survey programme is a joint initiative between the Department and the Food Standards Agency. The survey covers consumption of different food types by individuals, including processed products such as breakfast cereals and baked beans.

The Expenditure and Food Survey (EFS) is commissioned jointly by the Office for National Statistics and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). Results from EFS presented in the report, Family Food in 2001–02, show that consumption of meat-based ready meals, including takeaways consumed in the household, increased by 15 per cent. in comparison to 2000–01, which represents a 70 per cent. increase compared to 1996–97. The report is available on the Defra website at http://statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/.

### Psychiatric Wards (Delayed Discharges)

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to extend arrangements for charging social services departments for delayed discharges from psychiatric wards. [160047]

**Dr. Ladyman:** We intend to extend the system of reimbursement for delayed discharges to all hospital patients in a phased way, based on a consideration of the benefits for each group of patients. However, further parliamentary debate would be required to extend the scope to include mental health patients.

### Restructuring and Change Programme

**Mr. Norman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1699W, on the Restructuring and Change programme, how many of the 1,400 staff will *(a)* be made redundant, *(b)* retire and *(c)* be lost due to natural wastage. [158129]

**Ms Rosie Winterton** *[holding answer 2 March 2004]:* The number of staff who will be made redundant is not yet known. It will be determined by the levels of natural wastage, the take-up of any voluntary early severance/retirement scheme and the extent to which it is possible to re-deploy staff in the civil service.

**Mr. Norman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answers of 12 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1699W, and 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 297W, on the restructuring and change programme, how many of the 1,400 staff will be redeployed or transferred to departmental arm's length bodies or agencies. [158205]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** We estimate that 415 posts will transfer to the departmental arm's length bodies.

### Social Workers

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what targets his Department has set for recruitment of social workers. [159741]

**Dr. Ladyman:** The Department's national planning guideline is to recruit an additional 50,000 whole time equivalent people into the social care workforce, which includes 5,000 social workers by 2005–06.

As an incentive to train as a social worker, a bursary is available to all students who are not supported by their employer. The introduction of a degree in social work will also help to make this a more attractive career choice.

### Step Change

**Mr. Gardiner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when the review of Step Change will occur; and how long the review will take; [155393]

(2) whether the review of Step Change will be made public; and who will consider its findings. [155395]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** A ministerial committee has been set up to co-ordinate policy on imports of animals, plants, fish and their products, which will include a review of the Step Change. The timing of the review, and how it is publicised, are matters for the committee to decide.

### Subutex

**John Mann:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the use of Subutex in drugs treatment. [153982]

**Miss Melanie Johnson** *[holding answer 9 February 2004]:* Subutex is licensed for use in the treatment of opiate dependency, which is included in the clinical guidelines on the management of drug misuse and dependence issued by the Department in 1999. The Department has also made it possible for doctors to prescribe Subutex for instalment dispensing, to ensure there is no disincentive for its use as compared to methadone. While there are recognised advantages, there are also disadvantages to its use. There is a clear risk of Subutex being abused by injection. Methadone liquid appears more suitable for severely dependent opiate addicts. It is for clinicians to determine the appropriate use of Subutex for patients.

### Westminster Hall

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make it his policy to have senior Ministers reply to debates in Westminster Hall. [159617]

**Ms Rosie Winterton:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House of Commons on Monday 8 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1234W.

## CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

### Council of the Isles

**Mr. Paul Marsden:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs when the Council of the Isles last met; and when it will next meet. [159478]

**Mr. Leslie**: The Council of the Isles is known as the British-Irish Council. The Council last met on 28 November 2003 at a Summit at St. Fagans in Cardiff. The Council next meet in July for ministerial level meetings to discuss the Environment and Social Inclusion sectoral work strands. The next Summit is planned for autumn 2004 in Guernsey.

### Departmental Communications

**Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the total expenditure on communications for his Department has been in 2003–04, broken down by expenditure on *(a)* Government Information and Communication Service staff and *(b)* other staff, broken down by (i) press officers, (ii) special advisers and (iii) others. [158207]

**Mr. Lammy**: The Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA), which includes its agencies—the Court Service and the Public Guardianship Office (PGO)—employs 60 staff in communications work. This figure comprises 24 staff of the Government Information and Communication Service (GICS) and 36 others.

| | *Amount (£)* |
|---|---|
| *Department for constitutional affairs HQ* | |
| *(a)* GICS | 918,187 |
| *(b) Other staff* | |
| (i) Press officers[1] | 35,232 |
| (ii) Special advisers | [2]— |
| (iii) Others | 351,979 |
| *Court service* | |
| *(a)* GICS | 0 |
| *(b) Other staff* | |
| (i) Press officers | 0 |
| (ii) Special advisers | 0 |
| (iii) Others | 603,185 |
| *Public Guardianship Office* | |
| *(a)* GICS | 0 |
| *(b) Other staff* | |
| (i) Press officers[1] | 63,150 |
| (ii) Special advisers | 0 |
| (iii) Others | 80,525 |

[1] Non GICS.

[2] The Special Advisers' Code of Conduct sets out the sort of work a special adviser may undertake on behalf of their Minister. This includes communications activity. Details of the costs of Special Advisers are given on an annual basis. Information for the financial year 2003–04 will be published in due course.

*Notes:*

1. All figures include forecast expenditure for February and March 2003–04.

2. 'Others' includes staff working on publications, publicity, internal communications, websites and administration.

### Election Turnouts

**Mark Tami:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the *(a)* lowest and *(b)* highest turnout in a local authority election was in the last five years. [156445]

**Phil Hope:** I have been asked to reply.

Turnout at local authority elections is not recorded centrally and the specific figures requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However a source of information that may be useful to the hon. Member is the Local Elections Handbook which is published annually by the Local Government Chronicle Elections Centre at the University of Plymouth which contains turnout figures for local authority elections.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Afghanistan

**Mr. Ancram:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his policy is regarding the role that former Taliban members should play in the future government of Afghanistan; and what his policy is regarding proposals for an amnesty for those Taliban members deemed no longer to constitute a terrorist threat. [159505]

**Mr. Straw** *[holding answer 10 March 2004]:* The UK believes that national reconciliation is an important element in the process of rebuilding Afghanistan. It must be an Afghan-led process and one which is transparent. We would oppose the rehabilitation of the Taliban's senior leadership. Taliban who were involved in war crimes, terrorism, or engaged in violent opposition to the Coalition or the Bonn Process, should be brought to justice. The treatment of other former Taliban who no longer constitute a threat is a matter for the Afghan authorities.

**Mr. Ancram:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Government have made of the progress needed on security for elections to proceed in Afghanistan on 30 June; and if he will make a statement. [159888]

**Mr. Straw:** Security will be one of the key ingredients in facilitating successful and credible elections, including the electoral registration process currently underway. It is for the Afghan Government to lead on ensuring the elections are held in a secure environment. But they will require international support and assistance. Security is already being provided for the voter registration process. The Afghan Transitional Administration are also working with the United Nations, the International Security Assistance Force (led by NATO), and the US-led Coalition to put the necessary security structures in place for the elections themselves. No date has yet been announced for elections to be held.

**Mr. Jenkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action the Department is taking to support the UN plan to hold elections in Afghanistan this summer. [160221]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** The UK has committed £9 million to supporting the UN preparations for elections. Of this £9 million, £3 million has already been dispersed. The UK is also encouraging other donors to contribute to supporting preparations for the elections through funding, and through providing resources to the International Security Assistance Force to enable it to support the Afghan government in providing security for the elections.

**Mr. Ancram:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assistance the UK is giving to British businesses considering investing in Afghanistan; and what discussions he has had regarding the underwriting of risk for such businesses. [160229]

**Mr. Straw:** The Government, through UK Trade and Investment and the British embassy in Kabul provides direct assistance and advice on local business conditions including security advice to businesses wishing to invest in Afghanistan.

Export Credits Guarantee Department (ECGD) is currently unable to offer political risk insurance to UK companies investing in Afghanistan under its Overseas Investment Insurance scheme. ECGD judge that the political and economic situation in Afghanistan is too unstable to allow them to provide such cover. ECGD is however monitoring developments in Afghanistan and expects to conduct a market review in the latter part of 2004, following the proposed elections late this year.

**Mr. Ancram:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many additional *(a)* soldiers and *(b)* officials the Government are planning to send to Afghanistan to ensure stability in the build up to and during the proposed elections in that country. [160236]

**Mr. Straw:** It is the responsibility of the Afghan Transitional Administration to provide security for the forthcoming elections. The UK is supporting the election preparations through funding of £10.4 million for the UN electoral preparations plan and through the role of the UK-led Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Mazar-e Sharif. The Mazar-e Sharif PRT has 90 British soldiers.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence announced on 7 February 2004 that the UK would support NATO efforts to play a wider role in Afghanistan by increasing support to PRTs (a copy of which is available at www.securityconference.de > conferences > 2004 > speeches > Hoon,Geoffrey). The number of British soldiers likely to be involved has not yet been finalised. The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) is also considering a role in support of the elections. The UK currently contributes 350 soldiers to ISAF but no decision has been made on possible future contributions.

The UK is also supporting the EU Commission's intention to send a team of election observers to Afghanistan, and is currently funding an expert to participate in the ongoing EU exploratory mission on election observation, with a particular focus on women's participation in the elections.

**Mr. Ancram:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the 15 May Bishkek Conference on stability in Afghanistan; and what discussions he has had with other governments regarding the conference. [159887]

**Mr. Straw:** We welcome the proposal to hold a conference in Bishkek, involving Afghanistan and other countries in the region. Closer co-operation on trade, development and efforts to tackle illegal activities such as narcotics production and trafficking will enhance stability in the region. The conference will complement the regional commitment to the Good Neighbourly Relations Declaration signed in December 2002, and the related Declaration on Trade, Transit and Investment and Counter-Narcotics signed in September 2003.

We regularly discuss a wide range of issues concerning Afghanistan, including regional co-operation, with other governments and international organisations.

### Burundi

**Mr. Jenkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action his Department is taking to support the Arusha Accord, with particular reference to the stipulation within the Accord for elections to take place before the end of October. [160081]

**Mr. Mullin:** The UK strongly supports the Arusha accord and has provided political and financial support to Burundi since the Accord was signed in 2000. In financial year 2003–04, the UK has made £11.6 million available for Burundi. We provided £3.7 million to supply equipment to the Mozambican contingent of the African Mission in Burundi.

We recognise that there are many issues which need addressing before elections can be held satisfactorily and continue to encourage the government of Burundi to work to resolve them.

### Butler Committee

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many individuals have expressed an interest in submitting evidence to the Butler Committee on intelligence; and how many independent submissions have been received to date. [159942]

**Mr. Rammell:** This is a matter for the Butler Review Committee.

### Chad

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Government of Chad over the level of forced migration into Chad from the Sudan. [160185]

**Mr. Mullin:** Our embassy in Khartoum has discussed the conflict in Darfur with the Chadian embassy in Khartoum. We are also in close contact with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) in Geneva and their field teams in eastern Chad. The Department for International Development is one of the largest donors to UNHCR operations in Chad for

Sudanese refugees, having provided £1 million in October 2003 in response to the initial US$16 million appeal.

### Colombia

**Lynne Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the EU Commissioner for external relations regarding the Colombian Government's democratic security policies and Colombia's compliance with UN human rights recommendations; and if he will make a statement on areas of disagreement between the UK Government and the Commissioner. [159606]

**Mr. Rammell:** We followed closely the recent visit to Colombia of the EU Commissioner for External Relations which took place in January. We have no differences in view with the Commissioner about Colombia. The EU's latest position on Colombia—with which the UK is fully aligned—was set out in Conclusions of the General Affairs and External Relations Council of 26 January, following the Commissioner's visit.

**Lynne Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government will take in response to non-compliance of the Colombian Government with UN human rights recommendations. [159646]

**Mr. Rammell:** The British Government keep in close touch with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on Colombia and we take careful note of the matters raised in relevant UN reports on the situation in Colombia. The recommendations of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights remain a key issue for follow up to the London Declaration of July 2003. The UK and its EU partners have made clear to the Colombian Government the importance of progress on these areas. We await the next Report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on Colombia which is due to be published shortly. Its conclusions will assist the UK, the EU and the rest of the international community to focus on priority areas where further progress is needed.

### Correspondence

**Mr. Kaufman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he intends to reply to the letter to him dated 10 November 2003 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to M. Sam. [159983]

**Mr. Mullin:** I refer my right hon. Friend to my answers of 18 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 1107W, and 6 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 240–41W. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary replied to my right hon. Friend's letter on 16 December 2003.

### Environmentally Sustainable Procurement

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in what ways environmentally sustainable procurement strategies within the Department have driven innovation in the design and supply of products. [159103]

**Mr. Rammell:** The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has a Sustainable Procurement policy which promotes the purchase of recycled products (such as paper and toner cartridges); sustainably grown timber for construction and office furniture; and fair trade goods (such as coffee, tea and chocolate) for sale in the FCO restaurants and shop. We ensure that FCO contracts include environmental requirements. We are for example currently considering with potential suppliers if our existing computer printers, photocopiers and fax equipment can be replaced with more energy-efficient multifunctional devices. We also buy "green electricity" which supports the development of renewable energy sources.

### European Union

**Mr. Roy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had on reform of the EU's institutions to make enlargement work. [160254]

**Mr. MacShane:** My right hon. Friends the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and I have regular discussions with our European Colleagues on developments in the European Union, including on institutional issues. The Irish Presidency will report back to the European Council on 25–26 March 2004 on its assessment of the prospects for progress in the Intergovernmental Conference, on the basis of its consultations with member states.

**Mr. Roy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what measures are being considered in the context of the Intergovernmental Conference to reform the working of the EU to make it more *(a)* effective and *(b)* accountable. [160265]

**Mr. MacShane:** I refer my hon. Friend to Cm5934, the Government's White Paper on their approach to the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC). Chapter IV ("The Convention Outcome and Detailed Issues of the IGC", especially paragraph 42) sets out details of a number of measures under consideration in the IGC designed to make the EU more effective and accountable. Copies of the paper are available in the Library of the House.

### Falkland Islands

**Mr. Ben Chapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the sustainability of the economy of the Falkland Islands. [159873]

**Mr. Rammell:** Through careful management of its fishery industry, the Falkland Island Government generates over £20 million per annum in licence fees. Other sectors such as agricultural production also remain important. The Falklands economy has grown rapidly since 1982 and the Falkland Island Government continues to work to ensure that it remains diverse and sustainable for the future. This includes the continued development of sectors such as tourism and mineral resources. With the exception of defence costs, the Falkland Islands receive no grant in aid from Her Majesty's Government.

### Gibraltar

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much money his Department has spent on the tercentenary celebrations in Gibraltar. [160694]

**Mr. MacShane:** At this early stage in Gibraltar's tercentenary year, Foreign and Commonwealth Office expenditure on tercentenary events has been limited to the cost of Foreign and Commonwealth Office staff time devoted to the issue.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what role he has agreed with the Chief Minister of Gibraltar the Foreign and Commonwealth Office will play in the tercentenary celebrations. [160695]

**Mr. MacShane:** This is a matter for the Gibraltar Government.

### International Criminal Court

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the operation to date of the International Criminal Court. [159936]

**Mr. Rammell:** The International Criminal Court (ICC) was established by the Rome Statute, which entered into force on 1 July 2002. Work began shortly afterwards to prepare for the appointment of officials to the court's three main organs; the chambers (comprising 18 judges), the Office of the Prosecutor and the Registry.

The judges were subsequently elected in February 2003, the Prosecutor (Luis Moreno Ocampo, Argentina) was elected in April 2003 and the Registrar (Bruno Cathala, France) was elected in June 2003. The court opened for business with the swearing in of the prosecutor on 16 June 2003 followed by the swearing in of a Deputy Prosecutor (Serge Brammertz, Belgium) on 3 November 2003.

The prosecutor has yet to start his first formal investigation. He has been conducting preliminary examinations into the situations in Ituri (Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo) and northern Uganda. In December 2003, the Ugandan Government referred the situation in northern Uganda to the ICC. The prosecutor then announced in January 2004 that he would consider that situation further in order to determine whether to proceed with a formal investigation.

The UK is fully committed to supporting the ICC and is engaged in dialogue with the court at official level to consider ways of providing effective practical support.

### Iran

**Mr. Jenkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions his Department has had with the Iranian Government regarding the closure of the Yas-e-no and Sharq newspapers. [160080]

**Mr. Rammell:** We have not discussed the closure of these two newspapers in particular. But we have on many occasions made clear our concern at restrictions on free expression in Iran. The Iranian Government's failure over recent months to agree dates in early March for the regular meeting of the EU/Iran human rights dialogue has deprived the EU of a channel through which concerns on matters such as this would normally be raised. We regret that Yas-e no remains closed; Sharq reopened on 28 February.

### Israel

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the United Kingdom regards Israel as being in the possession of a deployable nuclear arsenal. [159975]

**Mr. MacShane:** We have regularly made clear that Israel should resolve international speculation about its nuclear programme by acceding to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear weapons state and by signing a nuclear safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency, thus opening up its facilities to international inspection.

### Kenny Richey

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the United States Administration about the case of Kenny Richey. [160165]

**Mr. Mullin:** We are in touch with Mr. Richey's lawyers both in the USA and the UK, as well as with Ohio State officials. We continue to monitor his case closely to determine what representations might be made on his behalf, and the appropriate time to make them, and will do all we properly can to try to prevent Mr. Richey's execution.

### Maldives

**Mr. Laxton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the arrests of members of the Maldivian Democratic Party on 13 February by the Maldivian authorities; and on the extent to which human rights are protected in the Maldives. [159859]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** We are aware that the Maldivian authorities arrested an unconfirmed number of people in the capital Malé on 13 February in advance of a demonstration planned for 14 February by those sympathetic to the Maldivian Democratic Party. We look to the Government of the Maldives to charge those arrested promptly, in accordance with local law, or to release them. We have concerns about the protection of human rights in the Maldives, including the right of freedom of expression. We will continue to raise these concerns with the Government of the Maldives.

### Middle East

**Mr. Clappison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the Palestinian Authority's policy towards security and terrorism. [159669]

**Mr. Rammell:** The Palestinian Authority can do more to control Palestinian terrorist groups and improve security for both Israelis and Palestinians. We are in close touch with them about how to achieve this.

**Mr. Clappison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made regarding the Al-Aqsa Brigade and Fatah and responsibility for terrorist attacks. [159945]

**Mr. Rammell:** We have no reason to doubt the Al-Aqsa Brigades' claims of responsibility for a number of terror attacks. While they proclaim their loyalty to Fatah, we do not judge that these attacks are sanctioned or approved by the Fatah leadership.

### Morocco

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Government of Morocco concerning Ali Salem Tamek. [160187]

**Mr. Rammell:** Officials and Ministers regularly call upon the parties to the Western Sahara dispute to take action on human rights issues.

We have in the past brought our concerns about the case of Ali Salem Tamek to the attention of the Moroccan authorities. Ali Salem Tamek was released from custody in January 2004. We continue to monitor the situation closely, and will take action with the appropriate authorities where necessary.

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the *(a)* security situation in Western Sahara and *(b)* impact of Moroccan migration into the territory. [160188]

**Mr. Rammell:** The UN-monitored ceasefire in Western Sahara has held for over a decade and the security situation remains stable.

Demographic changes in Western Sahara have been a factor in all the proposals on the future of the territory. We continue to urge all parties to engage flexibly with the UN Secretary-General and his personal representative, James Baker III.

### Nuclear Materials

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what funding the United Kingdom has provided to the International Atomic Energy Agency's nuclear materials tracking programme in each year since 2001. [159947]

**Mr. MacShane:** The UK has contributed a total of £750,000 to the International Atomic Energy Agency's Nuclear Security Fund. This has been contributed at a flat rate of £250,000 per annum in 2002, 2003 and 2004.

### Polisario Front

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the recent release of Moroccan prisoners of war by the Polisario Front; and if he will make a statement on the Sahrawis that have yet to be accounted for. [160186]

**Mr. Rammell:** We welcome the recent release of 100 Moroccan prisoners of war by the Polisario front and urge the Polisario to release the 513 remaining prisoners in their custody without delay.

We have encouraged all parties to co-operate with the International Committee of the Red Cross to account for those missing in the conflict.

### Russia

**Mr. Simon Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what formal consultation has been undertaken by his Department on the Sakhalin II phase 2 oil and gas project. [158272]

**Mr. Rammell:** The Export Credits Guarantee Department (ECGD), under the supervision of my hon. Friend the Minister for Trade and Investment leads on the formal aspects of the consultation process, including on environmental issues. However, due to the role that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office fulfils in supporting export promotion, we have also been closely involved in discussion of this project with the ECGD, DEFRA, UK Trade and Investment and the DTI, as well as Shell.

### Tibet

**David Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to meet the Dalai Lama during his forthcoming visit to the UK. [160261]

**Mr. Rammell:** My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary intends to meet the Dalai Lama during the latter's visit to the UK.

### United Nations

**Harry Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information has been provided by Her Majesty's Government to the Secretary-General of the United Nations pursuant to paragraph 2 of the General Assembly resolution 58/48; and if he will make a statement. [159418]

**Mr. MacShane:** The Government have not so far written to inform the UN Secretary-General of the extensive measures which the UK has put in place to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction and related technologies. The Government have, however, included much relevant information in their reports to the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee, available on the UN website at www.un.org.

**Mr. Roy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had on reform of the UN. [160269]

**Mr. Rammell:** I refer my hon. Friend to my statement on UN reform on 11 September 2003, *Official Report*, columns 139–47WH, and the "United Kingdom in the United Nations" Command Paper (Cmnd 5898) published in September 2003, a copy of which has been placed in the Library of the House.

The Government are firmly committed to reform of the United Nations. As an active UN member, the UK conducts regular exchanges with the UN and other member states on reform. We are working to create a more efficient United Nations better equipped to meet the challenges of the modern world and deliver the objectives established in the Millennium Declaration.

We support the work of the Secretary-General's High Level Panel which is looking into threats to peace and security and the UN response to them.

### Visa Applications

**Mr. Flook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many visa applications to British consulates in *(a)* Slovakia, *(b)* Turkey and *(c)* Croatia were (i) received and (ii) processed in each year since 1990. [159742]

**Mr. Mullin:** The following table shows figures for the number of entry clearance applications received and resolved in Slovakia, Turkey and Croatia since 1997. Figures for the years before 1997 are not readily available.

| | *Slovakia* | | *Turkey* | | *Croatia* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Received* | *Resolved* | *Received* | *Resolved* | *Received* | *Resolved* |
| 1997 | 401 | 369 | 65,056 | 60,528 | 841 | 851 |
| 1998 | 6,082 | 5,548 | 67,868 | 64,865 | 342 | 336 |
| 1999 | 22,838 | 19,700 | 63,565 | 46,596 | 2,435 | 2,354 |
| 2000 | 22,270 | 21,436 | 68,638 | 64,516 | 13,490 | 13,489 |
| 2001–02 | 20,051 | 18,226 | 54,086 | 50,524 | 13,988 | 13,892 |
| 2002–03 | 22,419 | 21,742 | 63,493 | 62,326 | 15,304 | 15,317 |

Since 2001, statistics have been collated by financial year (1 April to 31 March) rather than calendar year.

The numbers of applications received and resolved do not always tally. Applications that are recorded as being received in one accounting period may be carried forward for resolution in the next. It is therefore possible to resolve more applications during a period than were received for the same period. Figures show that fewer applications tend to be resolved than received. The method of recording the statistics accounts for this: a mother and three children on one passport may count as four applications received, but only one entry clearance resolved. Also, some applications will be counted as received that are subsequently withdrawn and therefore not counted as resolved.

Visa regimes were imposed on Slovakia on 8 October 1998, on Turkey on 23 June 1989 and on Croatia on 19 November 1999. The visa regime on Slovakia was lifted on 18 December 2003.

### Zimbabwe

**Mr. Ancram:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action can be taken against UK national companies involved in business with Zimbabwean companies classed as SDNs under United States Executive Order 13288; if he will make a statement on the extension of EU sanctions to include such measures; and when he expects EU sanctions to match those of the US. [159889]

**Mr. Straw:** On 21 February 2004 the EU's restrictive measures were renewed and extended to a larger number of Zimbabwean individuals who are responsible for policies that lead to the suppression of human rights, of the freedom of expression and of good governance. One of the measures is an assets freeze against a new list of 95 individuals. The US has similar measures against only 77 individuals. It would therefore be a backward step for the EU's measures to "match" those of the US in this regard.

On 3 March, the US announced that it was also freezing the assets of seven companies, controlled by three of Mugabe's closest confidantes—Information Minister Moyo, Speaker Mnangagwa and ex-Army Chief Zvinavashe. The UK and EU have already frozen the identifiable assets of those individuals. The EU measures target individuals, not companies. The UK and other member states have taken the view that targeting companies risks harming ordinary Zimbabweans who are already suffering under the present regime.

## DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

### Adjudication Panel

**Mr. Nigel Jones:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many cases have been referred to the Adjudication Panel by the Standards Board for England in each month since its establishment; how many have been determined; how many have yet to be determined; how many of the cases relate wholly to a failure of a member of a parish council to complete the council's Register of Member Interests; if he will list the complaints made in the remaining cases; and what the decision of the Adjudication Panel was in the determined cases. [160044]

**Mr. Raynsford:** A total of 195 cases have been referred to the Adjudication Panel for England between October 2002 and February this year. Of those 173 have been determined. The remaining 22 cases have yet to be determined. The following table shows the breakdown by month:

| | *Number of cases* |
|---|---|
| *2002* | |
| October | 1 |
| November | 19 |
| December | 25 |
| Total | 45 |
| *2003* | |
| January | 15 |
| February | 38 |
| March | 13 |
| April | 9 |
| May | 26 |
| June | 10 |
| July | 4 |
| August | 2 |
| September | 11 |
| October | 7 |

| | Number of cases |
|---|---|
| November | 0 |
| December | 7 |
| Total | 142 |
| *2004* | |
| January | 0 |
| February | 8 |
| Total | 8 |

128 cases related to breaches of the requirement to complete the Register of Interests by Parish Councillors. The following table shows the type of complaint made in the remaining cases and the outcome (in some cases more than one type of complaint is raised).

| Nature of complaint | Number |
|---|---|
| Failure to promote equality—unlawful discrimination | 3 |
| Failure to treat others with respect | 21 |
| Compromise impartiality of authority employees | 7 |
| Disclosure of confidential information | 6 |
| Bringing office or authority into disrepute | 37 |
| Using position to confer or secure advantage or disadvantage | 14 |
| Failure to use resources in accordance with requirements | 7 |
| Failure to report another member | 1 |
| Failure to disclose a personal interest | 19 |
| Prejudicial interest—failure to withdraw | 23 |
| Total | 138 |

In the 173 cases heard to date, the Adjudication Panel found that there had been no breach of the code in six cases, and declined to impose sanctions in a further six. In the other cases Members were disqualified, or suspended as tabled:

| Period of disqualification or suspension | Number of members |
|---|---|
| Member disqualified up to 1 month | 2 |
| Member disqualified for 1 to 6 months | 4 |
| Member disqualified for 1 year | 100 |
| Member disqualified for 18 months | 4 |
| Member disqualified for 2 years | 13 |
| Member disqualified for 3 years | 10 |
| Member disqualified for 5 years | 3 |
| Member suspended up to 1 month | 12 |
| Member suspended 1 to 6 months | 10 |
| Member suspended for 1 year | 3 |

### Community Plan Areas

**Mr. Clifton-Brown:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to extend further community plan areas. [159960]

**Keith Hill:** The London-Stansted-Cambridge Growth Area was extended to include Peterborough on 2 February 2004. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has no current plans to extend further any of the Sustainable Communities Plan Growth areas.

On 2 February, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister announced that the Government would be working with the Regional Development Agencies, and other public and private sector partners, on a new long-term growth strategy for the north. This new vision for the north, 'The Northern Way', seeks to develop a real ambition in the north about the long term potential for growth by fully exploring the opportunities for growth along the economic and transport corridors that connect the three northern regions. The focus is therefore different from the existing housing growth areas or market renewal pathfinders.

### Homelessness

**Ms Oona King:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the funding each local authority in London *(a)* has received and *(b)* will receive from the Homelessness Directorate in (i) 2002–03, (ii) 2003–04 and (iii) 2004–05 to support their local homelessness strategies; and how that funding has been or is to be used in each case. [158549]

**Yvette Cooper:** The allocations to London boroughs over the three years 2002–03 to 2004–05 are tabled as follows.

Homelessness grants from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister are intended to supplement main sources of expenditure on homelessness (for example, local authority general fund expenditure and housing investment) to fund innovative services that tackle and prevent homelessness more effectively. The approaches underpinning this funding were set out in our March 2002 report, "More than a roof".

Allocations were boosted in 2002–03 and 2003–04 in acknowledgement of the need to pump-prime a number of new schemes to help deliver the Government's target to end the use of bed and breakfast hotels for homeless families with children, except in short-term emergencies, while improvements to Housing Benefit subsidy for other forms of temporary accommodation were put in place.

All housing authorities are offered a set allocation based on historic levels of homelessness in the borough. An additional grant may also be awarded based on performance in tackling homelessness and an assessment by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Government Offices in the Regions of bids submitted by authorities for funds to help them:

eradicate the use of bed and breakfast hotels as accommodation for homeless families with children, except in short-term emergencies;

sustain reductions in the number of people sleeping rough to a level as near to zero as possible and at least two-thirds below the level in 1998; and

tackle and prevent homelessness more effectively.

Over the three-year period there has been a reduction in direct commissioning by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister of services to tackle rough sleeping. Resources have been transferred to local authorities to commission services themselves as part of the development and implementation of local homelessness strategies. This is most apparent in the increasing allocation to Westminster.

Authorities have considerable discretion over how they use the grant, provided that they deliver the required outcomes. While particular schemes are set out in individual financial agreements and monitoring returns for each authority, we do not maintain a detailed, central schedule of all the services funded in each year. Typical of the range of schemes that may be funded are: mediation; rent deposit/bond schemes; private sector and RSL lettings; advice services; services

for particularly vulnerable groups; tenancy sustainment and outreach services. Services provided in each local authority area, including those receiving Office of the Deputy Prime Minister funding, are likely to feature in most authorities' homelessness strategies if they existed or were planned when the strategies were being written.

An independent evaluation of the homelessness strategies developed during 2003 in response to the requirements of the Homelessness Act 2002 has been commissioned by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and will provide more detailed information on the approaches taken by authorities. A further project will be commissioned shortly to evaluate homelessness prevention schemes, including those funded by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's homelessness grants.

£

| | *Grant paid 2002–03* | *Offer amounts 2003–04*[1] | *Provisional offer 2004–05*[2] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Barking and Dagenham | 38,000 | 68,000 | 28,000 |
| Barnet | 420,000 | 435,000 | 165,000 |
| Bexley | 120,000 | 130,800 | 58,000 |
| Brent | 1,970,000 | 1,423,000 | 783,000 |
| Bromley | 242,000 | 183,500 | 100,000 |
| Camden | 1,004,000 | 1,884,192 | 1,800,000 |
| City of London | 18,000 | 656,000 | 500,000 |
| Croydon | 1,597,000 | 1,104,000 | 600,000 |
| Ealing | 1,535,000 | 1,224,608 | 600,000 |
| Enfield | 588,000 | 509,000 | 250,000 |
| Greenwich | 63,000 | 113,000 | 100,000 |
| Hackney | 224,000 | 646,000 | 640,000 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 1,816,000 | 1,300,500 | 1,500,000 |
| Haringey | 421,000 | 473,500 | 200,000 |
| Harrow | 191,000 | 181,000 | 178,000 |
| Havering | 0 | 27,000 | 27,000 |
| Hillingdon | 920,000 | 780,000 | 80,000 |
| Hounslow | 494,000 | 459,000 | 180,000 |
| Islington | 306,000 | 326,700 | 357,000 |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 1,252,000 | 1,565,511 | 905,000 |
| Kingston upon Thames | 151,000 | 121,000 | 90,000 |
| Lambeth | 1,083,000 | 1,149,456 | 2,000,000 |
| Lewisham | 79,000 | 290,000 | 250,000 |
| Merton | 116,000 | 75,000 | 80,000 |
| Newham | 1,803,000 | 1,257,000 | 250,000 |
| Redbridge | 458,000 | 292,000 | 105,000 |
| Richmond | 116,000 | 386,576 | 295,000 |
| Southwark | 518,000 | 996,508 | 1,100,000 |
| Sutton | 241,000 | 193,000 | 150,000 |
| Tower Hamlets | 1,174,000 | 876,050 | 800,000 |
| Waltham Forest | 825,000 | 383,000 | 200,000 |
| Wandsworth | 629,000 | 546,000 | 300,000 |
| Westminster | 2,902,000 | 4,434,374 | 7,366,000 |

[1] We will not know actual spend for 2003–04 until fourth quarter expenditure returns are completed and returned by London authorities.

[2] Some 2004–05 offers are still to be agreed with London authorities.

In addition to the above grants, cross boundary funding provided mainly to voluntary and community sector agencies to tackle and prevent homelessness totalled:

| | £ |
|---|---|
| 2002–03 | 24,371,000 |
| 2003–04 | 18,735,000 |
| 2004–05 | [1]9,063,000 |

[1] Not all allocations for 2004–05 have been confirmed.

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### House Building (Hampshire)

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 23 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 25W, on development sites, if he will make a statement on the conclusions reached by the Joint Advisory Panel at the meeting on 10 March regarding the review of progress made on Hampshire's house building targets. [159998]

**Keith Hill:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister welcomes the decision of the Joint Advisory Panel to recognise the uncertainty surrounding future housing provision in Hampshire, and to recommend a number of measures to reduce that uncertainty. The Panel has agreed to prepare a draft action plan, which we would like to agree in a month's time. The measures will need to be implemented by local authorities in Hampshire speedily, in order to obviate the need to release the reserve.

### Local Authority Debt

**Mr. Goodman:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what *(a)* instructions and *(b)* guidelines are issued by his Department to local authorities on the writing off of (i) Council Tax and (ii) Housing Benefit debt when the debt recovery costs are greater than the debt itself; and if he will make a statement. [160689]

**Mr. Raynsford:** Local authorities are under a duty to collect all council tax revenues owing to them. "Council Tax Practice Note 9: Recovery and Enforcement", issued jointly by the former Department of the Environment and the Welsh Office in 1993, states that authorities should have provisions in their Standing Orders or Financial Regulations to enable amounts to be written off if they are irrecoverable or not economical to pursue.

The recovery of housing benefit debt is a matter for the Department for Works and Pensions.

### Local Government Finance (Isle of Wight)

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what additional grant is to be paid to the Isle of Wight Council in 2004–05 following his decision to add £1 million to the grant for 2003–04. [160646]

**Mr. Raynsford:** In 2003–04, during the final consultation on our proposed formulae changes, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister accepted the Isle of Wight's argument that their New Earnings Survey sample size was too small for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to reliably calculate a separate area cost adjustment (ACA) for the island. As a result the Isle of Wight received the same ACA as Hampshire in the 2003–04 settlement. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister used the same methodology to calculate the ACA for the 2004–05 settlement when the Isle of Wight once again received the same ACA as Hampshire.

The Local Government Finance Settlement was approved by the House of Commons on 5 February 2004.

### Pre-Budget Report Leaflet

**Mr. Fallon:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the timetable for *(a)* publication

and (*b*) circulation to hon. Members by the Government Office for the South East of copies of the pre-Budget report leaflet for the south east; and what the (i) cost and (ii) purpose of the exercise were. [160634]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The information is as follows.

(a) This document is distributed after the pre-Budget statement via Government Offices for the Regions.

(b) The objective of the document is to explain the impact of the pre-Budget report on each region.

(i) The total cost of the publication and distribution of the document was £286.00 for the south-east.

(ii) Distribution of the document is in line with Government's commitment to promote dialogue with the regions, to strengthen their input into future policy making.

### Regional Assemblies/Government

**Mr. Jenkin:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister on what basis he decided that the referendums for elected regional assemblies should be conducted by all-postal ballot. [159824]

**Phil Hope:** Following a series of pilots in local authority elections and thorough evaluation by the Electoral Commission, it is clear that all-postal ballots can significantly increase the levels of participation in elections. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister considered this evidence carefully, before announcing our intention to hold the referendums by all-postal ballot in response to a question from the hon. Member for South Ribble (Mr. Borrow) on 22 October 2003.

**Ann Winterton:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister to whom Government Offices of the Regions would be accountable if regional assemblies are introduced. [160740]

**Mr. Raynsford:** Government Offices for the Regions will remain as part of central Government and will continue to be responsible to Government Ministers.

However the Government intend to devolve to elected assemblies some of the functions currently discharged through Government Offices. The assembly would be accountable to its electorate for those devolved functions.

**Ann Winterton:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister from which funding source the difference between the 2002–03 Government grant of £780 million for the North West Region, £350 million for the North East Region and £570 million for the Yorkshire and the Humber Region and the EU funding of £254 million for the North West, £88 million for the North East and £185 million for Yorkshire and the Humber was provided. [160742]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The difference between the 2002–03 likely total budgets for elected regional assemblies and the European programme funding is the block grant which assemblies will receive from central Government. The budgets for which a future elected regional assembly would be responsible (in the form of the block grant) are currently allocated to the Government Offices and non-departmental public bodies from central Government Departments.

### Regional Spatial Strategies

**Mr. Clifton-Brown:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will set out the current progress of the regional spatial strategies in each region. [159961]

**Keith Hill:** As the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill now stands as amended in the other place, there will be no regional spatial strategies until elected regional assemblies are established. As the Bill was introduced the intention was that regional planning guidance in each region would become the regional spatial strategy following commencement of Part 1 of the Bill. Current progress on the relevant regional planning guidance is tabled as follows.

*Existing RPGs and proposed revisions*

| | *Existing RPG* | | | *Revision timetable* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Region* | *Draft RPG published* | *Public examination into RPG* | *Issue of final RPG* | *Draft RPG/RSS published* | *Public examination into RPG/RSS* | *Target for issue of final RPG/ RSS* |
| East of England (Formally RPG6 but to become RPG 14) (Revision will extend coverage to whole of the East region) | August 1998 (issued for consultation by GO) | February 1999 | November 2000 | September 2004 | June/July 2005 | July 2006 |
| North East (RPG1) | December 1999 | June/July 2000 | November 2002 | November 2004 | August 2005 | June 2006 |
| East Midlands (RPG8) | November 1999 | June 2000 | January 2002 | Spring 2003[1] | Autumn 2003[1] | Autumn 2004[1] |
| South East (RPG9) (Revision will exclude areas now included in the East and London) | December 1998 | May 1999 | March 2001 | Summer 2005 | Late 2005 | Autumn 2006 |
| South East (Waste Review) | — | — | — | Early 2004[1] | Autumn 2004[1] | Summer 2005[1] |
| South West (RPG10) | August 1999 | March/April 2000 | September 2001 | Autumn 2004[1] | Early 2006[1] | Early 2007[1] |
| West Midlands (RPG11) | — | — | April 1998 | November 2001 | June 2002 | Early 2004 |
| Yorkshire and the Humber (RPG 12) | October 1999 | June/July 2000 | October 2001 | End 2004 | Autumn 2005 | Summer 2006 |
| Yorkshire and the Humber | — | — | — | June 2003[1] | February 2004[1] | Late 2004[1] |
| North West (RPG 13) | June/July 2000 | February 2001 | March 2003 | March 2004[1] | November 2004[1] | Late 2005[1] |
| Milton Keynes and South Midlands Study (MKSM), will inform RPG for the East of England, the South East and the East Midlands. | — | — | — | July 2003 | March-April 2004 | February 2005 |

[1] Partial reviews only.

## EDUCATION AND SKILLS

### Adoption

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funding has been made available to each local authority for the establishment of adoption support services under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 in the last 12 months. [156528]

**Margaret Hodge** *[holding answer 26 February 2004]:* Funding for local authority adoption support services (including adoption support services) derived from the following sources in the financial year 2003–04:

The children's social services Formula Spending Share (Children's FSS) of £3038.350 million, which is intended to fund all local authority children's social services, including adoption services. The Quality Protects (QP) main grant, which included approximately £60 million funding over the three years 2001–02 to 2003–4 to secure sustained improvements in adoption services. This funding will be mainstreamed from 2004–05 into the CSS baseline. An extra £70 million of ring-fenced money for Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Services from 2003–04 to 2005–06. £12 million of this was allocated to local authorities in the year 2003–04.

A breakdown of the allocations by local authority for the Children's FSS, overall QP main grant and Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Services grant is available in Local Authority Social Services Letter (LASSL) (2003)1, copies of which have been placed in the Library.

### Adult and Community Learning Programmes (Greater London)

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people were enrolled on adult and community learning programmes in Greater London in each year since 1995; and how many are enrolled on adult and community learning programmes now. [158409]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** The numbers of enrolments in Greater London on (i) adult and community learning and adult education courses run through local education authorities; (ii) LearnDirect; and (iii) adult basic skills, are set out separately as follows.

The number of enrolments on adult education courses run through local education authorities (LEAs) in England at 1 November each year is published annually in the Statistical First Release, "Adult Education Enrolments in England". The publication includes a breakdown of enrolments by region. The following table shows the number of enrolments on courses offered by LEAs in Greater London at 1 November for each year from 1995 to 2002, the latest year for which figures are available. These figures include enrolments on both courses that do and do not lead to a recognised qualification.

*Adult education enrolments on courses run by local education authorities in Greater London at 1 November: 1995 to 2002*[1]

| *November* | *Enrolments (thousand)* |
|---|---|
| 1995 | 222.8 |
| 1996 | 226.7 |
| 1997 | 209.0 |
| 1998 | 218.8 |
| 1999 | 179.5 |
| 2000 | 201.4 |
| 2001 | 217.3 |
| 2002 | 221.0 |

[1] Includes enrolments by 16 to 18-year-olds

*Source:*
Local education authorities

The figures in the following table show the numbers of learners on LearnDirect provision in Greater London in each year since 2000/01, the earliest year for which figures are available. Learners who withdrew from their course are excluded.

*Learners on LearnDirect provision in Greater London—2000/01 to date*

| *Academic year* | *Learners* |
|---|---|
| 2000/01 | 15,000 |
| 2001/02 | 50,000 |
| 2002/03 | 57,000 |
| 2003/04 (to date) | 30,000 |

*Source:*
LearnDirect

The final table shows the number of enrolments on adult basic skills courses in Greater London since the launch of the Skills for Life strategy.

*Enrolments (in thousands) on Adult Basic Skills in Greater London—2000/01 to 2002/03*[1,2]

| *Academic year* | *Enrolments (thousand)* |
|---|---|
| 2000/01[3] | 167 |
| 2001/02 | 272 |
| 2002/03 | 311 |

[1] Includes enrolments by 16 to 18-year-olds.

[2] Figures do not include estimates from the Offenders' Learning and Skills Unit and the Department for Work and Pensions.

[3] Part year figure covering April to July 2001.

*Source:*
Learning and Skills Council

### Adult Residential Colleges

**Mr. Boswell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to examine the contribution of residential colleges for adult education to the Government's lifelong learning policies; and if he will make a statement. [159525]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** There are 32 adult residential colleges based in rural locations in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. These colleges are mainly owned and run by Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and provide, in the main, short courses. They do not receive funding direct from the DfES or the Learning and Skills Council. It is for local Learning and Skills Councils, in discussion with LEAs, to consider whether, and if so how, residential colleges can contribute to meeting local needs in lifelong learning in the light of our commitments in 21st Century Skills to safeguard budgets for such learning.

### Asbestos

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will list the *(a)* schools and *(b)* other education facilities which have been identified as containing asbestos; what proportion of (i) schools and (ii) other education facilities have been surveyed for the purpose of identifying the presence of asbestos; which (A) schools and (B) other education facilities require (1) remedial work and (2) removal of asbestos; what this work will cost; what budgets are available for this work for 2004 and 2005; and what budget is available for future asbestos surveys. [159656]

**Mr. Miliband:** The Department does not hold information on which schools and other education facilities contain asbestos, nor on the proportion that has been surveyed for asbestos. As part of the data collected through the appraisal of Asset Management Plans, the Department has information on maintenance requirements at maintained schools, but asbestos work is not separately identified. By May this year, in accordance with the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002, schools should have identified and recorded the position of any asbestos. We do not provide funding specifically for the survey, treatment or removal of asbestos. Schools and authorities can use the large amounts of formulaic capital which is now allocated to them for investment in their buildings, including health and safety needs such as asbestos treatment. We would expect these needs to be prioritised highly in the local asset management planning process. The total amount of capital available for investment in school buildings in 2004–05 is £4.5 billion and in 2005–06 it rises to £5.1 billion.

### CAFCASS

**John Mann:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many complaints have been *(a)* made and *(b)* upheld against reports produced by the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service since the inception of the Service. [152348]

**Margaret Hodge** *[holding answer 30 January 2004]*: As at 31 March 2003, CAFCASS had received 916 complaints since its inception in April 2001, representing less than 1 per cent. of the total number of cases handled. Of the complaints, 47 per cent. were not upheld and 31 per cent. were resolved or withdrawn. Five per cent. of complaints were upheld, with 9 per cent. partly upheld and 8 per cent. remaining under investigation as at 31 March 2003.

Figures for the period April 2003-March 2004 are currently being collected from CAFCASS' regions and will be published in their 2003–04 Annual Report; which is expected to be laid before Parliament before the summer recess.

If complainants complete CAFCASS's complaints process and still remain dissatisfied, they are able to raise the matter, through a sponsoring MP, with the Parliamentary Ombudsman. In 2002–03, four complaints were referred to the Ombudsman: in three, no evidence was found to support them. The Ombudsman made enquiries about the fourth complaint, but decided not to progress it any further. CAFCASS only has figures on complaints received by the Parliamentary Ombudsman in 2002–03.

### Child Care Review Officers

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many independent review officers responsible for child care cases are employed in each local authority; and how many vacant posts there are in each local authority. [156525]

**Margaret Hodge** *[holding answer 26 February 2004]*: The information requested is not available centrally.

The Children Act 1989 Guidance requires that reviews are chaired by someone at a more senior level than the case social worker to bring a degree of oversight and objectivity to the review and care plan. Regulations also require local authorities to appoint an officer to assist in the co-ordination of all aspects of the review.

To further strengthen this, provision was made in the Adoption and Children Act 2002 for legislation to require local authorities to appoint Independent Reviewing Officers. These officers are to be independent of the management of the child's case and independent of the resources allocated to that case. Regulations commencing this provision will come into force in September 2004 following a consultation exercise last year. A large number of local authorities already employ individuals fulfilling a similar function.

### Children in Care

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* new born babies, *(b)* infants aged between one and four years and *(c)* children aged over five years have been taken into care by social services in each of the last 10 years. [152115]

**Margaret Hodge** *[holding answer 30 January 2004]*: The number of *(a)* new born babies, *(b)* infants aged between one and four years and *(c)* children aged over five years who were taken into care by local authorities in each of the last 10 years is shown in the table.

*Children who were taken into care during the years ending 31 March 1993 to 2003, by age group—England*

*Numbers*

| | | *Age on entering care* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Year* | [1,2]*All Children* | *Under 1* | *1 to 4* | *5 and over* |
| 1993 | 29,100 | 3,000 | 6,000 | 20,200 |
| 1994 | 31,300 | 3,200 | 6,500 | 21,700 |
| 1995 | 32,500 | 3,400 | 6,300 | 22,800 |
| 1996 | 32,100 | 3,300 | 6,200 | 22,600 |
| 1997 | 29,900 | 3,300 | 5,800 | 20,800 |
| 1998 | 29,700 | 3,200 | 5,700 | 20,800 |
| 1999 | 28,400 | 3,500 | 5,500 | 19,500 |
| 2000 | 28,600 | 3,700 | 5,200 | 19,600 |
| 2001 | 25,100 | 3,700 | 4,600 | 16,900 |
| 2002 | 24,600 | 3,900 | 4,500 | 16,200 |

[1] Only the first occasion on which a child entered care in the year has been counted.
[2] Figures for children in care in this table exclude agreed series of short term placements.

Of the 24,600 children who entered care during the year ending 31 March 2002, 68 per cent. were looked after under voluntary agreements (Section 20 of the

Children Act 1989), 17 per cent. were under a care order, and 15 per cent. were looked after under other legal statuses.

For both the Under 1 and 1–4 age groups, over half the children who entered care during the year ending 31 March 2002 were under voluntary agreements, 25–30 per cent. were under care orders and just under 20 per cent. were under other legal statuses. The pattern is slightly different for the 5 and over age group, with three quarters of the children entering under voluntary agreements, 11 per cent. under care orders, and 14 per cent. under other legal statuses.

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children aged *(a)* three to six months and *(b)* six months to one year entered local authority care in (i) Greater London and (ii) each London borough in the last 12 months for which figures are available. [158762]

**Margaret Hodge** *[holding answer 4 March 2004]:* The information requested is shown in the following table.

*31 March 2002, aged 3–6 months and 6 months to 1 year, London*

*Number*

| | *Age on entering care* | |
|---|---|---|
| | *3–6 months* | *6 months-1 year* |
| Inner London | 40 | 55 |
| Camden | 0 | 0 |
| City of London | 0 | 0 |
| Greenwich | — | 5 |
| Hackney | 10 | 10 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | — | 0 |
| Islington | 10 | — |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 0 | — |
| Lambeth | — | 5 |
| Lewisham | — | 0 |
| Southwark | — | — |
| Tower Hamlets | 0 | 0 |
| Wandsworth | 0 | 10 |
| Westminster | — | 15 |
| Outer London | 35 | 70 |
| Barking and Dagenham | 0 | 5 |
| Barnet | 0 | 0 |
| Bexley | — | 0 |
| Brent | — | 5 |
| Bromley | — | 0 |
| Croydon | 0 | 10 |
| Ealing | — | 0 |
| Enfield | 0 | — |
| Haringey | 0 | 0 |
| Harrow | 0 | — |
| Havering | — | 5 |
| Hillingdon | — | — |
| Hounslow | 5 | 5 |
| Kingston Upon Thames | 0 | 0 |
| Merton | — | — |
| Newham | 5 | 15 |
| Redbridge | 0 | 0 |
| Richmond Upon Thames | 0 | 0 |
| Sutton | 0 | 0 |
| Waltham Forest | 0 | — |

*Notes:*

1. Figures for children looked after in this table exclude agreed series of short term placement.
2. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 5. Numbers between 1 and 5 are suppressed (—).
3. The figures are based on a one-third sample of children. A zero in the table means there were no children in the sample.

### Children's Departments

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations he has received concerning the proposed formation of a children's department within local authorities; and if he will make a statement. [157358]

**Margaret Hodge:** We have received 4,604 responses to the Green Paper 'Every Child Matters' and have considered them very carefully. Last week we published 'Every Child Matters: Next Steps', which reports on the outcomes of the consultation and sets out the Government's proposals for taking this work forward.

### Children's Fund

**Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the Answer of 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1186W, on the Children's Fund, if he will list each project funded by the Children's Fund to date. [155076]

**Margaret Hodge:** The information requested on individual projects funded is not collected centrally; this is held only by partnerships. The latest available data shows that a total of 4,665 Children's Fund services were being delivered across England to 321,033 children, young people and carers.

A list of the 149 Children's Fund partnerships in England follows. Wave 1 partnerships were approved to begin from July 2001, Wave 2 partnerships from April 2002 and Wave 3 partnerships from April 2003. Under the 2002 Spending Review the programme has £150 million per annum, although we have been able to commit an additional £20 million to all partnerships from our 2004/05 budget.

*Partnership*

*Wave 1*

Norfolk county council
Camden LBA
Greenwich council
Hackney Education Department
Haringey council
Islington council
Newham
Southwark
Tower Hamlets
Blackburn with Darwen borough council
Blackpool borough council
Bolton Met. borough council
Halton (NCH)
Knowsley MBC
Lancashire county council
Liverpool county council
Manchester city council
Oldham MBC
Rochdale MBC
Salford city council
Birmingham city council
Sandwell MBC
Leicester city council social services
Lincolnshire Development

Nottingham City Social Services Department.
Gateshead MBC
Hartlepool borough council
Middlesbrough (NCH)
Newcastle city council
Stockton on Tees borough council
Sunderland City
Kent (FWA)
Portsmouth city council
Bristol
Cornwall (NCH)
Bradford City MDC
Doncaster MBC
Kingston Upon Hull city council
Leeds city council social services
Sheffield city council

*Wave 2*

Luton borough council
Peterborough
Suffolk county council
Barking and Dagenham
Brent social services
Hammersmith and Fulham social services
Lambeth
Lewisham
Waltham Forest
Wandsworth borough council
Westminster city council
Cheshire county council
Cumbria Community Foundation
St. Helens (NCH)
Sefton council
Tameside MBC
Trafford MBC
Wirral metropolitan borough
Bournemouth (The Childrens Society)
Devon county council
Plymouth
Torbay (The Children's Society)
Barnsley MBC
Calderdale council
Kirklees (NCC)
North East Lincolnshire council
North Lincolnshire council
North Yorkshire
Rotherham MBC
Derby city council
Derbyshire county council
Northamptonshire county council
Nottinghamshire county council
Darlington borough council
County Durham
North Tyneside council
Northumberland (NCH)
Redcar and Cleveland borough council
South Tyneside MBC
Brighton and Hove city council
East Sussex county council
Isle of Wight council
Medway council
Southampton city council
Coventry city council
Solihull MBC
Stoke-on-Trent (Voluntary Action)
Telford and Wrekin council
Walsall MBC
Wolverhampton city council

*Wave 3*

Barnet
Bath and North East Somerset
Bedfordshire
Bexley
Bracknell Forest
Bromley
Buckinghamshire
Bury
Cambridgeshire
City of London
Croydon
Dorset
Dudley
Ealing
East Riding of Yorkshire
Enfield
Essex
Gloucestershire
Hampshire
Harrow
Havering
Herefordshire
Hertfordshire
Hillingdon
Hounslow
Kensington and Chelsea
Kingston upon Thames
Leicestershire
Merton
Milton Keynes
North Somerset
Oxfordshire
Poole
Reading
Redbridge
Richmond upon Thames
Rutland
Shropshire
Slough
Somerset
Southend-on-Sea
South Gloucestershire
Staffordshire
Stockport
Surrey
Sutton
Swindon
Thurrock

Wakefield
Warrington
Warwickshire
West Sussex
West Berkshire
Wigan
Wiltshire
Windsor and Maidenhead
Wokingham
Worcestershire
York

**Computer Access**

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what programmes are in place to enable mature students on low incomes to acquire computers. [158150]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis** *[holding answer 2 March 2004]:* At present no centrally funded programmes are in place that enable mature students on low incomes to acquire free or low price computers. The Government have however, established a network of UK online centres. These centres provide open access to ICT and the internet for people in all communities. All mature students in England should be able to find a UK online centre near to their home.

Many higher education institutions run local schemes to provide financial support or computer loans to their students on a case-by-case basis.

There are several programmes that provide general financial support to mature students on a basis of need, such as Access Funds. These are explained in the booklet, "Money to Learn", published by the Department for Education and Skills.

**Departmental Policies (Regent's Park and Kensington, North)**

**Ms Buck:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the impact of his Department's policies on the constituency of Regent's Park and Kensington North since 1997. [145418]

**Mr. Charles Clarke:** The constituency Regent's Park and Kensington, North covers part of both Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea local education authorities. Where the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) can or does collect information by constituency, it has been provided.

Additional information could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, my Department is investigating ways in which we disseminate information about the effects of our policies at a local level. We hope to have systems to facilitate this in place later this year.

*Children, young people and families*

The Government have sought to increase the range, number, quality and effectiveness of services for children, young people and families since 1997. Although data are not collected on a constituency basis, information is available on the impact of programmes delivered in the London boroughs of Kensington and Chelsea, and Westminster.

*Children's Social Services*

Children's social services in the constituency are delivered by both Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster, both of which are three star social services authorities (as published in the Annual Review of Performance Reports, issued by the Chief Inspector of the Social Services Inspectorate).

*Early education*

The Government have guaranteed a free, part time, early education available place to all our four-year-olds since 1998 and an increasing number of three-year-olds, if their parents want it. All three-year-olds will be guaranteed a free place by April 2004.

Both Kensington and Westminster authorities have confirmed that they will be able to meet their statutory obligation to three-year-olds by April 2004. Currently, we understand that around 50 per cent. of Kensington's three and four-year-olds take up an early education place, while in Westminster the participation rates are: 86 per cent. for four-year-olds and 92 per cent. for three-year-olds.

*Child care*

Since 1999, a total of 1,583 new pre-school and out of school child care places have been created within the constituency benefiting 2,689 children.

*Disadvantaged area programmes*

There are four Sure Start local programmes in the constituency providing a range of early learning, health and family services and with 3,230 children in their catchment areas, and one early excellence centre has been established in the constituency offering early education, childcare, health and family support to local children and families. Neighbourhood nurseries are being built in disadvantaged communities throughout the country following an initiative that began in 2001. There are five proposed flagship children centres in both Kensington and Chelsea LEA and Westminster LEA, some of which would be developed from acclaimed local nursery schools.

*Connexions*

Connexions, the Government's front line support service for all young people aged 13–19, is providing advice, guidance and support to young people in Regent's Park and Kensington, North constituency through Central London Connexions partnership. Since its launch in June 2002, following a 12 month pilot, young people aged 13–19 have had access to support and advice on a range of issues to help them participate and achieve in education, employment and training and to reach their full potential as adults.

*Youth Services*

There are two local authority youth services in Regent's Park and Kensington, North—in Westminster and in Kensington and Chelsea. There is evidence that the Department's policies have made a positive impact on the standards of youth service provision in both areas, in both of which Ofsted inspections identified weaknesses but which, when re-inspected in October 2003, were found to have made good progress.

*Extended schools*

The Department is supporting the rollout of up to 240 full service extended schools by 2006, so that there will be at least one in each LEA area. Quintin Kynaston School in Westminster LEA and Sion Manning RC

School for Girls in Kensington and Chelsea LEA are being developed as full service extended schools from this year.

*Schools*

*Recurrent funding*

The estimated[1] increase in per pupil funding in Westminster in real terms from 1997–98 to 2004–05 is £1,160, compared with the national average of £880.

*School performance tables*

Key stage (KS) figures can be found on the DfES website at: www.dfes.gov.uk/performancetables.

*Specialist schools*

There are two specialist schools in Kensington and Chelsea LEA and four specialist schools in Westminster LEA:

*Education Action Zones*

There is an Education Action Zone in Westminster, which includes three secondary schools, 22 nursery and primary schools and two special schools.

*Beacon schools*

Within Regent's Park and North Kensington constituency there are a total of seven Beacon schools.

*Primary Strategy Leadership*

Six primary schools are part of the Primary Strategy Leadership programme in Kensington and Chelsea. Westminster LEA has not identified particular schools to participate in the programme but is using consultant leaders to give leadership support to all schools across the LEA.

*Leadership Incentive Grant*

There are eight secondary schools in Westminster in receipt of LIG and four schools in Kensington and Chelsea in receipt of LIG.

*Behaviour improvement projects*

In Westminster four secondary schools and 17 primary schools are involved in the BIP. In Kensington and Chelsea there are three secondary schools and 12 primary schools.

*Healthy schools*

There are different levels of involvement within the NHSS, level three being the highest—37.5 per cent. of schools in Kensington and Chelsea and 53 per cent. of schools in Westminster are working at this level and are recognised as healthy schools.

*14–19 Education*

The Government's strategy for 14–19 education and training, set out in "14–19: opportunity and excellence", will provide all young people with the opportunity to continue their education in different settings, including schools, colleges, and the workplace.

The impact of the 14–19 agenda on Regent's Park and Kensington, North includes:

*16–19 area inspection (14–19 from March 2003)*

16–19 area inspections were introduced in 1999 as a key means of securing improvements in education and training for young people. The royal borough of Kensington and Chelsea underwent a 16–19 area inspection in summer 2002. A copy of the Ofsted report can be found on their website www.ofsted.gov.uk.

With London Central LSC in the lead, local partners developed an action plan that was accepted by Stephen Twigg, the Parliamentary under Secretary of State for Schools, on 12 January 2003. London Central LSC is responsible for the successful implementation of the plan, which is on-going.

*Vocational Provision*

London Central LSC currently has four work-based learning providers delivering vocational programmes in the constituency of Regents Park and Kensington, North.

Learners in the borough have access to all of the remaining 31 work-based learning providers in the London Central portfolio. Within easy travelling distance they can gain entry to over 35 additional occupational areas ranging from accountancy, engineering and sport and recreation to construction, hospitality and retail.

*Educational maintenance allowances*

Neither Kensington and Chelsea nor Westminster is covered by Educational Maintenance Allowances (EMA) pilots although some students attending FE institutions in these LEAs may be in receipt of EMA because most of inner London is covered by pilots.

*Higher education*

*Participation*

The number of 18 to 20-year-olds entering full-time higher education courses, are as follows:

*Number*

| | *Kensington and Chelsea* | *Westminster* |
|---|---|---|
| 1997 | 655 | 613 |
| 1998 | 584 | 650 |
| 1999 | 614 | 647 |
| 2000 | 654 | 672 |
| 2001 | 658 | 688 |
| 2002 | 655 | 717 |

*Adult education*

The Local Labour Force Survey shows that in Regents Park and Kensington, North:

The proportion of working age people qualified to at least level 4 has risen from 30.5 per cent. in 1999 to 37.1 per cent. in 2001.

The proportion of working age people qualified to at least level 2 has risen from 62.6 per cent. in 1999 to 69.8 per cent. in 2001.

The proportion of working people without any qualification has fallen from 18.2 per cent. in 1999 to 13.6 per cent. in 2001.

The proportion of working age people who received job related training in the last four weeks rose from 10.4 per cent. in 1999 to 13.1 per cent. in 2001.

[1] Includes provisional estimates of grants and allocations still to be confirmed. Real terms at 2002–03 prices.

## Domestic Violence

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research Government departments have conducted within the past five years into the effects of domestic violence on children; and what the main conclusions were. [159802]

**Margaret Hodge:** There is considerable research already available conducted by experts in this field of social policy that highlights the effects of domestic violence on children. The main conclusions are that

children who have been exposed to domestic violence demonstrate more aggression, antisocial behaviour and anger, as well as withdrawal, depression, suicidal behaviour, anxiety, fears, phobias, insomnia and low self-esteem, compared to children who have not suffered these experiences.

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures are *(a)* in place and *(b)* planned to increase the consistency among geographical areas of standards of domestic violence services aimed at children. [159803]

**Margaret Hodge:** Local authorities, in partnership with other agencies, both statutory and voluntary, are expected to assess the needs of children in their areas, in accordance with the duties imposed on them by Part III of the Children Act 1989 and then to determine the range of services that will need to be available in order to respond to those needs. This process, inevitably and properly, leads to diversity in the provision of services at local level.

### Dyslexia Conference

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representation his Department plans to have at the Sixth British Dyslexia Association Conference; and if he will make a statement on programmes available to assist dyslexia sufferers. [159944]

**Margaret Hodge:** A DfES representative has served on the steering group for this event and we hope to send an observer on one of the conference days.

In addition to assisting with planning, the Department has provided grant support to enable a number of promising students to attend the event and a grant for a new conference publication aimed at classroom practitioners. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Skills has also provided a goodwill message for this international event, which will be reproduced in conference literature.

A number of commercially available programmes support children with specific learning difficulties. It is for parents, individual schools and local education authorities to decide whether a given technique has something to offer an individual child in the light of his or her needs.

### Education Maintenance Allowance

**Mr. Willis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research his Department has carried out, in addition to the three-year assessments, to assess the impact of education maintenance allowances on participating in the Government-supported training; and if he will make a statement. [155439]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* Evaluation findings show that the national EMA scheme is expected to increase participation in education at Year 12 by 3.8 per cent. and at Year 13 by 4.1 per cent. Evidence from the pilot EMA areas shows that little of the increase in participation through EMA is from Government Supported Training. Over half of the increase in participation through EMA is from young people who would otherwise not be in any education, employment or training, and most others are from work without training. There is some evidence from the pilot areas that suggests an increased flow into Government Supported Training at 18.

Overall EMA supports a range of learning up to level 3. This includes young people doing quality assured NVQs and vocational courses in FE colleges that often incorporate work placements.

**Helen Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the impact of educational maintenance allowances in improving participation rates in post-16 education. [156634]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** In the pilots, EMA increased participation by 16-year-olds in education by 5.9 per cent. points. Judged against historic trends, this represents a major increase. Our evaluators predict that in the first year of the national scheme, some 35,000 additional young people will participate in further education, and this will rise to over 70,000 per year when EMA is fully in place.

### Emotional Intelligence Initiatives

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what departmental initiatives there are in relation to emotional intelligence; what difficulties have been reported in implementing such initiatives; and how the success of these initiatives is evaluated; [155290]

(2) what funding his Department provides to *(a)* schools and *(b)* local education authorities to develop (i) emotional intelligence and (ii) literacy initiatives; [155292]

(3) which *(a)* schools, *(b)* academics and *(c)* university education departments his Department has assessed as the best practitioners in the field of emotional intelligence; and what his Department regards as best practice in this field. [155293]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** The Department is concerned to promote children's social and emotional development and their social, emotional and behavioural skills (SEBS), which themselves contribute to children's emotional intelligence and emotional literacy.

Promoting positive emotional and social development is a crucial part of educating children. The Department is therefore committed to providing guidance and materials for every stage. Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage covers the emotional and social development of very young children and we are developing associated training materials. The Personal, Social and Health Education framework supports the emotional and social development of children at Key Stages 1 to 4. To supplement that, the Department is piloting specific Social, Emotional and Behavioural Skills (SEBS) materials for primary schools in 25 local education authorities (LEAs) and developing similar materials for secondary schools.

The Department is investing £600,000 in SEBS materials for primary schools over two years. The pilot is in the early stages of implementation but initial feedback from schools is very positive. It will be evaluated by the University of London's Institute of Education. The Foundation and secondary materials are still at the initial development stage.

The development of SEBS materials is informed by existing good practice in a number of LEAs including Southampton, Bristol, Portsmouth, Cumbria, Merton, East Riding of Yorkshire, Brighton and Hove and Nottingham City. The Department is also advised by an expert SEBS practitioners group including academics from the universities of Southampton, Oxford and Middlesex, a range of voluntary bodies including the National Children's Bureau, the NSPCC and Antidote, senior school staff and LEA officers.

### EU Accession Citizens

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate the Government have made of how many EU accession country citizens will make use of the education system in the UK at each level. [157348]

**Alan Johnson:** From 1 May children living within the UK who come from the accession countries will have access to education here. In addition, students who attend Further and Higher Education Institutions will have home fee status as long as they have been resident within an acceding country for three years.

The Government commissioned work from independent academic experts on likely numbers of migrants arriving which is published and available on the Home Office website. We will monitor the situation post enlargement to ensure that the impact on schools, FE and HE is understood. Government departments are working together to ensure that all the available data are brought together to offer a rounded picture of the impact of accession and as well as feeding into this we will be looking to use the results to inform the picture for education.

For Higher Education we have been collecting data on the nationality of students, including those from accession countries for some years. We estimate a one-off increase in the number of EU students in the UK of perhaps about 8 per cent. as a result of EU enlargement. Our January HEFCE Grant letter took account of the expansion of the EU due to take place in 2004, and so did the Additional Student Numbers (ASN) exercise that HEFCE are currently running for foundation degrees. We have already forecasted for growth in new EU students and will continue to do so in the next Spending Review. It is important to remember that since we do not give maintenance to students from the EU, coming to study in the UK is not a 'cheap option' for them; they still have to find ways to support their living costs themselves.

### EU Enlargement

**Mr. Nigel Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which UK agencies are best able to *(a)* assist with recognising educational backgrounds and skills of migrant workers and *(b)* help the UK employment sector to take advantage of the enlargement of the EU. [157363]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** The Government welcome EU enlargement and expect that it will have a positive impact on the UK, allowing us to benefit from a wider skills market to fill key labour and skills gaps and boost productivity.

The UK National Reference Point (NRP) for Vocational Qualifications has been set up by UK Government to explain vocational qualifications (VQs) and particularly how UK VQs relate to ones elsewhere in Europe. The UK National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) advises on the comparability of overseas educational qualifications with those from the UK.

Jobcentre Plus is able to assist employers in the UK and migrant workers from the new member states to fill vacancies and find appropriate work. Jobcentre Plus, through its EURES adviser network is also able to advise employers and jobseekers about comparability of qualifications through the NARIC Global Qualifications database.

**Mr. Nigel Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of how enlargement of the EU will affect the skills shortage in the United Kingdom. [157362]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** The Government welcome EU enlargement and expect that it will have a positive impact on the UK, allowing us to benefit from a wider skills market to fill key labour and skills gaps and boost productivity. The UK has the strongest labour market for a generation and this puts us in a good position to absorb any additional migrant flows. Free movement of workers within a larger EU will complement the work we are doing to address the skills gaps that exist currently within our own workforce, which are predominantly in the Business Services and construction sectors.

As announced by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, A8-nationals who want to work in the UK will be required to apply to register as a worker once they have found a job. The benefit of this new light-touch worker registration scheme is that it will expand the range of skills and supply of workers available across the UK and allow us to monitor the types of work that accession country nationals are entering in the UK. Through our labour market data we will also be able to tell the impact on the UK labour market as a whole.

### European School, Culham

**Mr. Boris Johnson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if he will make a statement on the European Parliament resolution on the future financing of the European Schools (2002–2083 (INI)), with regard to the European School at Culham. [160266]

**Alan Johnson:** The future financing of the European School at Culham is the subject of an independent review as a direct result of the European Commission's intention to withdraw support from smaller European Schools. Decisions on the future of Culham will be taken by the European Schools Governing Body on the basis of this review.

### Further Education

**Mr. Mahmood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of *(a)* applicants and *(b)* entrants to each university in England were from (i) further education colleges, (ii) sixth-form colleges, (iii) school sixth-forms and (iv) independent schools in (A) 2001 and (B) 2002. [143642]

**Alan Johnson:** The information is not held centrally. The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) collects data on the previous school type of applicants and acceptances to full-time undergraduate courses but does not release this data at institutional level without the prior permission of the institutions.

However, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) publishes data annually showing the proportion of entrants to each university and HE college who come from state schools or colleges. This is contained in "Performance Indicators in Higher Education", the latest edition of which is available from the House Library.

### Gap Year Students

**Mr. Flook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate he has made of the number of A-level students who took a year off study before beginning a university course in each year since 1990. [152003]

**Alan Johnson:** The available information comes from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and covers deferred entry for 18-year-old, full-time, accepted applicants to first degree and HND study in the UK. Figures are in the table. Students who defer their application to UCAS because they are taking a gap year are therefore excluded.

*UK domiciled 18-year-old applicants, accepted through UCAS with deferred entry*

| *Year of application* | *Total accepted applicants* | *Total accepted on deferred basis* | *Percentage deferred* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1994/95 | 118,890 | 9,120 | 7.7 |
| 1995/96 | 124,908 | 10,495 | 8.4 |
| 1996/97 | 130,768 | 11,879 | 9.1 |
| 1997/98 | 146,756 | 13,345 | 9.1 |
| 1998/99 | 148,301 | 14,261 | 9.6 |
| 1999/2000 | 146,670 | 14,975 | 10.2 |

*UK domiciled 18-year-old applicants, accepted through UCAS with deferred entry*

| *Year of application* | *Total accepted applicants* | *Total accepted on deferred basis* | *Percentage deferred* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2000/01 | 147,986 | 16,007 | 10.8 |
| 2001/02 | 156,790 | 18,840 | 12.0 |
| 2002/03 | 161,032 | 19,600 | 12.2 |

*Source:*
UCAS

### Higher Education

**Chris Grayling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of students in higher education institutions are not studying for degree courses. [152685]

**Alan Johnson:** In 2002–03, 47 per cent. of all HE enrolments to UK HE institutions were for courses other than first degrees. Figures are given in the table.

*Enrolments to UK HE Institutions, 2002–03*

| *Level* | *Number* | *Percentage* |
|---|---|---|
| Postgraduate | 414,250 | 21 |
| First Degree | 1,075,070 | 53 |
| Other Undergraduate | 530,860 | 26 |
| All | 2,020,180 | 100 |

*Source:*
Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

**Shona McIsaac:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of 18-year-olds entered full-time higher education in *(a)* North East Lincolnshire and *(b)* North Lincolnshire in each year since 1990. [153598]

**Alan Johnson:** The available information is taken from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) applicants accepted to full time first degree and HND courses. Information prior to 1994 entry is not available at local education authority level. Figures are given in the table.

*Percentage of accepted applicants, aged 18, through UCAS*

| | *Year of Entry* | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *LEA* | *[1]1994* | *[1]1995* | *[1]1996* | *1997* | *1998* | *1999* | *2000* | *2001* | *2002* |
| North East Lincolnshire | - | - | - | 15.3 | 14.7 | 15.3 | 15.2 | 16.0 | 14.5 |
| North Lincolnshire | - | - | - | 20.2 | 18.8 | 17.9 | 21.3 | 18.2 | 18.6 |
| Humberside | 15.1 | 16.5 | 16.8 | — | — | — | — | — | — |

[1] Prior to 1997, North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire were contained within Humberside LEA along with the City of Kingston upon Hull and East Riding of Yorkshire.

### Isle of Wight College

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the quality of provision by the Isle of Wight college since publication of the statement by the Baroness Blackstone contained in the Department of Education and Skills press notices 1999/0212. [160272]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis** *[holding answer 10 March 2004]:* The Isle of Wight College recovery plan has been effectively implemented and the college now offers good quality courses across a wide provision to serve the needs of the local community. The college was inspected under the Common Inspection Framework in October 2003 and the inspectors judged that of the nine areas of learning delivered by the college, three were satisfactory, five were good and one outstanding. Leadership and management of the college was also judged to be good. The college has also recently been recognised as a Centre of Vocational Excellence for hospitality and catering.

### Language Teaching

**Helen Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many staff teaching English in secondary schools *(a)* for part of their time and *(b)* full-time do not have a first degree in English; [159820]

(2) how many staff teaching modern foreign languages in secondary schools *(a)* full-time and *(b)* for part of their time do not have a first degree in a foreign language; [159821]

(3) what the vacancy level for teachers of modern foreign languages is. [159822]

**Mr. Miliband:** Information on subject teaching is not available in the form requested. Similar information is available in 'Statistics of Education: School Workforce in England, 2003 Edition'. This can be found in the Library or at the following link: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsqatewav/DBA/OL/v000443/index.shtml. The level of qualifications teachers hold in the subjects they teach is shown in Table 24. The percentage of periods they provide in those subjects is shown in Table 25.

In January 2003, the vacancy rate for all languages in secondary schools in England was 1.1 per cent. Modern foreign languages cannot be separately identified.

### Learning Difficulties

**Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people in the United Kingdom had learning difficulties in each year since 1995. [158325]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** The Labour Force Survey (LFS) collects information on the long-term health conditions and impairments of working age adults. LFS estimates of those who have a current long-term impairment and whose main condition is a severe or specific learning difficulty are shown in the table below for each autumn since 1998. Comparable estimates are not available prior to 1998.

*People of working age[1] with a current long-term health condition or impairment[2] whose main condition is a learning difficulty[3]*

| *Autumn of each year* | *Thousand* | *Percentage of working age population* |
|---|---|---|
| 1998 | 128 | 0.35 |
| 1999 | 150 | 0.41 |
| 2000 | 153 | 0.42 |
| 2001 | 149 | 0.40 |
| 2002 | 187 | 0.50 |
| 2003 | 159 | 0.43 |

[1] Working age is defined as men aged 16–64 and women aged 16–59.

[2] People are defined as disabled if they have a long-standing illness significantly limiting their day-to-day activities and/or they have work-limiting disability.

[3] Main health condition is a severe or specific learning difficulty.

*Source:*

UK, Labour Force Survey

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of the school population is categorised as having *(a)* severe and *(b)* moderate learning difficulties; and what proportion is in special schools in each case. [159389]

**Margaret Hodge:** The Department of Education and Skills began collecting data on pupils' type of special educational need from January 2004. It is not possible to provide information on the proportion of the school population with severe or moderate learning difficulties until the data have been collated. We expect it to become available in the summer.

Information about the provision being made for pupils with statements of special educational need is collected from local authorities each year. In January 2003, 37.5 per cent. of pupils with a statement of special educational need were being educated in maintained, non-maintained or independent special schools.

**Charles Hendry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funding his Department provides for projects to train people with learning difficulties. [156021]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** There is no specific funding for such projects. Rather, training and education for people with learning difficulties is funded from the overall budget (£8.1 billion in 2003–04) which my Department allocates to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in order to carry out its education and training remit for young people and adults. Within this overall budget the LSC will spend £105 million this year on specialist residential college placements and considerably more supporting learners with learning difficulties in mainstream provision.

The Government have strengthened the rights of people with learning difficulties to appropriate post-16 provision through a combination of legislative change and collaborative work with key organisations representing disabled learners. Under Section 13 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000, the LSC has a specific responsibility to help young people and adults with learning difficulties. Although the LSC does not develop policies relating to specific groups of learners, its broad remit means that it can fund a wide range of provision to ensure these learners have access to suitable provision which meets their needs and, where appropriate, the additional support they require to undertake it.

The LSC has established a Forum on Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities to ensure that inclusive learning is at the heart of its policies and processes. Membership includes representatives from Government, external representative bodies and learners with learning difficulties. The LSC also participates in local Learning Disability Partnership Boards, with the Department of Health and other partner agencies, to improve local inter-agency working.

### Local Education Authorities

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what framework is in place to assess the quality of local education authorities in areas other than those covered by Ofsted. [157069]

**Mr. Miliband** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]:* Ofsted is responsible, under section 38 of the Education Act 1997, for inspecting the main functions of local education authorities (LEAs) as they relate to schools. Provisions in the Children Bill would widen the scope of section 38 to cover any function of an LEA other than those falling within the remit of the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI).

Local authority social care functions are inspected by the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI), whose functions are shortly to transfer to the newly established Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI). The Children Bill provides for the integrated inspection of children's services in local authority areas, with all relevant inspectorates working under a framework which will cover all local authority services for children, as well as other non-Council services such as health and probation.

### Numeracy/Literacy

**Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people in the United Kingdom were classified as *(a)* innumerate and *(b)* illiterate in each year since 1995. [158326]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** Until last year, information on literacy and numeracy skills had not been collected on a regular basis, so annual data are not available. However, the "Skills for Life Survey: A national needs and impact survey of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills", which was published by the Department for Education and Skills in October last year, tested the literacy, language and numeracy skills of 8,040 people in England. The findings are shown in the following table. Attainment is split into levels that are broadly mapped to the National Curriculum Key Stages in schools: Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3 correspond to Foundation, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, Level 1 corresponds to Key Stage 3, and Level 2 to Key Stage 4. We consider those who are at Entry Level 3 or below to have a severe basic skills need.

As education is a devolved matter, the Department does not have data covering the rest of the United Kingdom.

| | *Percentage of 16 to 65-year-olds* | *Number of 16 to 65-year-olds (million)* |
|---|---|---|
| *Overall literacy*[1] | | |
| Entry level 1 or below | 3 | 1.1 |
| Entry level 2 | 2 | 0.6 |
| Entry level 3 | 11 | 3.5 |
| (All Entry level or below) | (16) | (5.2) |
| Level 1 | 40 | 12.6 |
| Level 2 or above | 44 | 14.1 |
| | 100 | 31.9 |
| *Overall numeracy*[2] | | |
| Entry level 1 or below | 5 | 1.7 |
| Entry level 2 | 16 | 5.1 |
| Entry level 3 | 25 | 8.1 |
| (All Entry level or below) | (47) | (15.0) |
| Level 1 | 28 | 8.8 |
| Level 2 or above | 25 | 8.1 |
| | 100 | 31.9 |

[1] Base: all respondents with literacy level (7,874)

[2] Base: all respondents with numeracy level (8,040)

*Source for population figures:*

Census 01

**Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people in the United Kingdom had *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills below Level 1, broken down by (i) gender, (ii) race and (iii) socio-economic group in each year since 1995. [158328]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** Until last year, there was no large-scale collection of information on literacy and numeracy skills, so annual data are not available. However, the "Skills for Life Survey: A national needs and impact survey of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills", which was published by the Department for Education and Skills in October last year, tested the literacy, language and numeracy skills of 8,040 people in England.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy, recorded by gender, social class and ethnic background, is summarised in the tables.

As education is a devolved matter, the Department does not have access to data for the rest of the United Kingdom.

*Literacy and Numeracy skills below Level 1 by Gender*

*Literacy by Gender*
*Base: all respondents with literacy level (7874)*

| | *Men aged 16–65 (%)* | *Women aged 16–65 (%)* |
|---|---|---|
| Below Level 1 | 16 | 16 |
| Level 1 and above | 84 | 84 |

*Numeracy by Gender*
*Base: all respondents with numeracy level (8040)*

| | *Men aged 16–65 (%)* | *Women aged 16–65 (%)* |
|---|---|---|
| Below Level 1 | 41 | 59 |
| Level 1 and above | 53 | 47 |

*Literacy and Numeracy skills below Level 1 by Social Class*

*Literacy by household social class*
*Base: All respondents with literacy scores*

| | *Base* | *Below Level 1 (%)* | *Level 1 and above (%)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| I | 429 | 6 | 94 |
| II | 2,656 | 8 | 92 |
| IIIa | 1,328 | 12 | 88 |
| IIIb | 1,739 | 21 | 79 |
| IV | 1,051 | 31 | 69 |
| V | 301 | 37 | 63 |
| Total | 7,874 | 16 | 84 |

*Numeracy by household social class*

*Base: All respondents with numeracy scores*

| | *Base* | *Below Level 1 (%)* | *Level 1 and above (%)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| I | 433 | 23 | 77 |
| II | 2,664 | 33 | 67 |
| IIIa | 1,361 | 48 | 52 |
| IIIb | 1,785 | 56 | 44 |
| IV | 1,100 | 65 | 35 |
| V | 317 | 77 | 23 |
| Total | 8,040 | 47 | 53 |

*Literacy and Numeracy skills below Level 1 by ethnic group*

*Literacy level by ethnic group*
*Base: All respondents with literacy level*

*Percentage*

| | *All (n=7874)* | *White British (n=7015)* | *Asian (Indian) (n=123)* | *Asian (Pakistani) (n=69)* [1] | *Black (Caribbean) (n=80)* [1] | *Black (African) (n=77)* [1] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Below Level 1 | 16 | 14 | 37 | 47 | 40 | 38 |
| Level 1 or above | 84 | 86 | 63 | 53 | 60 | 62 |

[1] Note small base

*Numeracy levels by ethnic group*
*Base: All respondents with numeracy level*

*Percentage*

| | *All (n=8040)* | *White British (n=7160)* | *Asian (Indian) (n=130)* | *Asian (Pakistani) (n=70)* [1] | *Black (Caribbean) (n=86)* [1] | *Black (African) (n=78)* [1] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Below Level 1 | 47 | 45 | 61 | 71 | 81 | 78 |
| Level 1 or above | 53 | 55 | 39 | 29 | 19 | 22 |

[1] Note small base

## Post-16 Education

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what local education authority programmes encourage pupils to remain in education beyond the age of 16; and what steps his Department is taking to support these programmes. [154945]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** We work with local education authorities (LEAs), the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Connexions, and schools and colleges to encourage young people to remain in education or training after the age of 16. We are tackling the causes of low participation by providing a more flexible, coherent and better quality 14–19 curriculum; advice and guidance; and financial support.

We are working with 56 LEAs to pilot the Education Maintenance Allowance scheme. Evidence from the evaluation has led to our decision to extend the scheme across England from September 2004.

We have put in place a national Connexions service to provide advice, guidance and support to help young people make an effective transition to post-16 learning and to adult life. This is supported by Connexions Direct—an internet and telephone based confidential advice service available 18 hours a day and 365 days a year. The Connexions service has a specific target to reduce the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training by 10 per cent. by November 2004.

We are investing, jointly with the LSC, £46 million over the period 2002–03 to 2004–05 in a programme of 39 14–19 pathfinders. Pathfinder partnerships, which include LEAs, are testing local delivery of 14–19 education and training in a range of settings, introducing more curriculum flexibility and choice so that students' programmes can be better tailored to their needs and aptitudes.

We recognise that a key factor in the decision by young people to remain in education after 16 is the quality of their experience at school and the standards they achieve. That is why our strategy for transforming education in secondary schools, particularly the national Key Stage 3 Strategy, supports teachers in tailoring teaching and learning to meet the needs of pupils and to personalise their learning experience. The results of national curriculum tests at KS3 last year showed standards at their highest ever in each subject and at every level. Standards at KS4 again improved on previous record levels with greatest improvements in schools in the most challenging circumstances. The 'Increased Flexibility for 14–16 Year Olds' programme aims to increase attainment and encourage young people to progress into education or training. Over 90,000 pupils are currently involved and we are providing over £50 million of support in the current year to almost 300 partnerships between schools and colleges.

We are also working, through the Sure Start initiative, with LEAs and providers to continue to expand child care, early learning and health and family support from which teenage and older parents can benefit.

And we recognise that educational participation is supported and enhanced by modern, accessible youth work providing personal and social development. In "Resourcing Excellent Youth Services", we set youth services a clear vision of what we expect them to provide for the young people in their area. To help youth services achieve this vision, we gave local authorities a 5.9 per cent. investment increase in the EPS youth and community sub-block; and have also provided grant funding worth around £80 million over the period 2002–06 explicitly to support modernisation.

## Pre-schools

**Mr. Laws:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what his latest estimate is of the number of pre-schools in England; and if he will make a statement. [156698]

**Margaret Hodge:** My Department estimates that there were 10,100 pre-school or playgroups in England in January 2003. Provisional data for January 2004 will be published in May 2004.

## Pupils Attainments

**Helen Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the changes in pupils' attainment in the early years of secondary schools over the past two years. [159819]

**Mr. Miliband:** The Key Stage 3 (KS3) National Tests are the main measure of pupils' attainment in the early years of secondary education. The 2003 tests, recorded the best ever pupil attainment at KS3, with improvements in every subject and at every level. Over the past two years the percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 or above has increased by four percentage points to currently stand at 69 per cent. in English; increased by five percentage points to reach 71 per cent. in mathematics and increased by two percentage points to stand at 68 per cent. in science. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 6 or above over the same period has increased by three percentage points in English to reach 35 per cent., six percentage points in mathematics to reach 49 per cent., and six percentage points in science to reach 40 per cent..

These achievements endorse the positive impact on pupils' attainment of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy which we introduced to raise the attainment of all 11 to 14-year-olds. Our priority now is to build on these gains to achieve even higher standards this year by further embedding the strategy, maintaining a focus on tackling under performance, and supporting teachers to personalise teaching and learning to meet the needs of individual pupils.

## Recreational Adult Education

**Ms Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the implications of the decision to prioritise some groups of adult learners in recreational adult education. [146316]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** There has been no decision to prioritise some groups of learners in recreational adult education. We gave a commitment in the Skills Strategy White Paper to safeguard the availability of lifelong learning courses by agreeing with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) an overall indicative budget for non qualification provision provided through local education authorities (LEAs), family and neighbourhood learning. This we have done. The figure for 2004–05 is £207.4 million compared with £206 million in 2003–04. This follows a period when the Government significantly increased the budget for this type of learning from £145 million in 2000–01, and £183 million in 2002–03. In November 2002, 662,000 adults were on predominantly non vocational and non qualification courses run through LEAs.

## School Absenteeism (Greater London)

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many half-days have been lost owing to unauthorised absence of pupils in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough in each year since 1997 (i) in absolute terms and (ii) as a proportion of the total number of half-days. [158454]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** The information requested is shown in the tables.

*Unauthorised absence in maintained Primary and Secondary schools in Greater London 1997/98 to 2002/03*

| | Academic year 1997/98 | |
|---|---|---|
| *Local education authority* | *Number of sessions missed due to unauthorised absence* | *% half days missed due to unauthorised absence* |
| London, City of | 976 | 1.92 |
| Camden | 78,679 | 1.46 |
| Greenwich | 172,048 | 2.00 |
| Hackney | 101,078 | 1.58 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 65,994 | 1.90 |
| Islington | 105,073 | 1.70 |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 41,502 | 1.74 |
| Lambeth | 88,978 | 1.34 |
| Lewisham | 150,844 | 1.83 |
| Southwark | 169,937 | 2.03 |
| Tower Hamlets | 184,708 | 2.19 |
| Wandsworth | 66,109 | 0.99 |
| Westminster, City of | 91,418 | 2.08 |
| Barking and Dagenham | 105,543 | 1.52 |
| Barnet | 77,882 | 0.65 |
| Bexley | 38,296 | 0.42 |
| Brent | 62,081 | 0.75 |
| Bromley | 54,438 | 0.47 |
| Croydon | 67,594 | 0.56 |
| Ealing | 84,732 | 0.86 |
| Enfield | 111,415 | 0.95 |
| Haringey | 128,095 | 1.64 |
| Harrow | 43,429 | 0.55 |
| Havering | 37,739 | 0.40 |
| Hillingdon | 97,442 | 1.05 |
| Hounslow | 77,565 | 0.92 |
| Kingston upon Thames | 24,577 | 0.51 |
| Merton | 80,513 | 1.39 |
| Newham | 281,582 | 2.51 |
| Redbridge | 58,420 | 0.61 |
| Richmond upon Thames | 26,734 | 0.50 |
| Sutton | 27,419 | 0.39 |
| Waltham Forest | 122,797 | 1.42 |
| Greater London | 2,925,637 | 1.16 |

| | Academic year 1998/99 | |
|---|---|---|
| *Local education authority* | *Number of sessions missed due to unauthorised absence* | *% half days missed due to unauthorised absence* |
| London, City of | 870 | 1.62 |
| Camden | 80,643 | 1.47 |
| Greenwich | 164,721 | 1.84 |
| Hackney | 117,592 | 1.87 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 81,121 | 1.88 |
| Islington | 101,917 | 1.70 |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 44,302 | 1.72 |
| Lambeth | 74,782 | 1.11 |
| Lewisham | 146,376 | 1.77 |
| Southwark | 152,771 | 1.85 |
| Tower Hamlets | 144,803 | 1.75 |
| Wandsworth | 55,429 | 0.82 |
| Westminster, City of | 111,262 | 2.52 |
| Barking and Dagenham | 118,473 | 1.64 |
| Barnet | 82,707 | 0.70 |
| Bexley | 41,590 | 0.42 |
| Brent | 67,803 | 0.75 |
| Bromley | 55,152 | 0.47 |
| Croydon | 85,711 | 0.69 |
| Ealing | 78,697 | 0.78 |
| Enfield | 139,097 | 1.17 |
| Haringey | 132,103 | 1.66 |
| Harrow | 38,434 | 0.50 |
| Havering | 35,452 | 0.36 |
| Hillingdon | 111,820 | 1.15 |
| Hounslow | 85,135 | 0.99 |
| Kingston upon Thames | 26,861 | 0.55 |
| Merton | 81,051 | 1.35 |
| Newham | 279,864 | 2.34 |

| Local education authority | Academic year 1998/99 Number of sessions missed due to unauthorised absence | % half days missed due to unauthorised absence |
|---|---|---|
| Redbridge | 59,335 | 0.59 |
| Richmond upon Thames | 39,226 | 0.71 |
| Sutton | 29,396 | 0.41 |
| Waltham Forest | 105,736 | 1.15 |
| Greater London | 2,970,232 | 1.15 |

| Local education authority | Academic year 1999/2000 Number of sessions missed due to unauthorised absence | % half days missed due to unauthorised absence |
|---|---|---|
| London, City of | 1,024 | 1.93 |
| Camden | 73,343 | 1.38 |
| Greenwich | 140,254 | 1.59 |
| Hackney | 106,715 | 1.68 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 64,254 | 1.58 |
| Islington | 87,926 | 1.51 |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 28,882 | 1.24 |
| Lambeth | 67,732 | 1.06 |
| Lewisham | 177,815 | 2.06 |
| Southwark | 140,088 | 1.70 |
| Tower Hamlets | 175,273 | 1.97 |
| Wandsworth | 47,933 | 0.71 |
| Westminster, City of | 82,599 | 1.96 |
| Barking and Dagenham | 112,190 | 1.53 |
| Barnet | 92,733 | 0.80 |
| Bexley | 65,638 | 0.67 |
| Brent | 71,191 | 0.78 |
| Bromley | 55,696 | 0.46 |
| Croydon | 66,086 | 0.54 |
| Ealing | 74,619 | 0.74 |
| Enfield | 158,499 | 1.36 |
| Haringey | 158,098 | 2.11 |
| Harrow | 43,560 | 0.55 |
| Havering | 32,183 | 0.33 |
| Hillingdon | 115,132 | 1.13 |
| Hounslow | 80,178 | 0.93 |
| Kingston upon Thames | 29,328 | 0.61 |
| Merton | 59,500 | 1.01 |
| Newham | 251,543 | 2.14 |
| Redbridge | 70,426 | 0.71 |
| Richmond upon Thames | 51,160 | 0.93 |
| Sutton | 28,208 | 0.38 |
| Waltham Forest | 89,053 | 0.99 |
| Greater London | 2,898,859 | 1.12 |

*Notes:*

Figures relate to maintained primary and secondary schools but exclude maintained special schools and CTCs.

Figures cover pupils that were absent between September and May for each year

*Unauthorised absence in maintained Primary and Secondary schools in Greater London 1997/98 to 2002/03*

| | Academic year 2000/01 Number of sessions missed due to unauthorised absence | % half days missed due to unauthorised absence |
|---|---|---|
| London, City of | 470 | 0.85 |
| Camden | 77,860 | 1.48 |
| Greenwich | 151,560 | 1.74 |
| Hackney | 137,829 | 2.10 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 59,493 | 1.40 |
| Islington | 81,544 | 1.40 |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 40,208 | 1.56 |
| Lambeth | 78,000 | 1.19 |
| Lewisham | 201,480 | 2.44 |
| Southwark | 147,966 | 1.72 |

*Unauthorised absence in maintained Primary and Secondary schools in Greater London 1997/98 to 2002/03*

| | Academic year 2000/01 Number of sessions missed due to unauthorised absence | % half days missed due to unauthorised absence |
|---|---|---|
| Tower Hamlets | 176,825 | 1.97 |
| Wandsworth | 41,310 | 0.62 |
| Westminster, City of | 70,169 | 1.59 |
| Barking and Dagenham | 119,229 | 1.61 |
| Barnet | 107,497 | 0.90 |
| Bexley | 67,686 | 0.67 |
| Brent | 62,876 | 0.69 |
| Bromley | 82,593 | 0.69 |
| Croydon | 83,410 | 0.65 |
| Ealing | 58,368 | 0.58 |
| Enfield | 176,126 | 1.45 |
| Haringey | 137,481 | 1.78 |
| Harrow | 38,516 | 0.49 |
| Havering | 39,524 | 0.40 |
| Hillingdon | 91,964 | 0.93 |
| Hounslow | 91,588 | 1.08 |
| Kingston upon Thames | 22,032 | 0.44 |
| Merton | 49,034 | 0.87 |
| Newham | 233,181 | 1.93 |
| Redbridge | 75,684 | 0.73 |
| Richmond upon Thames | 66,817 | 1.22 |
| Sutton | 29,372 | 0.40 |
| Waltham Forest | 115,934 | 1.25 |
| Greater London | 3,013,626 | 1.15 |

| | Academic year 2001/02 Number of sessions missed due to unauthorised absence | % half days missed due to unauthorised absence |
|---|---|---|
| London, City of | 169 | 0.32 |
| Camden | 65,294 | 1.25 |
| Greenwich | 165,470 | 1.86 |
| Hackney | 118,493 | 1.81 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 46,981 | 1.13 |
| Islington | 81,441 | 1.37 |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 31,389 | 1.26 |
| Lambeth | 69,059 | 1.05 |
| Lewisham | 152,961 | 1.84 |
| Southwark | 156,481 | 1.76 |
| Tower Hamlets | 163,020 | 1.83 |
| Wandsworth | 57,917 | 0.86 |
| Westminster, City of | 54,865 | 1.22 |
| Barking and Dagenham | 127,790 | 1.73 |
| Barnet | 91,524 | 0.78 |
| Bexley | 76,907 | 0.75 |
| Brent | 53,091 | 0.58 |
| Bromley | 86,441 | 0.72 |
| Croydon | 78,092 | 0.61 |
| Ealing | 55,691 | 0.55 |
| Enfield | 175,576 | 1.47 |
| Haringey | 156,948 | 1.93 |
| Harrow | 34,500 | 0.45 |
| Havering | 38,596 | 0.39 |
| Hillingdon | 104,817 | 1.04 |
| Hounslow | 88,872 | 1.04 |
| Kingston upon Thames | 19,697 | 0.39 |
| Merton | 38,326 | 0.69 |
| Newham | 213,733 | 1.78 |
| Redbridge | 78,596 | 0.74 |
| Richmond upon Thames | 64,402 | 1.23 |
| Sutton | 49,739 | 0.65 |
| Waltham Forest | 92,502 | 1.03 |
| Greater London | 2,889,380 | 1.10 |

| | Academic year 2002/03 | |
|---|---|---|
| | *Number of sessions missed due to unauthorised absence* | *% half days missed due to unauthorised absence* |
| London, City of | 0 | 0.00 |
| Camden | 55,645 | 1.14 |
| Greenwich | 166,073 | 1.85 |
| Hackney | 105,774 | 1.62 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 48,180 | 1.19 |
| Islington | 80,662 | 1.36 |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 24,846 | 0.97 |
| Lambeth | 62,317 | 0.92 |
| Lewisham | 136,429 | 1.57 |
| Southwark | 157,226 | 1.75 |
| Tower Hamlets | 138,820 | 1.56 |
| Wandsworth | 52,766 | 0.78 |
| Westminster, City of | 48,561 | 1.08 |
| Barking and Dagenham | 119,169 | 1.60 |
| Barnet | 87,718 | 0.74 |
| Bexley | 54,322 | 0.54 |
| Brent | 56,144 | 0.60 |
| Bromley | 87,561 | 0.73 |
| Croydon | 110,841 | 0.87 |
| Ealing | 48,907 | 0.49 |
| Enfield | 173,070 | 1.44 |
| Haringey | 143,333 | 1.75 |
| Harrow | 25,072 | 0.32 |
| Havering | 37,431 | 0.39 |
| Hillingdon | 111,853 | 1.10 |
| Hounslow | 95,439 | 1.11 |
| Kingston upon Thames | 17,616 | 0.35 |
| Merton | 41,819 | 0.77 |
| Newham | 150,900 | 1.29 |
| Redbridge | 76,663 | 0.73 |
| Richmond upon Thames | 56,648 | 1.09 |
| Sutton | 35,024 | 0.46 |
| Waltham Forest | 81,085 | 0.90 |
| Greater London | 2,687,914 | 1.03 |

*Notes:*

City of London reported no unauthorised absences in 2002/03.

Figures relate to maintained primary and secondary schools but exclude maintained special schools and CTCs.

Figures cover pupils that were absent between September and May for each year

### Schools (Accidents)

**Mr. Jenkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much was spent in legal costs by *(a)* schools and *(b)* local education authorities in relation to (i) school trip accidents and (ii) accidents within schools in 2003. [160070]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** My Department does not collect this information from local education authorities or schools.

### Sector Skills Development Agency/ University for Industry

**Michael Fabricant:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the *(a)* Sector Skills Development Agency and *(b)* the University for Industry is registered to (i) the ISO 9000:2000 standard requirement and (ii) Investors In People standards. [159748]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** The Sector Skills Development Agency is not registered to the ISO 9000:2000 standard requirement As a relatively new organisation the Sector Skills Development agency is working towards and is totally committed to achieving Investors in People recognition during the operating year 2004–05.

The University for Industry is not registered to the ISO 9000:2000 standard requirement but is currently considering its value and expect shortly to make a decision about its adoption. The University for Industry was recognised as an Investor in People on 29 October 2003.

### Special Educational Needs

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment he has made of the change in the rate of incidence of emotional and behavioural difficulties as a special educational need among primary school children over the last 10 years. [157176]

**Margaret Hodge:** In the past no figures have been collected for special educational need by type of difficulty. However, from January this year we have started to collect information about type of need for pupils with statements of SEN and for those at School Action Plus as part of the Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC). One of the categories used is 'Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulty' (BESD).

From this summer, information will be available on the number of children in primary schools with BESD. These figures will act as the baseline against which we will be able to compare future trends.

**Mr. Hoban:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what procedures are in place to assess progress made in improving the attainment of children with a statement of special educational needs. [157823]

**Margaret Hodge:** Each child with a statement of special educational needs (SEN) is expected to have short-term educational and development targets set for them during the course of the year. In addition to routine monitoring of the child's progress by their teacher, these targets form part of their individual education plan which should be reviewed by the school at least twice a year and fully considered by the Local Education Authority at the annual review of the child's statement before new targets are set.

"Removing Barriers to Achievement: the Government's Strategy for SEN", launched on 11 February, will strengthen the focus on pupil progress and achievement. Key measures include:

trialling and guidance on how schools can make effective use of routine tests, tasks and other forms of assessment to inform target-setting and reporting on pupil progress;

helping schools to make effective use of information contained within the Pupil Achievement Tracker and Ofsted Performance and Assessment Reports so that they can compare their performance for different groups of pupils, including those with SEN, with other schools;

extending the Pupil Level Annual School Census to include pupil details by type of SEN, allowing comparison with others and better identification of pupils who may need targeted support;

promoting the use of P-Scales by all schools with pupils working at the very lowest level of the National Curriculum, by providing guidance on moderation to support consistent assessment and collecting P Scale results as part of the national data collection exercise from 2005;

looking further at how the achievements of all children, including those working below the level of the national tests can best be reflected in national performance tables.

The SEN Strategy includes a number of measures which underpin this work including: equipping teachers and other professionals with the skills and confidence they need to enable children with SEN to reach their potential; encouraging children and young people to be actively involved in decisions about their learning; and promoting and supporting the commitment of inclusive schools.

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the future role of moderate learning difficulty special schools will be; and if he will make a statement. [159383]

**Margaret Hodge:** The Government's special educational needs strategy Removing Barriers to Achievement makes it clear that we believe that special schools have an important role to play within the overall spectrum of provision for children with special educational needs—educating some children directly and sharing their expertise with mainstream schools to support greater inclusion.

There will always be changes to local provision to reflect local needs and circumstances. This is a matter for local decision. Local education authorities are required to review their provision and future needs for children with special educational needs when drafting their School Organisation Plan.

**Mr. Jenkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of pupils at special schools was successfully reintegrated within the mainstream school system in 2003. [160071]

**Margaret Hodge:** In January 2003, local authorities reported that 1020 pupils had transferred from special schools to mainstream schools. That is 1.1 per cent. of the special school population. In addition, about 2000 pupils are dual registered and spend part of their time in a mainstream school. Others are on the roll of a special school but have regular mainstream experience.

The Government's SEN Strategy, "Removing Barriers to Achievement", encourages greater collaboration between special and mainstream schools in order to promote inclusion. This will include greater movement between special schools and mainstream schools by both pupils and staff. We will also encourage more special schools to participate in federation, cluster and twinning arrangements and, through the Building Schools for the Future programme, hope to bring more schools closer physically, including through co-location.

### Student Drop-out Rates

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the estimated cost to public funds was of students dropping out of higher and further education courses in the latest year for which figures are available. [156309]

**Alan Johnson:** The Higher Education Funding Council for England's (HEFCE) teaching funding method provides funding for students who complete their course of study. Students who do not complete their course are not fundable. Figures for the public costs of student support for higher education students who do not complete their courses are not available.

Further education funding for institutions is based on learners' attendance on termly census dates. If students finish their studies before the planned end of their course no further funding is provided. Thus if a student attends for one term of a one year course, the college gets 30 per cent. of the funding for the whole course. The Learning and Skills Council estimates that around £319 million is spent on teaching students who attend only part of their course. This does not include any Learner Support Funds received by these learners as this information is not available centrally.

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the percentage drop-out rate for students from higher education institutions whose home residence is in the *(a)* 100 poorest wards in England and Wales and *(b)* 100 richest wards in England and Wales was in the last academic year. [156311]

**Alan Johnson:** Non-completion rates are not calculated at ward level.

The figures produced by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) in the publication 'Performance Indicators in Higher Education in the UK' give non-completion rates for UK domiciles as a whole at each UK HE institution. A copy of the publication is held in the House Library.

### Student Finance

**Mr. Jenkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when the www.dfes.gov.uk/studentsupport website will carry information on how the Higher Education Bill will change student finance arrangements. [160068]

**Alan Johnson:** The DfES Student Support website will contain information on any changes to the Higher Education funding regime only after the passage of the Bill and when the detail of the future arrangements have been decided. Until then, information on the possible impact of the Higher Education Bill on student finance arrangements is available on the Department's www.dfes.gov.uk/hegateway website which is dedicated to keeping the public informed on developments around Higher Education reform. A link between the two sites ensures that people can access both information on the current funding regime and proposals for the future.

**Chris Grayling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many graduates have begun to repay income contingent loans in each of the past three financial years. [159850]

**Alan Johnson:** Repayments of income-contingent loans are collected through the tax system, apart from a few exceptions. Repayments are notified to the Student Loans Company (SLC) after the end of the tax year, after which time has to be allowed for reconciliation with SLC records. Therefore complete data on the number of borrowers with income-contingent loans where repayments have begun to have been made are not yet available.

Borrowers enter repayment status, i.e. are due to make repayments on their loans, in the April after graduating or otherwise leaving their course. No repayments are

deducted from income-contingent borrowers whose income falls below £10,000 per year. Borrowers with income contingent loans can also make voluntary repayments, either in the form of pre-payments before they enter repayment status, or ad-hoc repayments to accelerate their repayments after entering repayment status. These repayments are made directly by the borrower to the SLC. The table shows the number of UK income-contingent loan borrowers who have entered repayment status by tax year. It also shows the number who have made voluntary repayments by tax year, and of those the number who have entered repayment status in that year.

| | *2000–01* | *2001–02* | *2002–03* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Entered repayment status | 36,000 | 66,000 | 202,000 |
| Borrowers who made voluntary repayments | 5,000 | 12,000 | 24,000 |
| of which, borrowers in the first year of entering repayment status | 1,000 | 1,000 | 8,000 |

*Source:*

Student Loans Company

**Students (South Derbyshire)**

**Mr. Todd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many students there were in the most recent academic year for which statistics are available whose home prior to commencing their higher education course was in the South Derbyshire constituency; [157399]

(2) what proportion of students leaving school or college at 18 whose home was in the South Derbyshire constituency commenced a higher education course in the most recent academic year for which statistics are available. [157400]

**Alan Johnson:** Figures at constituency level are not held centrally.

The available information covers students accepted for entry to full time undergraduate courses via the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) by local education authority (LEA). The figures show that in autumn 2002, 3,508 students of all ages from South Derbyshire LEA obtained a place in HE. In the same year, 22.5 per cent. of all 18-year-olds from South Derbyshire LEA obtained a place.

**Unruly Behaviour**

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what steps he is taking to address the problem of unruly behaviour by pupils in *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* high schools; [156492]

(2) what plans he has to change guidance to teachers with respect to restraining unruly and violent pupils. [156496]

**Mr. Ivan Lewis:** We are investing nearly £470 million over this and the next two years in measures to improve behaviour and attendance in schools. These include training for school staff in managing pupil behaviour and reducing and preventing violence. We have also made it clear that head teachers can permanently exclude pupils responsible for violence, and that we would support such action. In January 2003 new Regulations governing exclusions came into force and the DfES issued new Guidance on Exclusion from Schools and Pupil Referral Units, which introduced several changes. Independent Appeal Panels are not able to reinstate a pupil solely on the basis of technical defects in prior procedure. They are also now required to balance the interests of the excluded pupil against the interests of all the other members of the school community.

New legislation in the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 will enable local education authorities and schools to enter into parenting contracts with parents whose children are excluded from school, helping parents who are willing to engage to improve their children's behaviour. Where children are excluded for serious misbehaviour and parents are unwilling to engage, local education authorities may apply for court-imposed Parenting Orders, compelling the parents to attend parenting classes. We have issued "A legal toolkit for schools", which identifies legal remedies available when school staff experience problems with violent parents. Some of these are also available when dealing with violent pupils.

It is not possible to provide details of separate primary and secondary funding as a major element. The Behaviour Improvement Programme, funds partnerships of schools that include primary and secondary schools, and funding decisions are made locally.

We have no plans to change current guidance on restraining unruly or violent pupils. Our current guidance is contained in Section 550A, Circular 10/98, which came into force on 1 September 1998.

We also have guidance in this area for special schools. These are contained in LEA /0264/2003 September 2003 (guidance for LEAs and special schools on drawing up physical intervention policies and risk assessment).

# Written Answers to Questions

*Friday 12 March 2004*

## TREASURY

### Customs and Excise Staffing

**Annabelle Ewing:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many Customs and Excise staff were employed in Scotland in each year since 2002; [157866]

(2) when the last review of staffing numbers and locations was carried out by HM Customs and Excise; [157867]

(3) what plans he has to increase the number of Customs and Excise staff employed in Scotland. [157868]

**John Healey** *[holding answers 2 March 2004]*: The regional distribution of permanent staff (including fixed term) staff in all Government Departments is published annually by the Cabinet Office in Table D of 'Civil Service Statistics', a copy of which is available in the Library of the House.

In April 2002 there were 1170 full time equivalent Customs and Excise staff based in Scotland, along with a further 21.5 casual staff.

The April 2003 figures are due for publication in the summer.

In addition, staff from the national and mobile strike teams of the Law Enforcement business are available to be deployed in Scotland according to the assessed risks and operational needs. Along with detector dog teams and crews of the customs cutter fleet.

The national deployment of Customs and Excise staff is reviewed annually, and at other times as necessary. The number of staff deployed in Scotland are determined by current risk and intelligence factors. Resourcing for the next year will be decided by the Department's business managers in accordance with their assessment of operational needs.

### Film Industry

**Glenda Jackson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what decision has been reached on the moratorium proposed to him for affording films in pre-production relief from the newly introduced tax liabilities. [160260]

**Dawn Primarolo:** No new tax liabilities have been introduced on film production. A number of tax reliefs exist specifically for film production and remain available for film-makers. These include Section 42 of the Finance (No.2) Act 1992 and Section 48 of the Finance (No.2) Act 1997. Measures to be included in Finance Bill 2004 prevent tax avoidance through the manipulation of partnership losses. A number of such avoidance schemes were targeted at the film industry.

### Gift Aid

**Mr. Don Foster:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what representations his Department has received from *(a)* the museum and *(b)* the heritage sector in relation to introducing gift aid tax relief in (i) writing, (ii) meetings and (iii) other forms since 1997; and if he will make a statement; [155988]

(2) what estimate he has made of the cost to museums of *(a)* computer equipment, *(b)* staff, *(c)* administration and *(d)* other costs in relation to claiming gift aid; and if he will make a statement; [155989]

(3) pursuant to the answer of 15 January 2004 to the hon. Member for Leominster (Mr. Wiggin), *Official Report*, columns 865–6W, on gift aid, what research his Department has conducted into the impact of lost gift aid revenue on *(a)* national museums, *(b)* independent museums, *(c)* country houses and *(d)* royal buildings; and if he will make a statement. [155990]

**John Healey:** Ministers and officials from the Treasury and Chancellor's Departments regularly receive a wide range of representations from museums and the heritage sector, including many on the benefits they receive from Gift Aid.

In April 2000 the Government made improvements to the Gift Aid scheme, as part of a wider package to make the tax system simpler for charities and their donors and to encourage greater charitable giving. In 2002–03 charities received donations under Gift Aid of £2.3 billion, including tax relief from the Government of £506 million.

Under a special exemption introduced in 1989 and imported into Gift Aid as part of a wider reform in 2000, certain heritage and conservation charities are able to claim Gift Aid on membership subscriptions in the same way as they were previously able to claim tax refunds under Deeds of Covenant. Deeds of Covenant lasted for at least three years, meaning that a donor was required to have an ongoing commitment to a charity, but Gift Aid can apply to one-off donations as well.

A number of charities eligible for the special exemption are claiming Gift Aid tax refunds under so-called 'day membership' schemes. These schemes do not generate additional giving, but simply reclassify admission fees as donations on which Gift Aid is being claimed.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in the pre-Budget report (Cm 6042) that the Government will amend the Gift Aid legislation to ensure that the special exemption applies as it was originally intended and not to these 'day memberships'.

This will mean that heritage and conservation charities will continue to benefit from the special exemption where a donor has an ongoing commitment to the charity, such as an annual membership, and these charities—like other fundraising charities—will continue to benefit from Gift Aid on other donations of money.

The Government is consulting closely with charities that might be affected, directly and through their associations and representative bodies, on the detail of how the change may best be achieved.

As I made clear in my earlier answer, no estimate is available of the amount of money being claimed by charities which are taking advantage of this. Charities are not required to differentiate on their Gift Aid claims the amounts they are claiming for 'day membership' income from other amounts they are claiming. No estimate has been made of the cost to museums of claiming the Gift Aid benefits they enjoy.

### Housing Stock Transfers

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the situation of local authorities who have transferred their housing stock and who have to pay VAT on the service arrangements involved in that transfer. [161043]

**John Healey:** A local authority is entitled to recover any VAT incurred on professional services supplied to it in connection with arranging the transfer of housing stock to the private sector. VAT can also be recovered on certain improvement works the purchaser may require the local authority to carry out as a contractual condition of purchase.

### Large Business Office

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his answer of 12 February, *Official Report*, column 1556W, on the Large Business Office, when the Director of Inland Revenue's Large Business Office first asked Inland Revenue's internal auditors to review the accuracy of the Large Business Office's compliance data for 2002–03; when the internal auditors reported their findings; when the relevant commissioner first made known to fellow board members the existence of potentially unreliable reports of the Large Business Office's compliance performance; when the Board received the report on the issues of the 2003 review; when Inland Revenue first alerted the National Audit Office to the existence of previously overstated compliance performance for the Large Business Office in Inland Revenue's annual reports; how many of the Large Business Office's geographic offices were revealed by the 2003 follow-up review to have had at least one Large Business Office caseworker who was not reporting yield in line with departmental guidance; and what proportion of Large Business Office caseworkers were revealed not to be reporting yield in line with departmental guidance. [160095]

**Dawn Primarolo:** The Director of the LBO asked the Internal Audit Office to carry out a review of the 2002–03 figures in April 2003 (after the year end). The IAO made their report in August 2003.

A design fault in the LBO computer system incorrectly invited Inspectors to enter a tax outcome for taxpayer favour adjustments. All taxpayer favour adjustments were recorded in this way. The Board was advised in October 2003 of the overall adjustments required to LBO yield figures. The issue was discussed with NAO at a working level in February 2004 as part of their general audit coverage of the Inland Revenue.

### Project ASPIRE

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his Answers of 8 September, 2003, *Official Report*, column 95–96W, on the ASPIRE Programme and 11 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 604W, on the Inland Revenue, on what date it became Inland Revenue policy to include in its invitations to tender provision allowing it to undertake a review of the tax affairs of those companies responding; and on what date it was decided to include a provision in the ASPIRE invitation to tender allowing the Inland Revenue to undertake a review of the tax affairs of those companies responding. [160189]

**Dawn Primarolo:** As a Government Department, the Inland Revenue must comply with EU Council Directive 50/92, which came into force in the UK in January 1994 as a Statutory Instrument (Public Services Contract Regulations 1993 (1993: No 3228)). This Statutory Instrument allows a contracting authority to reject a service provider if the latter has not fulfilled obligations relating to payment of taxes under the law of any part of the United Kingdom.

Work on drafting the ASPIRE ITT commenced in January 2002 and notification that a review of the tax affairs of bidders would form part of the evaluation was included in a draft version of the ITT issued to the three shortlisted bidders on 31 July 2002.

### Tax Compliance

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 16 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 811W, on tax compliance, what the very exceptional circumstances are in which Inland Revenue will inform other Government Departments that a potential supplier has poor compliance in its tax affairs; on how many occasions in each year since 1996–97 the Inland Revenue has informed other Government Departments of a potential supplier's poor compliance standing; and which office of the Inland Revenue is responsible for making such reports to other Government Departments. [160013]

**Dawn Primarolo:** Where the Inland Revenue is working on a procurement exercise or is engaged in a contract jointly with another Government Department, the Revenue may withdraw from that joint exercise or contract in the light of tax non-compliance by a supplier. In those exceptional circumstances an explanation to joint procurement partners for the withdrawal would be appropriate but would be limited to a brief general statement and will not include details of non-compliance of the potential supplier. Where necessary, this would be done by the most appropriate Revenue office in the specific instance.

### Tax Exemption (Computers and Internet)

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many businesses in Crosby have benefited from the 100 per cent. tax exemption for the purchase of computer and internet equipment. [160443]

**Dawn Primarolo:** We regret that the information is not available to estimate the number of businesses in Crosby which have benefited from the 100 per cent. first year capital allowances for the purchase of information and communication equipment.

### Tax Thresholds

**Mr. Byers:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the threshold for higher rate tax liability would be if it were to cover 6 per cent. of the working age population; and what estimate he has made of tax lost by restricting the higher rate to 6 per cent. of the working age population. [160696]

**Dawn Primarolo** *[holding answer 11 March 2004]:* I regret that it would be possible to provide a reliable answer only at disproportionate cost.

## PRIME MINISTER

### Prisoners (Egypt)

**Mr. Amess:** To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 26 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 49W, if he will *(a)* meet the families of the detainees and *(b)* invite hon. Members representing constituencies in which the detainees families reside to the meeting before the detainees are brought back to court on 25 March. [160794]

**The Prime Minister:** As the Department which leads on consular cases overseas, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Ministers continue to make representations to the Egyptian Government where appropriate and are maintaining contact with the men's families.

## CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

### Bail (Northern Ireland)

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment he has made of the current arrangements for access to bail for defendants awaiting trial in Northern Ireland. [159554]

**Mr. Leslie:** Applicants for bail have prompt access to the Magistrates' Courts and to the High Court for bail applications. First applications to the High Court are frequently heard within 24 hours of receipt. Second and subsequent applications are normally listed for hearing within 48 hours. Saturday hearings for first bail applications in scheduled offence cases were introduced in January 2004.

### Privy Council

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many times the Privy Council met in 2003; and how many Privy Counsellors were present on each occasion. [159582]

**Mr. Leslie:** The Privy Council met 14 times in 2003. The date of each Meeting and the number of Privy Counsellors that were present at each one are set out as follows.

| *Date* | *Number of Privy Counsellors* |
|---|---|
| *2003* | |
| 27 February | 4 |
| 20 March | 5 |
| 8 May | 4 |
| 13 May | 3 |
| 21 May | 3 |
| 12 June | 4 |
| 13 June | 3 |
| 26 June | 3 |
| 17 July | 4 |
| 8 October | 4 |
| 14 October | 3 |
| 13 November | 4 |
| 20 November | 3 |
| 10 December | 6 |

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### British Airways (Call Centre)

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what payments have been made to British Airways for the setting up of a call centre in Belfast; and whether such payments are still being made. [160220]

**Mr. Pearson:** British Airways operates a contact BA call centre in central Belfast which was expanded in 1998 with an offer of selective financial assistance from the then NI Industrial Development Board (IDB) totalling £512,000 for the creation of 65 new jobs.

On 18 February 2004, British Airways announced that the Belfast call centre would create a further 48 new jobs. This latest expansion has not attracted selective financial assistance from Invest NI (the successor body to IDB).

Owing to a policy of commercial confidentiality on information relating to specific companies, it would be inappropriate to disclose information about the amounts actually paid to British Airways.

### Charity Commission

**Lembit Öpik:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans the Government has to introduce a Charity Commission in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [159854]

**Mr. Spellar:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for North Down (Lady Hermon), on 11 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1657W.

### Derating

**Mr. Clifton-Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many properties, broken down by categories of use, will be affected by the proposal to derate businesses in the province; and how much money will be raised by each of the proposed steps until full derating is reached in 2011. [159957]

**Mr. Pearson:** The potential yield from the phasing out of industrial derating is included in table 1 below and the number of properties, broken down by categories of use,

that will be affected by the proposal to phase out industrial derating for manufacturing business in Northern Ireland is included in table 2.

*The Potential Yield From the Phasing Out of Industrial Derating*

| | *Rate liability (percentage)* | *Estimated total yield £ million* |
|---|---|---|
| 2005–06 | 15 | 8 |
| 2006–07 | 25 | 14 |
| 2007–08 | 35 | 19 |
| 2008–09 | 50 | 27 |
| 2009–10 | 75 | 41 |
| 2010–11 | 75 | 41 |
| 2011–12 | 100 | 55 |

*Non Domestic Properties defined as Industrial1 for Industrial Derating*

| *Property description* | *Number of properties* |
|---|---|
| Factories | 4,458 |
| Workshops and stores | 552 |
| Quarries, Sandpits, & Mines | 150 |
| Other | 13 |
| Total | 5,173 |

*Source:*
VLA Non Domestic Property List

### Extradition

**Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many requests for extradition of terrorist suspects from the Irish Republic have been *(a)* made and *(b)* granted in each year since 1997. [159556]

**Mr. Paul Murphy:** There have been no requests for the extradition of terrorist suspects from the Republic of Ireland to Northern Ireland since 1997, and therefore none granted.

## TRANSPORT

### Bus Lanes

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many miles of priority bus lanes have been created in Crosby since 1997. [160547]

**Mr. McNulty:** Crosby is included in the Merseyside Local Transport Plan (LTP) area. The Merseyside Passenger Transport Executive (PTE) is the local transport authority responsible for improving public transport in Merseyside including, for example, implementing bus priority measures. The PTE has recorded that it has delivered or is planning to deliver 37km of bus lanes in Merseyside between 1998–99 and 2005–06—including 5.9km of bus lanes in Sefton. These figures do not take into account other bus priority measures such as Quality Bus Corridors/showcase routes or other schemes, which may incorporate bus priority measures.

It is not possible to provide data from before 1998–99 nor is it possible to identify separately how many km of bus lanes the PTE has delivered or is planning to deliver in Crosby. It is ultimately a matter for local transport authorities to decide how to distribute the annual capital allocation received from the Government for spending on local transport in their areas, in line with local priorities and in order to achieve the objectives set out in their LTPs.

### Correspondence

**Mr. Kaufman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he intends to reply to the letter to him dated 4 February from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. D. McDowell. [159988]

**Mr. Darling:** I replied to my right hon. Friend yesterday.

### Procurement Policy

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport in what ways environmentally sustainable procurement strategies within the Department have driven innovation in the design and supply of products. [159147]

**Mr. McNulty:** Environmentally sustainable procurement strategies have driven innovation in this Department in the following areas:

It is Government policy to use recycled paper and this Department has developed a Recycled Printing Papers Framework to meet the requirements of the Waste Strategy Initiative. Since the Framework started in August 2000, the success can be measured in terms of awareness, quality, availability and price advantage, demonstrated in savings to Government of £1.8 million, growth in the market place and improvements in supply and quality. There are now more than 25 Government Departments and agencies using the Framework.

It is now a contractual provision within the Department to use legal and sustainable timber for all central furniture and property management contracts. Certification to this effect is required for all furniture supplied. A decision has also been taken to discontinue use of natural wood veneers on ranges of furniture where alternative finishes are available.

The Department's catalogue of core stationery items clearly identifies "green" products. All toner cartridges are recycled.

The Department's IT disposal contract offers surplus equipment to schools under a Home Office scheme. Any equipment where this is not appropriate is disposed of in an environmentally friendly way.

All the Department's personal and laptop computers have power saving software which puts the hardware into power saving mode after approximately 20 minutes of inactivity. In addition, a rolling program is in place to refresh hardware: this has recently included the replacement of monitors with flat screen technology which has a much lower power consumption and heat output. All PC, laptop and network printer hardware also complies with EU energy saving and electrical regulation.

The Department has encouraged its main suppliers of furniture, stationery and office machinery to aim for ISO 14001 certification. Most have now received accreditation with the remainder expected to achieve it in 2004.

The Department carries out an annual environmental audit of suppliers of goods, irrespective of whether they have an ISO 14001 accreditation. The audits are carried out internally by trained staff. Examples of good practice are shared with other suppliers where possible.

The Department (in collaboration with ODPM) has awarded a contract for an electronic environmental management system (EMS) which is now being rolled out to other Government Departments.

### Railway Investment

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the effect of investment in railway improvements over the next 10 years upon residents of Crosby. [160548]

**Mr. McNulty:** Merseytravel Passenger Transport Executive (PTE) is responsible for improving services and facilities for passengers on the Merseyrail network. Network Rail is responsible for maintaining and renewing the infrastructure and will be renewing one mile of track at Blundellsands and Crosby in 2005–06.

The PTE has plans for a number of improvements over the next 10 years. These include upgrading the car park at Blundellsands and Crosby and making the station fully compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995; investigating the provision of a dedicated car park at Hall Road station; providing a lift at Waterloo station to improve accessibility; and upgrading the car park, improving access to the ticket office and improving bus turnaround at Formby station. The waiting room at Formby is being refurbished through the Strategic Rail Authority's Modern Facilities at Stations Programme. In addition, Merseyrail rolling stock will be fully refurbished by the end of 2004. The refurbishment includes the provision of CCTV, dedicated wheelchair spaces and cycle racks.

### Rural Bus Services

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many rural bus services in Crosby are supported by rural bus grants. [160546]

**Mr. McNulty:** Rural bus subsidy grant (RBSG) is paid to local transport authorities; in the case of Crosby this is the Merseyside Passenger Transport Executive (PTE). It is for the authority to decide which services should be supported with the grant. We understand from the PTE that no rural bus services in Crosby are provided by RBSG. The Merseyside PTE provide support for certain rural bus services in Crosby through their main revenue support funding.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### Environmental Sustainability

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with local authorities regarding local authority charging for waste collection and disposal. [159037]

**Mr. Morley:** In its response to the Strategy Unit report, the Government undertook to carry out further work before making a decision on whether to enable local authorities to implement direct or variable charging for waste collection and disposal. Officials have met representatives of local authorities and the Local Government Association as part of this work.

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department is taking to demonstrate to local authorities the potential benefits of *(a)* increasing recycling and *(b)* reducing waste. [159004]

**Mr. Morley:** The Government's Waste Strategy 2000 set out a vision of sustainable waste management incorporating a shift away from reliance on landfill and towards waste reduction, re-use and recycling. In doing so, it explored the environmental, economic and social benefits arising from such a shift. The Strategy Unit's 2001 report, Waste not, want not, reiterated these arguments.

Part of the role of Defra's Waste Implementation Programme is to ensure that local authorities understand the benefits of more sustainable waste management. This is being pursued on an individual basis with local authorities, through regional conferences, and via the programme's national messages.

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how her Department disseminates best practice in sustainable waste management to local authorities. [159005]

**Mr. Morley:** The Defra Waste Implementation Programme's Local Authority Support Unit has been established to provide advice and a range of tools to enable local authorities to meet and, where possible, exceed their statutory targets.

The Unit has already identified a number of areas where local authorities need additional support. In response the Unit is producing a range of tools, case studies and best practice.

These will cover such areas as contract development and service procurement, strategy development, collection of bulky goods, estates recycling, kerbside capture rates and best recycling and re-use practice at civic amenity sites.

These and other tools and services developed in response to local authority needs will be disseminated through a dedicated local authority support website for waste recycling activities, to be launched in May 2004.

Tools and support will also be targeted specifically to individual local authorities which will most benefit from assistance.

### Action Energy Programme

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what fees were paid in the last year to WS Atkins for the management of the Action Energy programme; and whether the fees paid covered work done to improve the energy efficiency of *(a)* UK buildings and *(b)* industrial processes. [155047]

**Mr. Morley:** In July 2002 Defra transferred the Energy Efficiency Best Practice programme to the Carbon Trust who relaunched it as their own Action Energy programme. Action Energy is the UK's main energy efficiency information, advice and research programme for organisations in the business and public sectors.

The Carbon Trust is a private company grant funded by Defra to lead on energy efficiency for the business and public sector and support the development of a low carbon economy in the UK. Contracts held by the Carbon Trust are a matter for the Carbon Trust Board.

### Batteries (Disposal)

**Mrs. Spelman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects the forthcoming EU legislation on the disposal and recycling of batteries to be introduced in the United Kingdom. [157526]

**Mr. Morley:** The timetable for implementation of the draft Directive for Member States is unclear. The Directive will be negotiated through the co-decision process. As such, much will depend on whether agreement is reached after First or Second Reading, or following conciliation. The draft Directive is expected to receive its First Reading in the European Parliament on 19 April 2004. The negotiation process may however be delayed by European Enlargement in May 2004 and European Parliament elections in June 2004.

Once the Directive is in place the UK Government will have 18 months to transpose it into domestic law.

### Cattle Tagging

**Mr. Todd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research she has collated on the use of electronic tags in cattle; and what progress she has made towards implementing such a system. [159484]

**Alun Michael:** The Department has considered research results on the use of electronic identification both at a European level and small scale trials within the United Kingdom. We have also recently launched a pilot project on a minimum of 50 commercial sheep farms to assess how industry can make best use of electronic identification and to identify any issues that may arise. All these findings will be taken into account in the development of electronic identification for livestock. However, until the European Union agrees harmonised technical standards and implementation guidelines, the Government is unable to promote the widespread use of this technology given the current lack of standardisation.

### Combined Heat and Power

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what financial incentives she has considered in the development of the Government's Combined Heat and Power Strategy Paper; and if she will make a statement. [159211]

**Mr. Morley:** The measures to support CHP announced in the Energy White Paper, taken together with the measures we have previously introduced and detailed in the draft CHP Strategy, will significantly help CHP. These include:

exemption from the climate change levy for fuel inputs and electricity outputs from Good Quality CHP;

the £50 million Community Energy programme promoting community heating;

eligibility for Enhanced Capital Allowances; and

a reduction in VAT to 5 per cent. for certain grant funded domestic micro-CHP installations.

We will set out the full range of support measures in the Government's Strategy for CHP to 2010, which we intend to publish after the Easter Recess.

**Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she last visited a combined heat and power plant; and if she will make a statement. [159212]

**Mr. Morley:** Ministers and officials meet regularly with the Combined Heat and Power Association and members of the industry and have visited a number of CHP schemes.

### Dairy Farming

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what forecast she has made of the price of milk per litre in the first three years after the Common Agricultural Policy mid-term review takes effect. [156441]

**Alun Michael:** If milk prices fully reflected the reductions in intervention prices for butter and skimmed milk powder in the period 2004–07, there would be a decrease of 4.5 pence per litre, assuming current exchange rates. The Commission in its economic assessment of the reform proposals concluded that prices would not fall to the full extent of any support price cuts. Colman and Harvey in their recent study for the Dairy Supply Chain Forum concluded that the average farm gate price in the UK could fall to just above 15 pence per litre. However, the effects of these lower prices on farm incomes will be, at least in part, offset by the introduction of direct payments. Furthermore, decoupling should lead to some improvement in prices and incomes as farmers produce for the market, rather than subsidy.

### Departmental Communications

**Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many staff are employed in the Department to work in the communications field, broken down by *(a)* Government Information and Communication Service staff and *(b)* other staff, broken down by (i) press officers, (ii) special advisers and (iii) others. [158169]

**Alun Michael:** There are 60 staff employed in the Communications Directorate of the Department as professional communicators, 41 of which are members of the Government Information and Communications Service.

The Directorate has 21 Press Officers. The remainder of the staff are employed in marketing, internal communications, new media, strategic planning publications and print.

The Special Advisers' Code of Conduct sets out the sort of work a special adviser may undertake on behalf of their Minister. This includes communications activity.

The number of staff who work in the communications field across the Department could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

**Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the total expenditure on communications for the Department has been in 2003–04, broken down by expenditure on

*(a)* Government Information and Communications Service staff and *(b)* other staff, broken down by (i) press officers,(ii) special advisers and (iii) others. [158201]

**Alun Michael:** Information on expenditure is not kept in the categories requested in the question and could only be assembled at disproportionate cost.

The total cost of staff and related expenditure for Defra Communications Directorate for 2003–04 is estimated to be £5.2 million. This includes the cost of staff in both communications professional grades and other categories. Within this figure the cost for operating the Press Office is estimated to be £1.5 million for the year.

The Special Advisers' Code of Conduct sets out the sort of work a special adviser may undertake on behalf of their Minister. This includes communications activity. Details of the costs of Special Advisers are given on an annual basis. Information for the financial year 2003–04 will be published in due course.

### Departmental Furniture

**Ms Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which companies have contracts for furniture provision for her Department; and what measures have been implemented to ensure that when a product contains wood, it can be shown to come from legal and sustainable sources. [158103]

**Mr. Morley:** The following companies have furniture supply contracts with the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and its executive agencies:

Carleton
Walls 2 Workstations
Viking
Project Office Furniture
Hallways
Matthews Office Furniture

Purchasing centres in Defra and its executive agencies have been issued with guidance, including a model specification clause and contract condition, that explains how to seek to acquire timber and wood products from legal and sustainable sources.

Defra's main furniture supplier, Carleton, is certified as operating a chain of custody system that meets the standards set by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). Certified products provide assurance that the timber used is from legal and sustainable sources. The Department monitors the value of certified wooden furniture purchased as part of its duty to report its timber purchases.

Defra is organising the creation of a central point of expertise on timber that will review the guidance given to all central departments and assess the extent to which certification schemes provide assurance that the Government contract requirements for legal and sustainable timber are met.

### Diesel Trains

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent assessment she has made of *(a)* the levels and *(b)* the environmental implications of emissions from diesel trains. [155414]

**Mr. Morley:** Emissions from diesel trains are calculated and reported in the UK's National Atmospheric Emission Inventory produced in the Defra research programme. All UK emissions data are available on the internet: http://www.naei.org.uk.

The main pollutants emitted from the combustion of diesel fuels are carbon dioxide ($CO_2$—a greenhouse gas), oxides of nitrogen ($NO_x$), particulates ($PM_{10}$) and Sulphur Dioxide ($SO_2$). The following table shows emissions of these four pollutants for 1990, 1995 and 2001 from diesel trains, from the railway system as a whole (including emissions from electricity generation for electric trains), and from all UK sources.

| *Pollutant/Source* | *1990* | *1995* | *2001* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Carbon as $CO_2$* | | | |
| Diesel Trains | 1,889 | 1,854 | 1,273 |
| Railway System | 6,182 | 6,521 | 5,784 |
| UK all sources | 585,047 | 548,616 | 556,352 |
| *$NO_x$* | | | |
| Diesel Trains | 21 | 15 | 10 |
| Railway System | 36 | 28 | 20 |
| UK all sources | 2,759 | 2,174 | 1,680 |
| *$PM_{10}$* | | | |
| Diesel Trains | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Railway System | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| UK all sources | 309 | 239 | 178 |
| *$SO_2$* | | | |
| Diesel Trains | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Railway System | 52 | 40 | 19 |
| UK all sources | 3,719 | 2,365 | 1,125 |

Emissions from diesel trains have fallen substantially in the last decade. In 2001, emissions from diesel trains accounted for approximately 0.2 per cent. of UK $CO_2$ emissions, compared to 0.3 per cent. in 1990. For $NO_x$ the proportion of UK emissions originating from diesel trains fell from 0.8 per cent. in 1990 to 0.6 per cent. in 2001. $PM_{10}$ emissions from diesel trains accounted for 0.6 per cent. of total UK emissions in 1990, reducing to 0.5 per cent. in 2001. Finally, $SO_2$ contributions have remained about the same over the same time period at about 0.08 per cent. of total UK emissions.

Defra has not assessed specifically the environmental implications of emissions from diesel locomotives because they are a low proportion of total national pollutant emissions. It is however possible that these emissions might have an impact on local air quality. Local authorities have a duty to review and assess air quality outside of buildings to identify areas where it is considered likely that Air Quality Objectives will be exceeded. Some local authorities are now beginning to perform monitoring in the vicinity of rail stations.

Under the new Non-Road Mobile Machinery Directive (97/68/EC) new railcar and locomotive engines are being addressed in two stages, from 2005 to 2007 and then again from 2011. Under the new Directive, emission standards have been set in addition to a requirement for replacement engines to meet the very latest emission limits.

### Environment Council

**Mr. Hood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the outcome was of the Environment Council on 2 March; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if she will make a statement. [159173]

**Mr. Morley:** I attended the Environment Council on 2 March 2004, together with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

The Council agreed by consensus a set of Conclusions as the contribution by Environment ministers to the Spring European Council. We were pleased with the priorities reflected in the Conclusions. They included rapid implementation of the Environmental Technologies Action Plan, a proposal that the Commission should report annually to Spring council on the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol, and called on the Community and member states to consider mid and long-term emissions reduction strategies, including targets, in preparation for the 11th Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Climate Change in November 2005. We called on the Commission, in preparing its review of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy by the end of 2004, to incorporate the external dimension of sustainable development so as to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and other international commitments.

We held a short policy debate on the proposal for a Regulation on shipments of waste. Replying to a series of questions from the Irish Presidency to all the delegations, I indicated that any measures aimed to prevent 'eco-dumping' should work through establishing community-wide standards and preserve the internal market; that in handling mixed 'green waste', the UK would support a proportionate, risk-based approach, aligned to the OECD Decision on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Wastes Destined for Recovery Operations; and that the 'take-back' requirements of the Regulation should not be applied to 'green waste'.

The Commission gave a progress report on the proposal for a Regulation on the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH). We were informed that further work is being done on assessing the impact of the proposals. There are to be policy debates in both the Competitiveness and Environment Councils, in May and June respectively. We were also updated on the progress of negotiations on the proposal for a Directive to amend the EU emissions trading scheme in respect of the Kyoto Protocol's project mechanisms. Although work remains to be done, the Presidency remained hopeful that an agreement could be reached which would also receive the early support of the European Parliament.

There was a brief report back from the 7th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity/ 1st Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, noting the good progress made there on protected areas and the conservation of high seas biodiversity, and also the very good EU co-ordination.

Other items were considered under Any Other Business and included a statement by the French delegation on the need to continue to press forward on maritime safety issues; a statement by the Belgian delegation on the protection of the marine environment, and in particular the problems of species spreading through ballast water and of by-catches of small mammals; written briefing from the Commission concerning its action plan on establishing a Global Monitoring for Environment and Security system; briefing from the Presidency on its plans to progress the proposal for a Regulation extending the Financial Instrument for the Environment (LIFE); and briefing from the Commission on its action plan on environment and health.

Over lunch we discussed the preparations for the 8th special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (UNEP) to be held in Jeju at the end of March, and the 12th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development to be held in New York in April.

### Environmental Crime

**Mr. Peter Ainsworth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans the Government have to establish specialist environmental prosecutors to deal with environmental crime; and if she will make a statement. [154966]

**Mr. Morley** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]:* The Government have no plans to establish specialist environmental prosecutors to deal with environmental crime. Responsibility for prosecutions for environmental crime rests with the Crown Prosecution service, the courts, the police, local authorities, HM Customs and Excise and with agencies of Government including the Environment Agency, Countryside Agency and English Nature.

### EU Producer Responsibility Legislation

**Mr. Bill O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the research which *(a)* has been and *(b)* will be undertaken to measure the effect of EU producer responsibility legislation on design of environmental targets in the UK. [157983]

**Mr. Morley:** Producer responsibility Directives include the Packaging, End of Life Vehicles (ELV), and Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directives. The WEEE and ELV Directives contain provisions on product design that are expected to increase the recyclability of vehicles and electrical and electronic equipment when they are transposed later this year.

The Packaging Directive is implemented in England and Wales by (i) the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations 1997 (as amended) ("the packaging Regulations") and the parallel instruments in the devolved administrations; and (ii) the Packaging (Essential Requirements) Regulations 2003. The Producer Responsibility Obligations provide incentives to minimise packaging as the amount of packaging waste producers have to recover and recycle is determined, in part, by the

amount of packaging they handle. Therefore businesses can save money if they reduce the amount of packaging they handle.

The Government recently commissioned a study on the impact of the Essential Requirements Regulations, which can be viewed at: www.dti.gov.uk/sustainability/packagingfinalreport.pdf. The report highlights a number of instances where packaging has been minimised as a result of the Essential Requirements Regulations. For example one large retailer has reduced the weight of plastic packaging on a range of cosmetic products saving around 30 tonnes of plastic per year.

### Farm Payments

**Mr. Nicholas Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the names and addresses of *(a)* individuals and *(b)* limited companies who receive more than £10,000 in direct payments under the Common Agricultural Policy; and if she will make a statement. [160169]

**Alun Michael:** The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) is bound by commercial confidentiality in its dealings with its customers, whether sole traders or farmers or corporations, breach of which by disclosing information relating to the affairs of individual traders or farmers or corporations would expose the RPA to the liability of legal proceedings in court.

In relation to individual farmers or traders, information which is of a personal nature, such as individual payments to such persons, is personal data which is protected from voluntary disclosure under the Data Protection Act 1998. While the RPA can release global figures relating to payments, which do not identify individual persons, including corporations, it is unable to release individual figures without incurring the liabilities under the two principles referred to.

### Flood Defences

**Mr. Michael Foster:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of flood defence barriers along the River Severn. [155088]

**Mr. Morley:** The Environment Agency's initial assessment is that the use of demountable and portable defences along the River Severn in early February was a success. The Agency estimates that around 200 properties were protected from serious flooding. A full assessment will be available in May.

### Fuel Poverty

**Mr. Kidney:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress her Department has made pursuant to its fuel poverty strategy to secure an increase in the number of training places for *(a)* gas fitters and *(b)* installers of (i) central heating systems and (ii) energy efficiency measures. [157162]

**Mr. Morley:** Defra has worked together with the Department for Education and Skills, Transco and the Gas and Water Industry National Training Organisation to fund training for 485 gas engineers to work on the Warm Front scheme.

In October 2003 we announced an Energy Efficiency Installer Training Programme, in partnership with the heating industry, Energy Saving Trust, and the Learning and Skills Council. The programme aims to provide 70,000 engineers with the necessary skills to specify, install and maintain high-efficiency heating systems.

### Marine Consents

**Mr. Chope:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects to publish the conclusions of the Review of Marine Consents. [157185]

**Mr. Morley** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]:* The Review is being led by my right hon. Friend the Lord Rooker, Minister of State at the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The Government are considering a range of options for reform of the current consenting regime. An announcement will be made in due course.

### Over-30-months Scheme

**Mr. Todd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will publish the legal advice her Department uses to determine eligibility for payment under the over-30-months scheme when cattle are presented for slaughter without an official tag but with other supporting documents; and how many claims previously regarded as ineligible for want of tags have been accepted since this advice. [159486]

**Alun Michael:** When cattle are presented for slaughter at a designated abattoir the Rural Payments Agency must be satisfied of the origin of the animal. There is a risk that without an ear tag an animal might have been substituted. However, provided that there is some clear and unequivocal identification on the animal itself which directly links with the animal's official documentation it may be concluded that an animal can be satisfactorily identified.

Sixty six animals initially regarded as ineligible because of a missing official tag have since been accepted onto the scheme.

### Refrigerators

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for what reasons the Environment Agency has not implemented a minimum standard for the amount of ozone-depleting substances recovered from each refrigerator. [154777]

**Mr. Morley:** Two of the principal aims of the Ozone Depleting Substance (ODS) Regulation (EC 2037/2000) are to prevent the release of existing ODS and ensure their recovery.

When setting performance standards the Environment Agency must have regard to the ODS Regulations and the criteria set out in Waste Management Paper No4 (WMP4). Licence conditions must be necessary, enforceable, unambiguous and comprehensive. The standard set by the Agency is based on the emission loss to the atmosphere from the process based on throughput, and the percentage loss through attachment to residual metal, plastic, foam and oil. The ODS Regulations do not require minimum

recovery; only that releases are prevented and ODS recovered. The Environment Agency considers that the performance standards set meet these requirements.

Setting a minimum standard of ODS recovered would be problematic when assessed against the aforementioned criteria and the fact that fridges accepted at the facilities do not contain an average or an assumed amount of ODS, as carried out by certain other standards.

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of chlorofluorocarbons is extracted from recovered refrigerators in *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* other EU member states. [154778]

**Mr. Morley:** To calculate the percentage of chlorofluorocarbons (CFC) from recovered refrigerators the average recovered CFCs per fridge for R11 and R12 needs to be used, which for 2003 in England and Wales are 186.13g and 50.5g respectively, and the average amount of CFCs contained in a refrigerator.

However, there is currently no agreed figure for an average amount of CFCs in a refrigerator across member states, primarily because of the variation in size and volume of units. Therefore it is not possible to assess and compare the percentage of CFCs with any confidence. It is for this reason that the performance standards set in the UK work on the basis of emissions lost in the process and those lost through attachment to residual metal, plastic, foam and oil.

### Sellafield

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent information she has received from the Environment Agency on the management of Technetium-99 radioactive wastes at Sellafield. [156639]

**Mr. Morley:** In September 2001 the Environment Agency published its proposed decision on the future regulation of technetium-99 (Tc-99) discharges from Sellafield into the Irish sea. In December 2002, the Secretaries of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and for Health published their decision not to exercise their powers under the Radioactive Substances Act 1993 to direct the Agency in respect to its proposed decision. The Agency's decision was, therefore, implemented in full. It contained a number of elements including a requirement to work towards the abatement of Tc-99 discharges through "MAC Diversion". This technique came into operation in middle of last year. The Agency also required research to be carried out into the use of tetraphenylphosphonium bromide (TPP) to abate Tc-99 discharges still further. A plant-scale trial using TPP was carried out towards the end of last year. The results of the trial are currently being evaluated by the Agency and the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate. We look forward to hearing their conclusions, which are expected in April.

### Thames Estuary

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the possible rise in sea level in the Thames Estuary as a result of *(a)* climate change and *(b)* other factors in the next (i) 25, (ii) 50 and (iii) 75 year terms; and what research her Department has (A) carried out and (B) commissioned into the subject. [154230]

**Mr. Morley:** The Thames Barrier was originally constructed to accommodate an 8mm per year increase in sea level, which at the time of design was extrapolated from tidal records through the Estuary. This, in principle, provides protection against a one in a 1000 year tidal surge up to 2030. Current guidance from DEFRA suggests an increase in relative sea level of up to 6mm per year is built into plans for future flood defences.

The 6mm per year figure is intended to accommodate the impact of climate change on sea level; that is thermal expansion of the oceans and ice melt of coastal ice-sheets, as well as long-term regional land subsidence.

Currently the Environment Agency is undertaking work to consider flood risk management options for the estuary up until 2100 under the project, Thames Estuary 2100. This will also involve making a full assessment of the risks associated with climate induced sea level, including potential changes in North Sea surges.

Predictions for the next 100 years will be developed using UK Climate Impact Programme research combined with trends inferred from the project's investigation into absolute ground level changes. This research is currently scheduled to be completed by September 2006.

### Timber

**Ms Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what construction and refurbishment her Department is undertaking; at what locations; and what measures are being implemented to ensure that all timber used *(a)* on the construction sites and *(b)* in the final projects will come from legal and sustainable sources. [158102]

**Mr. Morley:** The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and its executive agencies are undertaking the following construction and refurbishment projects valued at over £100,000:

New technical buildings for the Veterinary Laboratories Agency, Weybridge;

New farm buildings for the Veterinary Laboratories Agency, Weybridge;

New lifts for the Rural Payments Agency, Carlisle;

Office redevelopment in Whitehall, London;

Office refurbishment in Millbank, London.

Procurement centres in Defra and its executive agencies have been issued with guidance, including a model specification clause and contract condition, which explains how to seek to acquire timber and wood products from legal and sustainable sources. Contractors for the projects listed above are required to supply timber from legal and sustainable sources. Building site supervisors are instructed to monitor compliance with these contract requirements.

### Toxic Waste

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which sites, broken down by region, are licensable for disposal of

toxic waste; what the most recent return of annual disposal of toxic waste is; and whether each site will be licensable after the EU directives on toxic waste disposal have been fully implemented. [155105]

**Mr. Morley** *[holding answer 23 February 2004]*: I have placed a list, compiled by the Environment Agency, in the Library. This list identifies all the facilities, in alphabetical order, that had hazardous waste consigned to them in the year 2002 in England and Wales. Disposal, recovery, treatment and transfer stations are included. Sites where wastes were disposed of on the site of production are not included. The location and total quantity of hazardous waste received in 2002 are given. Most, if not all, of the non-landfill sites on this list will continue to be licensed to take hazardous waste in the future.

In terms of the impact of the Landfill Directive, the Agency are considering applications for hazardous waste landfills from operators wishing to continue to accept hazardous waste after the ban on co-disposal (of hazardous and non-hazardous waste) comes into force in July this year in accordance with the EU Landfill Directive. In addition, other landfill sites, classified as non-hazardous, may opt to accept stable non-reactive waste in separately constructed cells. Both these issues are being kept under regular review. Not all hazardous wastes are toxic and the Landfill Directive specifically bans hazardous wastes that are explosive, corrosive, oxidising or flammable from being disposed of to landfill.

## US Vessels

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer to the right hon. Member for Suffolk, Coastal (Mr. Gummer) of 29 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 494W, on US vessels, what discussions took place with *(a)* the US authorities and *(b)* the US Marine Administration before the departure of the vessels; what requests were made; what replies to these requests were received; and if she will make a statement. [153328]

**Mr. Morley:** The Environment Agency had a number of discussions with the US Marine Administration (MARAD) and the US Environmental Protection Agency prior to the departure of the vessels regarding the export of the vessels to the UK.

The Agency encouraged contact between MARAD and Hartlepool borough council in late September regarding the matter of planning permission for the Graythorp facility. At about the same time, the Agency spoke to the United States' Environmental Protection Agency about this matter. In October and prior to the departure of the vessels the Environment Agency, on several occasions in telephone calls and emails, advised MARAD to keep the vessels in the US until they were satisfied that all necessary arrangements were in place. No formal response was received.

The UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency had discussions with both MARAD and the US Coastguard regarding the safety of the vessels, their planned route and their towing arrangements.

## Village/Community Halls

**Dr. Murrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what work she has commissioned into *(a)* the value to communities of village and community halls and *(b)* the repair and renovation needs of village and community halls. [159675]

**Alun Michael:** I have discussed this issue with ACRE, The Village Halls Forum and other stakeholders, and Defra is about to commission research on the repair and renovation needs of village halls and on the value of the activities that take place in village halls to the communities they serve.

## Warm Front Scheme

**Mr. Chaytor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what instructions her Department issued to Warm Front scheme managers on the publication on their websites of monthly statistical data relating to works carried out under the scheme. [154679]

**Mr. Morley** *[holding answer 27 February 2004]*: Both Warm Front Scheme Managers have been asked to provide details on their websites of the number of measures installed in each quarter. That information is now available for the current financial year from 1 April to 31 December 2003.

Annual data from the start of the scheme in June 2000 will be available on their websites shortly.

## Waste

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department has taken to alert producers of hazardous waste to their obligations under the Landfill Directive. [156410]

**Mr. Morley:** The Department has taken the following actions:

- conducted six rounds of public consultation on aspects of the Landfill Directive, three of which dealt specifically (although not exclusively) with hazardous waste issues;
- set up the Hazardous Waste Forum and the Landfill Directive Implementation Group—whose membership includes representatives of hazardous waste producers such as the -CBI and the Chemical Industries Association;
- published the Hazardous Waste Forum action plan on the reduction and environmentally sound management of hazardous waste;
- assisted in the issue of guidance material by the Environment Agency, including technical guidance on assessing and classifying hazardous waste;
- organised seminars and took part in those organised by others (e.g. the Environmental Services Association and the Chemical Industries Association);
- arranged bilateral meetings with a wide range of industry and other interests;
- commissioned research and other projects (either direct or though the Hazardous Waste Forum or the Environment Agency).

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what limitations on *(a)* volume and *(b)* duration apply to on-site storage by producers of hazardous materials before such materials are classified as waste. [156431]

**Mr. Morley:** The definition of waste in force in the United Kingdom is the definition in Article 1(a) of the Waste Framework Directive (as amended). It provides that waste means, "... any substance or object ... which the holder discards or intends or is required to discard."

It rests in the first place with the producer of a substance to decide whether it is being discarded as waste. The Environment Agency is designated as a competent authority for the purposes of the Directive and is responsible for the application of its controls to substances discarded as waste.

Whether or not substances, such as hazardous materials, are discarded as waste is a matter which must be determined on the facts of the case and the interpretation of the law is a matter for the Courts. The European Court of Justice (ECJ) has issued several judgments on the interpretation of the definition of waste and the meaning of "discard". ECJ judgments are binding on member states and their "competent authorities".

There are no specific limits on *(a)* volume and *(b)* duration of storage of hazardous materials to determine whether they have been discarded as waste. However, the long term storage of materials with little intention or certainty of future use, or that no use for the material other than disposal can be envisaged, may be an indication that the material has been discarded as waste.

Where hazardous materials have been discarded as waste, the Government have provided an exemption for the temporary storage of hazardous waste at the place of production in paragraph 41 of Schedule 3 of the Waste Management Licensing Regulations 1994. This allows for the temporary storage at the place of production, pending collection, for a period not exceeding 12 months of:

80 cubic metres of waste in a secure container; or

50 cubic metres of waste in a secure place; or

23,000 litres of liquid waste in a secure container.

**Mr. Lindsay Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will introduce measures to compensate households who suffer noise and smells from landfill sites. [157260]

**Mr. Morley:** There are no plans to introduce a compensation scheme. Measures are already in place to control noise and smells from landfill sites.

The EU Waste Framework Directive requires member states to put in place necessary measures to ensure that controlled waste is recovered or disposed of without harm to human health and the environment. This is done in the UK by means of a Waste Management licence which is issued and regulated by the Environment Agency. The Environment Agency has a range of enforcement tools which it can use to ensure licence conditions are met.

Also, in order to obtain such a licence for a landfill site, planning permission would be needed which should address the issue of likely nuisance to local residents.

### Westminster Hall

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make it her policy to have senior Ministers reply to debates in Westminster Hall. [159619]

**Alun Michael:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to him by my right hon. Friend , the Leader of the House on 8 March, *Official Report*, column 1234W.

## CABINET OFFICE

### Asbestos

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what proportion of buildings occupied by *(a)* staff of the Department and *(b)* staff of the Department's executive agencies have been surveyed for the purpose of identifying the presence of asbestos prior to implementation of the control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002. [159371]

**Mr. Alexander:** All of the buildings occupied by, and which are the direct responsibility of the Cabinet Office, the Government Car and Despatch Agency and the Central Office of Information have been surveyed for the purpose of identifying the presence of asbestos. The respective landlords for buildings occupied but not controlled by the Cabinet Office, are responsible for the control of any asbestos present.

### Civil Service Code

**Adam Price:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what procedures are followed when a breach of the Civil Service Code is suspected; and who is responsible for their oversight. [161044]

**Mr. Alexander:** Departmental Staff Handbooks, which incorporate the Civil Service Code, define the standards of conduct required of civil servants within individual departments, the penalties they may incur if they fall short of them, and the arrangements for raising breaches or concerns under the Civil Service Code.

### Emergency Planning College

**Patrick Mercer:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much has been spent at the Emergency Planning College at Easingwold on new classrooms and accommodation over the past two years; and how much was spent on new training equipment in the same period. [158982]

**Mr. Alexander:** Work Started in August 2003 on a £7 million programme to replace the Emergency Planning College's student residential accommodation, training and seminar rooms, library, research facilities and integral IT and audio-visual training equipment. The programme will provide a modern learning environment for the new courses that the college will deliver from September 2004 onwards.

Owing to the planned demolition of the old classroom block to make way for the new building, the college has limited expenditure on new training equipment in the past two years to £10,000, the minimum necessary to sustain teaching in temporary accommodation.

The College has a range of other projects to enhance its training, including development of a distance and e-learning capability, which involves spending £180,000 over the next four years on systems, materials and products.

### EU-sourced Legislation

**Mr. Heald:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what proportion of statutory instruments introduced by his Department in *(a)* 1996–97 and *(b)* 2002–03 had the European Union as their legislative source. [160050]

**Mr. Alexander:** None of the statutory instruments introduced by the Cabinet Office in 1996–97 or 2002–03 had the European Union as their legislative source.

## DEFENCE

### Defence Fire Service

**Mr. Grogan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the transfer of the Defence Fire Service to a public private partnership would require parliamentary approval. [159637]

**Mr. Ingram** *[holding answer 8 March 2004]*: The Airfield Support Services Project (ASSP) is seeking the most cost effective and viable solution for the provision of airfield support services, including wider fire services, without compromising operational capability and/or safety. No decision has yet been made about the outcome of this project and we will only do so following full and careful consideration of all the options. Although we are moving towards this point, I am not yet in a position to say exactly when this will be.

If a Public Private Partnership were to be chosen as the preferred way ahead for ASSP, the Secretary of State would retain his position as the Fire Authority and no change in legislation would be required.

### Defence Finance

**Mr. Soames:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the final provision and outturn for Request for Resources 1 Provision of Defence Capability, were in cash terms, for financial years *(a)* 2001–02 and *(b)* 2002–03. [161037]

**Mr. Ingram:** I will write to the hon. Member and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

### Deployment

**Mr. Soames:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what percentage of the *(a)* Royal Navy and Royal Marines, *(b)* Army and *(c)* Royal Air Force trained strength were deployed on operations and other military tasks for each quarter for (i) each calendar year from 1997 to 2001 and (ii) 2003. [161036]

**Mr. Ingram:** Information has only been collected in the form requested since the beginning of financial year 2001–02. Figures for 2001–02 and 2002–03 were published in the Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts 2002–03 (HC1125). Comparable figures for the first three quarters of 2003/04 are:

*Percentage*

| | *2003–04* | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *April to June* | *July to September* | *October to December* |
| Royal Navy (incl. Marines) | -18.7 | 12.8 | 14.0 |
| Army | 46.9 | 23.2 | 22.9 |
| Air Force | 16.5 | 13.0 | 12.9 |

These percentages do not include personnel preparing for operations or recovering from operations.

Similar information on the percentage of trained strength committed to operations in 2000–01 was published in the December 2001 answer given on 10 December 2001 to the hon. Member for Yeovil (*Official Report*, column 532W), but this was not on a directly comparable basis.

Summary information on commitment levels for 1998–99 and 1999–2000 was published in the respective Ministry of Defence Performance Reports (CM4520, Cm. 5000). Again, this information was not compiled on a comparable basis to that set out above. Quarterly information on these years, and further information for years predating the 1998 Strategic Defence Review, is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

### Documents

**Mr. Paul Marsden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which documents are held by his Department written by *(a)* P. H. Pearse, *(b)* Thomas J. Clarke, *(c)* Thomas Macdonagh, *(d)* Edward Daly, *(e)* William Pearse, *(f)* Michael O'Hanrahan, *(g)* Joseph Mary Plunkett, *(h)* John MacBride, *(i)* Sean Heuston, *(j)* Michael Mallin, *(k)* Eamonn Ceannt, *(l)* Con Colbert, *(m)* Thomas Kent, *(n)* Sean MacDiarmada, *(o)* James Connolly and *(p)* Sir Roger Casement. [156303]

**Mr. Ingram:** I am not aware of any documents held by the Ministry of Defence written by those listed. However, a full answer could be given only after detailed research covering a large number of documents, which would involve disproportionate cost. The National Archives at Kew holds records (primarily in class WO71) relating to these individuals which were formerly held by MOD.

### Falkland Islands

**Mr. Ben Chapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the role of the military base at Mount Pleasant on the Falkland Islands. [160245]

**Mr. Ingram:** Mount Pleasant Complex is the base for the majority of British military forces in support of the mission of Commander British Forces.

### Gibraltar

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what role the Ministry of Defence is playing in the 300th anniversary of British rule in Gibraltar; and if he will make a statement. [158264]

**Mr. Ingram:** I refer my hon. Friend to the Statement made to the House on 27 November 2003 (columns 224–225) by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence.

### Iraq

**Tom Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Iraqi men have died while being held in British military custody in Iraq; what the cause of death was in each case; and if he will make a statement. [158033]

**Mr. Ingram:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave on 4 December 2003, (*Official Report*, column 127W) to my hon. Friend the Member for Leyton and Wanstead (Harry Cohen).

Cause of death is not something for investigating Royal Military Police personnel to determine.

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the investigation into the death, in British custody, of Baha Mousa, in Iraq; when the investigation is likely to be completed; and whether the findings will be made public. [146515]

**Mr. Ingram:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 4 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1050W. The result of the investigation will be made public in due course.

**Bob Russell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will hold an independent public inquiry into the deaths of the six Royal Military police officers from the Colchester garrison who were killed in Iraq. [151785]

**Mr. Hoon:** The Royal Military Police's Special Investigations Branch is conducting a thorough investigation into the deaths of the soldiers. The conduct of such investigations is independent of the Army's chain of command. When the investigation has been completed a full report will be given to the families concerned. I will make public as many of its findings as possible, subject to operational and other security constraints.

### Operation Artemis

**Mr. Gray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what the cost is of the use of members of the armed forces for covert surveillance on upland estates as part of Operation Artemis; [154733]

(2) how many army units will take part in covert surveillance on upland estates as part of Operation Artemis; [154734]

(3) what impact the deployment of members of the armed forces for covert surveillance on upland estates will have on the British Army's military obligations overseas. [154735]

**Mr. Ingram:** None. No requests for assistance have been received from Civil Police for such assistance this year.

### Operaton Telic

**Lynne Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of UK operations during the war in Iraq Operation Telic represents. [151576]

**Mr. Ingram:** Operation Telic is the on-going UK contribution to coalition military operations in Iraq, not a fraction of it.

### Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much *(a)* has been spent and *(b)* investment is planned on research and design of unmanned aerial vehicles. [158510]

**Mr. Ingram:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 11 November 2003, (*Official Report*, column 183W). The figures provided do not differentiate between "research" and "research and design" and the two terms are to be taken as synonymous in this context.

The Ministry of Defence considers that UAVs have the potential to make significant contributions to future operations and is in the process of assembling its future research programme in support of the development of UAV-based capabilities. The investment plans are still subject to refinement and confirmation.

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether unmanned aerial vehicles will operate with *(a)* air squadrons and *(b)* the fleet air arm. [158514]

**Mr. Ingram:** We expect Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) to be a joint capability for the joint battlespace. By integrating them into the emerging military command and control digitised network they will support Network Enabled Capability (NEC). At this stage we envisage them operating primarily within the land environment but we are exploring the wider operational utility of UAV systems in the joint battlespace, including the maritime environment, through the Joint UAV Experimentation Programme (JUEP). And under the Future Offensive Air System programme we expect to look at a potential mix of platforms, including Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicles (UCAVs), to meet our future strike capability from around the end of the next decade.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Broadband

**Michael Fabricant:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry who will be responsible for providing the European Commission with information on the UK's national strategy on growth in the broadband and third-generation mobile sectors prior to the next meeting of the Inter-Governmental Conference; and if she will make a statement. [156463]

**Mr. Timms:** The Department of Trade and Industry supplied the European Commission with information on the UK's national strategy on growth in the broadband and third-generation mobile sectors on 19 December 2003.

The UK was a late starter in relation to broadband, but with 3.2 million subscriptions to date and growing by some 40,000 per week the market is now exhibiting strong growth. Our target remains for the UK to have the most extensive and competitive broadband market

in the G7 by 2005. We are already ahead of our European G7 neighbours in both the competitiveness and extensiveness of our broadband market.

### Conferences and Seminars

**Michael Fabricant:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how many conferences and seminars the Department has cancelled since June 2001; and what the cost of these cancellations was; [160557]

(2) how many *(a)* conferences and *(b)* seminars the Department has held since June 2001; and what the cost was in each case. [160558]

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* conferences and *(b)* seminars were convened by her Department in each year since 1997; what the costs were of each event; and how many were cancelled. [161146]

**Ms Hewitt:** The Department does not maintain a central register of conferences and seminars held and is therefore unable to provide the numbers and costs requested.

### Disability Discrimination Act

**Mr. Goodman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures her Department is taking to prepare *(a)* businesses and *(b)* service providers for the implementation of the parts of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 which come into effect later this year. [160691]

**Ms Hewitt** *[holding answer 11 March 2004]:* My Department is working with colleagues in the Department for Work and Pensions to ensure that information is available from a variety of sources such as free information packs, videos, websites and conferences.

This will complement the Open4All campaign being undertaken by the Disability Rights Commission. The Small Business Service will update its No-Nonsense Guide available to small business through Business Link Operators.

### Electricity Prices

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the current price levels for electricity supplied to domestic customers are, broken down by supplier; and what the average electricity bill was for each region in the last year for which figures are available. [157901]

**Mr. Timms:** Current price levels for domestic electricity supply by supplier are dependent on a number of factors, including the nature of the tariff which the customer has chosen; whether the customer is with their home supplier or has switched; how the customer chooses to make their payments (direct debit is usually cheaper than both standard credit and prepayment meter options); and on levels of consumption. Customers are able to make comparisons via the Energywatch website for tariffs in their own areas.

DTI conducts a survey of domestic electricity suppliers that collects data on their tariffs and customer numbers. This data is provided on the assurance that it will not be possible to identify individual companies from the results published. Therefore, average prices broken down by supplier cannot be provided, although regional averages can. These figures are used to produce average electricity comparisons for cities in the UK regions published in the Quarterly Energy Prices publication and on DTI's website at www.dti.gov.uk/energy/inform/energy_prices/index.shtml. The relevant table is reproduced as follows:

*Table 2.2.3 Average annual domestic electricity bills[1] in 2003 for selected towns and cities in the UK and average unit costs[2]*

*Pence per kWh and pounds*

| *Payment type* | | *Credit* | | *Direct debit* | | *Prepayment* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Town/city[3]* | *Bill range[4]* | *Unit cost* | *Bill* | *Unit cost* | *Bill* | *Unit cost* | *Bill* |
| Aberdeen | Largest | 8.52 | 281 | 8.09 | 267 | 9.03 | 298 |
| | Average | 8.33 | 275 | 7.85 | 259 | 8.42 | 278 |
| | Smallest | 6.79 | 224 | 6.76 | 223 | 7.36 | 243 |
| Belfast | Average[5] | 9.85 | 325 | 9.55 | 315 | 9.70 | 320 |
| Birmingham | Largest | 7.39 | 244 | 7.15 | 236 | 8.00 | 264 |
| | Average | 7.21 | 238 | 6.91 | 228 | 7.70 | 254 |
| | Smallest | 6.21 | 205 | 6.45 | 213 | 7.12 | 235 |
| Canterbury | Largest | 8.45 | 279 | 7.97 | 263 | 8.52 | 281 |
| | Average | 7.30 | 241 | 6.94 | 229 | 7.39 | 244 |
| | Smallest | 6.48 | 214 | 6.24 | 206 | 6.64 | 219 |
| Cardiff | Largest | 8.82 | 291 | 8.42 | 278 | 9.94 | 328 |
| | Average | 8.58 | 283 | 8.18 | 270 | 9.12 | 301 |
| | Smallest | 7.61 | 251 | 7.21 | 238 | 8.33 | 275 |
| Edinburgh | Largest | 9.09 | 300 | 8.42 | 278 | 9.15 | 302 |
| | Average | 8.06 | 266 | 7.82 | 258 | 8.52 | 281 |
| | Smallest | 7.55 | 249 | 7.33 | 242 | 8.12 | 268 |

*Table 2.2.3 Average annual domestic electricity bills[1] in 2003 for selected towns and cities in the UK and average unit costs[2]*

*Pence per kWh and pounds*

| *Payment type* | | *Credit* | | *Direct debit* | | *Prepayment* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Town/city[3]* | *Bill range[4]* | *Unit cost* | *Bill* | *Unit cost* | *Bill* | *Unit cost* | *Bill* |
| Ipswich | Largest | 7.48 | 247 | 7.09 | 234 | 8.18 | 270 |
| | Average | 6.85 | 226 | 6.58 | 217 | 7.24 | 239 |
| | Smallest | 6.15 | 203 | 5.85 | 193 | 6.67 | 220 |
| Leeds | Largest | 8.52 | 281 | 7.36 | 243 | 8.36 | 276 |
| | Average | 7.24 | 239 | 6.94 | 229 | 7.70 | 254 |
| | Smallest | 6.70 | 221 | 6.04 | 199 | 7.15 | 236 |
| Liverpool | Largest | 8.21 | 271 | 8.12 | 268 | 9.03 | 298 |
| | Average | 7.91 | 261 | 7.67 | 253 | 8.12 | 268 |
| | Smallest | 6.79 | 224 | 6.58 | 217 | 7.52 | 248 |
| London | Largest | 7.70 | 254 | 7.70 | 254 | 8.42 | 278 |
| | Average | 7.55 | 249 | 7.30 | 241 | 7.67 | 253 |
| | Smallest | 6.55 | 216 | 6.24 | 206 | 7.33 | 242 |
| Manchester | Largest | 8.00 | 264 | 7.27 | 240 | 8.97 | 296 |
| | Average | 7.12 | 235 | 6.82 | 225 | 7.64 | 252 |
| | Smallest | 6.52 | 215 | 6.27 | 207 | 6.91 | 228 |
| Newcastle | Largest | 9.45 | 312 | 8.94 | 295 | 8.61 | 284 |
| | Average | 7.58 | 250 | 7.33 | 242 | 8.15 | 269 |
| | Largest | 6.67 | 220 | 6.21 | 205 | 7.06 | 233 |
| Nottingham | Largest | 7.24 | 239 | 7.15 | 236 | 8.52 | 281 |
| | Average | 6.91 | 228 | 6.55 | 216 | 7.48 | 247 |
| | Largest | 6.48 | 214 | 6.15 | 203 | 6.94 | 229 |
| Plymouth | Largest | 8.39 | 277 | 8.33 | 275 | 9.18 | 303 |
| | Average | 8.15 | 269 | 7.85 | 259 | 8.15 | 269 |
| | Smallest | 7.30 | 241 | 6.94 | 229 | 7.82 | 258 |
| Southampton | Largest | 8.67 | 286 | 8.21 | 271 | 8.61 | 284 |
| | Average | 7.73 | 255 | 7.27 | 240 | 8.27 | 273 |
| | Smallest | 6.64 | 219 | 6.48 | 214 | 7.03 | 232 |
| UK | Largest | 9.85 | 325 | 9.58 | 316 | 9.94 | 328 |
| | Average | 7.58 | 250 | 7.21 | 238 | 8.05 | 266 |
| | Smallest | 6.15 | 203 | 5.85 | 193 | 6.64 | 219 |

[1] All bills are calculated assuming an annual consumption of 3,300 kWh. They are calculated as weighted (by average customer numbers) averages of individual tariff bills. Figures are inclusive of VAT. 2003 bills relate to the total bill received during the year, which covers consumption from Q4 2002 to Q3 2003.

[2] Unit costs are calculated by dividing the bills shown by the relevant consumption levels.

[3] The towns/cities specified indicate which electricity region these bills apply to (see Table A2 in Annex A).

[4] The largest and smallest annual all tariff average company electricity bills and unit costs.

[5] There is no competition in electricity in Belfast, therefore no smallest/largest tariffs available.

### EU Emissions Trading Scheme

**Ms Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what consultations she has conducted with *(a)* trade associations and *(b)* the British Ceramic Confederation on the national allocation plan of the Emissions Trading Scheme; and if she will make a statement. [160233]

**Mr. Timms:** As part of the Government's consultation, DTI and Defra officials have held a series of meetings with trade associations and other interested stakeholders to discuss the UK's draft National Allocation Plan for the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. This included a meeting with the British Ceramic Confederation on 27 February 2004.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations she has received from industry on the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. [158848]

**Mr. Timms:** We have received numerous representations from companies, trade associations and other business organisations about the Government's proposals for implementing the EU Emissions Trading Scheme in the UK.

**Mr. Stephen O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the principal guidelines were for the national allocation of emission allowances; and if she will make a statement on the overall transparency of the process. [158849]

**Mr. Timms:** I refer the hon. Member to the written ministerial statement by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Environment on 19 January 2004, *Official Report*,

columns 53–54WS, about the publication of a consultation paper on a draft National Allocation Plan for the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS) which sets out the Government's proposals for allocating allowances under the scheme.

The Government have conducted two consultations on the UK's draft National Allocation Plan and has involved businesses that will be covered by the EU ETS and other interested stakeholders at every stage of the preparations. Business and interested stakeholders will have a further opportunity to comment before the final allocation decision is taken in October 2004. Information on the EU Emissions Trading Scheme can be found on the DTI and Defra websites:

www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/euets.shtml and
www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/trading/eu/index.htm.

### EU Match Funding

**Annabelle Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much matched EU funding was made available by her Department in each year since 1997, broken down by nation of the United Kingdom. [160109]

**Ms Hewitt** *[holding answer 9 March 2004]:* Details of funds distributed by DTI to match European Structural Funds are not recorded centrally, and could therefore be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Since the devolution arrangements for Scotland and Wales were established in 1999, with responsibility for the financing of European Structural Funds transferred to the devolved Administrations, DTI match funding has been restricted to England.

### Internet (Child Pornography)

**Ms Shipley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures she has taken to encourage internet service providers to take action to contact child pornography websites. [158998]

**Mr. Timms:** The Government support the work of the Internet Watch Foundation, which was established by the internet industry in consultation with Government. The Internet Watch Foundation works in partnership with internet service providers, telecommunications companies, mobile operators, software providers, police and Government, to minimise the availability of illegal internet content, particularly child abuse images. Their Internet Hotline deals with reports of potentially illegal internet content, such as websites, newsgroups and online groups that contain: images of child abuse anywhere in the world; adult material that potentially breaches the Obscene Publications Act in the UK; and criminally racist material in the UK.

One measure of the success of this self-regulatory approach is that less than 2 per cent. of the illegal content reported to the IWF relates to material hosted in the UK.

### Ofgem

**Mr. Carmichael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when Ofgem will publish the outcome of its consultation on transmission investment and renewable generation. [156618]

**Mr. Timms:** I understand that Ofgem expects to publish the outcome of this consultation in April, together with a proposed timetable for taking work forward.

### Post Office Closures

**Mr. Bill O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people in the Normanton constituency live within a mile of a post office following the Post Office closure programme by Post Office Ltd.; and if she will make a statement. [159604]

**Mr. Timms:** Post Office Ltd. is committed to ensuring that at the end of the urban reinvention programme nationally 95 per cent. of the urban population will still live within one mile of a post office and the majority within half a mile. This information is not collected, however, for each constituency.

In the case of Normanton constituency four offices are to close under Post Office Ltd.'s urban reinvention programme. All have alternative offices within 1 mile.

### Procurement Policy

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in what ways environmentally sustainable procurement strategies within the Department have driven innovation in the design and supply of products. [159146]

**Ms Hewitt:** I refer to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Environment on 10 March 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1542–543W.

Within the framework of this overall approach, DTI is contributing towards encouraging environmental innovation through public procurement in a number of ways, including:

Participating in the development of the procurement aspects of the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate. It is expected that the forthcoming procurement section will set Government-wide commitments for embedding sustainable development considerations in Departmental procurement strategies.

Taking forward the commitment in the Government's Innovation Report to ask its industry-led Innovation and Growth Teams (IGT) to identify where public procurement could better facilitate innovation and how this could be achieved, including setting up an Environmental Innovation Procurement Group (EIPG) to use procurement to drive innovation in the environmental industries.

Led by the Joint DTI/Defra Environmental Markets Unit (JEMU), the EIPG comprises business and other stakeholders and is working to tackle actual and perceived barriers, such as cost, risk, skills, information and inertia to the procurement of innovative environmental technologies, products and services by the public sector.

### Radioactive Waste

**Mr. Watson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 5 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1180W, on radioactive waste, what her policy is on making Nirex independent of the industry. [160680]

**Mr. Timms:** The review of Nirex announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on 16 July 2003 is not yet complete. Government decisions on Nirex will be informed by the outcome of the review.

### Renewable Energy

**Mr. Watson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the reasons underlying the percentage target for energy from renewable sources. [161006]

**Mr. Timms:** The Government's energy policy sets out four main goals:

In line with the royal Commission on Environmental Pollution's (RCEP's) recommendation, to work towards cutting emissions of carbon dioxide by some 60 per cent. by around 2050,

To maintain the reliability of energy supplies,

To promote competitive energy markets in the UK and beyond,

To ensure that every home is adequately and affordably heated.

Renewable forms of energy will play a key role in helping us to meet these goals. In January 2000, the Government announced their intention to set a target of 10 per cent. of UK electricity from renewables by 2010, subject to the costs being acceptable to the consumer. The target was set at a level considered to be challenging and yet achievable.

### Underground Power Lines (Thames Gateway)

**Jon Cruddas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with *(a)* the utility companies, *(b)* ministerial colleagues and *(c)* local regeneration agencies on undergrounding power lines in the Thames Gateway. [160005]

**Mr. Timms:** The Department of Trade and Industry is fully committed to regeneration and growth in the Thames Gateway and are aware that it contains an unusual concentration of overhead power lines. My officials have been working closely with ODPM, other Government Departments and the local regeneration agencies to consider whether some of these might be undergrounded or re-routed. They have also had meetings with the utility company responsible for most of the lines involved and with developers working in the Gateway. Ministers have been kept regularly informed of progress and have had discussions with counterparts in other Departments.

**Jon Cruddas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the cost of undergrounding power lines in the Thames Gateway; and what resources she has made available to help with the cost of undergrounding power lines in the major development sites in the Thames Gateway. [160006]

**Mr. Timms:** Discussions regarding estimates of the costs of undergrounding some sections of the power lines in the Thames Gateway have been taking place between developers working in the Gateway and the utility companies involved. These discussions are continuing. The Department of Trade and Industry has no provision for the cost of undergrounding lines.

**Jon Cruddas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what her strategy is for undergrounding power cables on the major development sites in the Thames Gateway. [160007]

**Mr. Timms:** Undergrounding is one of the options being considered for power lines in the Thames Gateway. Others include re-routeing and keeping lines in situ. The developers working on the major sites in the Gateway are preparing an analysis of those sections of line where they consider undergrounding to be important. As soon as this is available it will be discussed with the various Government bodies involved and the relevant utility companies. This approach will enable a more strategic view to be taken across the Gateway than an approach based on ad hoc consideration of the position on individual sites.

### Wind Turbines

**Mr. Walter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will investigate how far away wind turbines are required to be sited from houses in *(a)* Denmark, *(b)* Germany and *(c)* the United States to avoid the risk of ill effects on their inhabitants, and then report to Parliament the implications for the United Kingdom. [159896]

**Mr. Timms** *[holding answer 11 March 2004]:* We are investigating availability of the information requested with the International Energy Agency and will provide a response once received.

## EDUCATION AND SKILLS

### Disability Discrimination Act

**Mr. Goodman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures his Department is taking to prepare education institutions for the implementation of the parts of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 which come into effect later this year. [160690]

**Mr. Charles Clarke** *[holding answer 11 March 2004]:* The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) makes provision in Part 2 about discrimination in the employment field; in Part 3 about discrimination by providers of goods, facilities and services to the public or a section of the public; in Part 4 about discrimination in the education field (Chapter 1 deals with schools and Chapter 2 with Further and Higher Education); and Part 5 about public transport.

The DDA will shortly be amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (Amendment) Regulations 2003 ("the 2003 Regulations") coming into force on 1 October 2004. These Regulations largely implement the requirements of the disability strand of the Employment Directive (Directive 2000/78/EC). Substantial amendments are made to Part 2 of the DDA and also in one area of Part 3, namely that of employment services. The 2003 Regulations do not, however, implement the Directive's requirements in relation to qualifications, vocational guidance and vocational training insofar as those requirements impact on areas covered by Part 4 of the DDA. Separate Regulations implementing the Directive in relation to Part 4 will be made by the

Secretary of State for Education and Skills in due course. Therefore, with regard to the 2003 Regulations, educational institutions, as providers of education, will not be affected by the changes which come into force on 1 October 2004.

The DDA was amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA), which largely addresses the requirements of the Employment Directive in relation to vocational training in education institutions. The next amendment under SENDA, in relation to education, is not due for implementation until 2005 when a duty in further and higher education regarding 'premises' comes into force. At this point only the implementation of the DDA Part 3 affecting premises of service providers (but excluding education institutions) will remain. DfES will consult on any proposed changes needed to bring the Employment Directive fully into effect, but will not bring those amendments in before the final SENDA provisions are implemented in 2005.

The Department of Trade and Industry is responsible for taking measures to prepare employers for the changes under part 2 of the DDA.

## Foundation Degrees

**Mr. Wiggin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the *(a)* participation rates in and *(b)* drop out rates from higher education were in the last period for which figures are available, broken down by (i) parliamentary constituency and (ii) local education authority. [150464]

**Alan Johnson:** Participation rates at constituency level are not held centrally. The available information on participation rates by Local Education Authority (LEA) is taken from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and covers 18-year-old applicants who were accepted to full time undergraduate courses in the UK. Figures for the latest year are in the table.

Non-completion rates by student domicile are not calculated by the Department. The available information on non-completion rates by institution of study is published annually by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) in the publication 'Performance Indicators in Higher Education in the UK', a copy of which is in the House Library.

*Proportion of English domiciled students aged 18 accepted through UCAS to full-time undergraduate courses in the UK, by LEA of domicile: autumn 2002 entry*

| *Local education authority (LEA)* | *17-year-old population in 2001* | *18-year-olds accepted to HE in 2002* | *Proportion entering Higher Education (%)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Barking | 1,965 | 268 | 13.6 |
| Barnet | 3,958 | 1,279 | 32.3 |
| Barnsley | 2,714 | 409 | 15.1 |
| Bath and NE Somerset | 1,937 | 450 | 23.2 |
| Bedfordshire | 4,629 | 1,149 | 24.8 |
| Bexley | 2,657 | 539 | 20.3 |
| Birmingham | 1,3647 | 2,576 | 18.9 |
| Blackburn with Darwen | 1,982 | 375 | 18.9 |
| Blackpool | 1,641 | 272 | 16.6 |
| Bolton | 3,539 | 734 | 20.7 |
| Bournemouth | 1,550 | 368 | 23.7 |

*Proportion of English domiciled students aged 18 accepted through UCAS to full-time undergraduate courses in the UK, by LEA of domicile: autumn 2002 entry*

| *Local education authority (LEA)* | *17-year-old population in 2001* | *18-year-olds accepted to HE in 2002* | *Proportion entering Higher Education (%)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bracknell Forest | 1,509 | 272 | 18.0 |
| Bradford | 6,860 | 1,279 | 18.6 |
| Brent | 3,080 | 1,053 | 34.2 |
| Brighton and Hove | 2,487 | 446 | 17.9 |
| Bristol, City of | 4,448 | 1,038 | 23.3 |
| Bromley | 3,145 | 1,037 | 33.0 |
| Buckinghamshire | 6,047 | 1,905 | 31.5 |
| Bury | 2,349 | 596 | 25.4 |
| Calderdale | 2,410 | 522 | 21.7 |
| Cambridgeshire | 7,001 | 1,532 | 21.9 |
| Camden | 1,980 | 402 | 20.3 |
| Cheshire | 8,303 | 2,594 | 31.2 |
| City of London | 44 | 58 | 131.8 |
| Cornwall (including Isles of Scilly) | 6,185 | 1,280 | 20.7 |
| Coventry | 4,058 | 773 | 19.0 |
| Croydon | 4,077 | 1,011 | 24.8 |
| Cumbria | 5,922 | 1,340 | 22.6 |
| Darlington | 1,260 | 288 | 22.9 |
| Derby | 2,858 | 530 | 18.5 |
| Derbyshire | 8,503 | 1,911 | 22.5 |
| Devon | 8,290 | 1,738 | 21.0 |
| Doncaster | 3,794 | 682 | 18.0 |
| Dorset | 4,728 | 973 | 20.6 |
| Dudley | 3,656 | 730 | 20.0 |
| Durham | 6,382 | 1,222 | 19.1 |
| Ealing | 3,696 | 1,086 | 29.4 |
| East Riding of Yorkshire | 4,014 | 880 | 21.9 |
| East Sussex | 5,921 | 1,191 | 20.1 |
| Enfield | 3,017 | 931 | 30.9 |
| Essex | 15,622 | 3,584 | 22.9 |
| Gateshead | 2,542 | 443 | 17.4 |
| Gloucestershire | 6,944 | 1,733 | 25.0 |
| Greenwich | 2,755 | 393 | 14.3 |
| Hackney | 2,706 | 331 | 12.2 |
| Halton | 1,806 | 285 | 15.8 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 1,484 | 291 | 19.6 |
| Hampshire | 16,286 | 3543 | 21.8 |
| Haringey | 2,389 | 487 | 20.4 |
| Harrow | 2,843 | 1,120 | 39.4 |
| Hartlepool | 1,268 | 230 | 18.1 |
| Havering | 2,756 | 428 | 15.5 |
| Herefordshire | 2,030 | 508 | 25.0 |
| Hertfordshire | 12,274 | 3,572 | 29.1 |
| Hillingdon | 2,961 | 798 | 27.0 |
| Hounslow | 2,470 | 676 | 27.4 |
| Isle of Wight | 1,537 | 294 | 19.1 |
| Islington | 2,044 | 329 | 16.1 |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 1,680 | 334 | 19.9 |
| Kent | 16,488 | 3,863 | 23.4 |
| Kingston-upon-Hull, City of | 3,289 | 417 | 12.7 |
| Kingston-upon-Thames | 1,608 | 524 | 32.6 |
| Kirklees | 4,956 | 1,114 | 22.5 |
| Knowsley | 2,303 | 311 | 13.5 |
| Lambeth | 2,916 | 496 | 17.0 |
| Lancashire | 14,823 | 3,511 | 23.7 |
| Leeds | 8,541 | 1,699 | 19.9 |
| Leicester | 3,928 | 833 | 21.2 |
| Leicestershire | 7,607 | 1,854 | 24.4 |
| Lewisham | 2,838 | 474 | 16.7 |
| Lincolnshire | 7,769 | 1,842 | 23.7 |
| Liverpool | 6,041 | 1,101 | 18.2 |
| Luton | 2,423 | 474 | 19.6 |
| Manchester | 6,272 | 762 | 12.1 |
| Medway | 3,146 | 601 | 19.1 |
| Merton | 2,005 | 530 | 26.4 |
| Middlesbrough | 2,055 | 379 | 18.4 |
| Milton Keynes | 2,870 | 522 | 18.2 |
| Newcastle upon Tyne | 3,383 | 826 | 24.4 |

*Proportion of English domiciled students aged 18 accepted through UCAS to full-time undergraduate courses in the UK, by LEA of domicile: autumn 2002 entry*

| Local education authority (LEA) | 17-year-old population in 2001 | 18-year-olds accepted to HE in 2002 | Proportion entering Higher Education (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Newham | 3,515 | 675 | 19.2 |
| Norfolk | 9,010 | 1,642 | 18.2 |
| North East Lincolnshire | 2,151 | 312 | 14.5 |
| North Lincolnshire | 2,030 | 378 | 18.6 |
| North Somerset | 2,336 | 498 | 21.3 |
| North Tyneside | 2,334 | 412 | 17.7 |
| North Yorkshire | 7,235 | 1,850 | 25.6 |
| Northamptonshire | 7,987 | 1,681 | 21.0 |
| Northumberland | 4,054 | 964 | 23.8 |
| Nottingham | 3,449 | 502 | 14.6 |
| Nottinghamshire | 9,302 | 1,897 | 20.4 |
| Oldham | 3,037 | 632 | 20.8 |
| Oxfordshire | 7,732 | 1,700 | 22.0 |
| Peterborough | 2,176 | 351 | 16.1 |
| Plymouth | 3,161 | 547 | 17.3 |
| Poole | 1,713 | 298 | 17.4 |
| Portsmouth | 2,250 | 385 | 17.1 |
| Reading | 1,640 | 388 | 23.7 |
| Redbridge | 3,097 | 1,081 | 34.9 |
| Redcar and Cleveland | 1,949 | 334 | 17.1 |
| Richmond upon Thames | 1,858 | 563 | 30.3 |
| Rochdale | 2,762 | 515 | 18.6 |
| Rotherham | 3,165 | 530 | 16.7 |
| Rutland | 585 | 112 | 19.1 |
| Salford | 2,774 | 376 | 13.6 |
| Sandwell | 3,679 | 536 | 14.6 |
| Sefton | 3,552 | 971 | 27.3 |
| Sheffield | 5,998 | 1,082 | 18.0 |
| Shropshire | 3,554 | 935 | 26.3 |
| Slough | 1,464 | 328 | 22.4 |
| Solihull | 2,617 | 775 | 29.6 |
| Somerset | 6,413 | 1,337 | 20.8 |
| South Gloucestershire | 2,869 | 426 | 14.8 |
| South Tyneside | 2,034 | 353 | 17.4 |
| Southampton | 2,334 | 427 | 18.3 |
| Southend on Sea | 1,974 | 355 | 18.0 |
| Southwark | 2,556 | 401 | 15.7 |
| St. Helens | 2,207 | 497 | 22.5 |
| Staffordshire | 10,134 | 2,476 | 24.4 |
| Stockport | 3679 | 980 | 26.6 |
| Stockton on Tees | 2,552 | 586 | 23.0 |
| Stoke-on-Trent | 2,951 | 431 | 14.6 |
| Suffolk | 8,107 | 1,787 | 22.0 |
| Sunderland | 3,787 | 612 | 16.2 |
| Surrey | 12,958 | 3,763 | 29.0 |
| Sutton | 1,933 | 591 | 30.6 |
| Swindon | 2,260 | 369 | 16.3 |
| Tameside | 2,847 | 448 | 15.7 |
| Telford and Wrekin | 2,098 | 408 | 19.4 |
| Thurrock | 1,631 | 184 | 11.3 |
| Torbay | 1,480 | 300 | 20.3 |
| Tower Hamlets | 2,797 | 408 | 14.6 |
| Trafford | 2,784 | 736 | 26.4 |
| Wakefield | 3,868 | 713 | 18.4 |
| Walsall | 3,390 | 642 | 18.9 |
| Waltham Forest | 2,563 | 553 | 21.6 |
| Wandsworth | 2,177 | 514 | 23.6 |
| Warrington | 2,376 | 551 | 23.2 |
| Warwickshire | 6,271 | 1,575 | 25.1 |
| West Berkshire | 2,167 | 437 | 20.2 |
| West Sussex | 8,838 | 1,912 | 21.6 |
| Westminster | 2,098 | 356 | 17.0 |
| Wigan | 3,799 | 708 | 18.6 |
| Wiltshire | 5,721 | 1,321 | 23.1 |
| Windsor and Maidenhead | 1,835 | 522 | 28.4 |
| Wirral | 4,247 | 1,049 | 24.7 |
| Wokingham | 2,002 | 654 | 32.7 |
| Wolverhampton | 3,146 | 710 | 22.6 |
| Worcestershire | 6,586 | 1,640 | 24.9 |
| York | 2,037 | 572 | 28.1 |
| Total England | 613,573 | 134,785 | 22.0 |

*Notes:*

1. The effect of year on year fluctuations on a small population mean that this method of calculating participation rates is unreliable for the City of London.

Participation rates have been calculated using the 17-year-old population from the previous year to reduce the distortion caused to LEA populations by the migration of students to their place of study. However, any migration, for whatever reason, at age 17 will affect the rates shown here, particularly between authorities that are geographically close, for example in the London area.

Accepted applicants with unknown English domiciles are excluded from the figures.

Population figures relate to persons aged 17 as at 31 August in the year prior to entry, counts taken at the following 1 January; accepted applicants are aged 18 at 30 September in the year of entry.

## Further/Higher Education

**Chris Ruane:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* 16, *(b)* 17, *(c)* 18, *(d)* 19, *(e)* 20 and *(f)* 21-year-olds were in further education in the last year for which figures are available. [160459]

**Alan Johnson:** The information is contained in table 3.8 of the Statistical Volume "Education and Training Statistics for the United Kingdom: 2003 edition", a copy of which is available in the Library. The publication is also available online at: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgatewav/DB/VOL/v000431/index.shtml.

**Mr. Jenkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many undergraduates domiciled in England under the age of 24 entered a UK university in each of the last five years; and how many pupils domiciled in England were in upper sixth form education in each of the last six years; [143217]

(2) how many undergraduates domiciled in England under the age of 24 his Department expects to enter a UK university in each of the next six years; and how many pupils domiciled in England his Department expects will attend upper sixth form education in each of the next five years. [143218]

**Alan Johnson:** Figures for undergraduates entering UK HE institutions for the last five years are in the table. Projections are not available at this level.

*English domiciled students under the age of 24 entering UK HEIs*

| | Number |
|---|---|
| 1997–98 | 238,703 |
| 1998–99 | 242,840 |
| 1999–2000 | 244,953 |
| 2000–01 | 247,689 |
| 2001–02 | 259,964 |
| 2002–03 | 268,976 |

*Source:*
Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

Data on pupils in upper sixth form education are not available as we do not have data with the exact definitions for this group of young people. However, data with equivalent definitions—17-year-olds participating in full-time education by institution type—is readily available and published in the Statistical First Release (SFR) publication, SFR 31/2003, entitled 'Participation in Education, Training and Employment by 16 to 18-year-olds in England:2001 and 2002'.

The table shows the number of 17-year-olds participating in full-time education by institution type from end 1997 to end 2002.

*Table 1: Number of 17-year-olds in full-time education by institution type*

| | *1997* | *1998* | *1999* | *2000* | *2001(a)*[1] | *2001(b)*[1] | *2002*[2] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Full-time education* | | | | | | | |
| Maintained schools | 129,600 | 131,400 | 132,200 | 136,800 | 136,100 | 136,100 | 140,200 |
| Independent schools | 36,600 | 36,200 | 35,300 | 35,500 | 35,400 | 35,400 | 37,000 |
| Sixth form colleges | 47,400 | 46,600 | 46,400 | 47,400 | 47,800 | 47,800 | 51,900 |
| General FE, tertiary and specialist colleges | 140,800 | 135,800 | 135,700 | 136,400 | 136,100 | 134,300 | 143,700 |
| Higher education institutions | 3,000 | 3,000 | 3,200 | 3,200 | 3,500 | 3,500 | 3,900 |
| Total | 357,300 | 353,000 | 352,900 | 359,300 | 358,900 | 357,000 | 376,800 |

[1] The break in the series is due to changes in the source of further education data. Students on solely government supported work based learning-funded courses (WBL) are no longer recorded in the further education data. Results for end 2001 have been produced using both methods and are given in the tables, the second set *(b)* being consistent with end 2002.
[2] Provisional.
Please see 'Notes for Editors' section in the SFR 31/2003 for more information.

Projections on a consistent basis are not available. A consistent set of projections will be published in the 2004 Departmental Report.

### Part-time Students

**Tony Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many part-time students are in tertiary education, broken down by the age groups *(a)* 18 to 25, *(b)* 25 to 35, *(c)* 35 to 45, *(d)* 45 to 55, *(e)* 55 to 65 and *(f)* 65 plus. [159427]

**Alan Johnson** *[holding answer 10 March 2004]:* The available information is given in the table and shows part-time enrolments at English institutions.

*Part-time enrolments*[1,2] *to HE and FE courses at English institutions by age*

| *Age* | *HE study* | *FE study* |
|---|---|---|
| Under 18 | 1,585 | 132,616 |
| 18 to 24 | 129,269 | 273,916 |
| 25 to 34 | 228,740 | 396,623 |
| 35 to 44 | 213,194 | 416,516 |
| 45 to 54 | 112,599 | 296,169 |
| 55 to 64 | 37,002 | 176,773 |
| 65 years and over | 19,195 | 127,189 |
| Unknown | 10,860 | 16,489 |
| Total | 752,444 | 1,836,291 |

[1] Figures are on a snapshot basis. For study in HE institutions, figures are as at 1 December and refer to the academic year 2002/03. For study in FE institutions, University for Industry and external institutions, figures are as at the 1 November and refer to academic year 2001/02.
[2] As the figures are calculated on a snapshot basis they will therefore exclude any enrolments after these dates.
*Source:*
Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and Learning Skills Council (LSC).

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Afghanistan

**Mr. Ancram:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what the Government's position is regarding the appointment of a Supreme Court in Afghanistan by the President of Afghanistan; [160234]

(2) what steps the Government is taking to ensure a free and fair judiciary in Afghanistan; [160235]

(3) what the Government's position is regarding the appointment of a state commission to appoint *(a)* members of the judiciary and *(b)* the Supreme Court in Afghanistan. [160243]

**Mr. Straw:** We are working closely with the Afghan Government and Italy (lead-nation on judicial and penal reform) on the reconstruction of the judiciary (including a new Supreme Court). We are also considering how best to support the Afghan Government as it arrests and prosecutes those involved in the production and trafficking of narcotics.

In October 2002 President Karzai appointed a Judicial Commission of distinguished Afghan legal professionals to oversee the reform to the judiciary. The UK supports Afghanistan in developing a justice system which is speedy, fair, transparent and accessible to all. The UK has contributed £0.5 million to a UNDP programme on the reform of the judiciary and has committed £232,000 to penal reform, through Penal Reform International.

The new Afghan Constitution establishes that the nine members of the Supreme Court should be appointed by the President, with the approval of the Wolesi Jirga (lower house of the new National Assembly). Until elections for the Wolesi Jirga take place, the current Supreme Court will continue to sit. After the elections, a new Supreme Court will be established within thirty days.

### Gibraltar

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on plans for a new constitution for Gibraltar. [160892]

**Mr. MacShane:** I refer my hon. Friend to the statement made by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary in this House on 6 February 2004, *Official Report*, columns 51–52WS.

### Global Conflict Prevention Pool

**Mr. Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much has been gifted under the Global Conflict Prevention Pool. [158533]

**Mr. Rammell:** The following table gives readily available details of items which have been 'gifted' under the strategies of the Global Conflict Prevention Pool (GCPP) since it was set up. To undertake further research would involve disproportionate costs. Gifting is taken as referring to items which have been donated by HMG to another Government.

The GCPP is intended to support the prevention, management and resolution of conflict, and post conflict reconstruction to help avoid the re-ignition of conflict at a later date. A range of activities are covered, for example: development of new governance and justice systems; disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of fighters into society and development of alternative livelihoods for them; training for police, armed forces and other parts of the security sector in democratic and accountable systems which respect human rights. Most GCPP funding is spent on consultancy and other non-capital support to these objectives. Related technical and other equipment is however sometimes supplied under Ministerially approved guidelines, where this supports an agreed conflict prevention strategy.

| *GCPP strategy* | *Recipient* | *Financial year* | *Total cost* | *Description (end use)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Afghanistan | Afghan Transitional Administration | 2002–03 (£63,092) and 2003–04 (£100,000) | £4.8 million total £163,092 | Kabul Entry Vehicle Check-points:<br>Buildings (nine): £50,000<br>Equipment: £100,000 comprising hand-held metal detectors, mirrors for vehicle checks, generators, heaters, basic drug identification kits, communications, cold-weather clothing, torches, spotlights, beds, water tanks.<br>Joint Security Co-ordination Centre Equipment: £13,000 comprising computers, software and licenses, printers, scanners, digital projector, fax machine, photocopier, communications, office furniture, stationery. |
| | | 2002–03 (£850,000) and 2003–04 (£625,000) | £1,475,000 | Office of the National Security Adviser:<br>Temporary office accommodation: £900,000<br>Office equipment: £575,000 comprising security (CCTV etc.),<br>Communications, audiovisual, vehicles, office furniture, generators. |
| | | 2003–04 | £90,000 | Police Crime Scene Investigation Units:<br>Uniforms and specialist clothing: £55,000<br>Office Equipment: £20,000<br>Computers and software: £15,000 |
| | | 2003–04 | £6,500 | Counter Narcotics Directorate: Computers and office equipment. |
| | | 2003–04 | £921,500 | Afghan Border Police Headquarters: Contribution to total cost of building. |
| | | 2002–03 (£1,300,000) and 2003–04 (£817,753) | £2,117,753 | Afghan National Army: Communications equipment and spares: 2,027,753 Vehicles (6 jeeps and 9 trucks): 90,000 |
| | | 2003–04 | £10,000 | Regional Police equipment:<br>60 x Blankets, one x 60m carpet, 300 jackets, security equipment (torches, mirrors, hand-tools), two 4x4 pick-up trucks, vehicle spares. |
| Balkans | UNMIK | September 2003 | £555,101 | Kosovo Organised Crime Bureau: surveillance equipment for tackling organised crime. |
| | OHR | January 2003 | £167,222 | Computer equipment and software to combat organised crime in Bosnia. |
| Belize and Guatemala | Belize Defence Force | 2001–02 | £169,555 | Non-lethal military equipment including aircraft parts and freight costs, Land Rovers and spares, radio equipment. |
| | | 2002–03 | £248,996 | Non-lethal military equipment including uniforms, mess kits, tents, hammocks, radio equipment. |
| | | 2003–04 | £116,566 | Non-lethal military equipment including uniforms, trucks, outboard motors, mess kits. |
| Central and Eastern Europe | | 2001–02 | £282,500<br>£75,000 | Six hornet radars, body armour, global positioning system, mine detector sets, flares, electronic wheelbarrow, helmets. EOD equipment also supplied..<br>Four fork-lift trucks |
| Former Soviet Union | Government of Uzbekistan. | 2001–02 | £71,169 | Electronic court reporting equipment for the Uzbek courts in Tashkent. |
| | OSCE | 2002–03 and 2003–04 | £268,444 | Riot shields and riot clothing for the OSCE Special Police Adviser in Kyrgyzstan. |
| India/Pakistan | | | | Nothing 'gifted'. |
| Indonesia/E. Timor | | | | Nothing 'gifted'. |
| Middle East and North Africa | Palestinian Authority | 2002–03 | £32,337 | Gaza Project details:<br>Phase I<br>- Computer equipment: £12,125.3<br>-Copiers and faxes: £5,223.39<br>-Video conference kit: £5,948.72<br>(to link N and S Gaza)<br>-Merez Radio/phones: £3,380.57<br>-Furniture: £5,241.24 |

| GCPP strategy | Recipient | Financial year | Total cost | Description (end use) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Palestinian Authority | 2003–04 | £36,235 | Phase II<br>-Computer equipment: £15,824.2<br>-Copiers and faxes: £8,312.96<br>-Merez Radio/phones: £3,515.79<br>-Furniture: £8,113.37<br>Total units:<br>Computer equipment (includes PC, Keyboard, CPU and UPS) = 35<br>Printers = 9<br>Copiers = 10<br>Faxes = 9<br>Merez Radio/phones = 51<br>Furniture (includes desks, chairs etc) for 45 staff in North Gaza, Gaza City and Khan Yunis. |
| | Palestinian Authority | 2002–03 and 2003–04 | £7,921 | Jericho Monitoring Mission<br>Infrastructure improvements at Jericho gaol included:<br>Prison perimeter walls– barbed wire for inner and outer prison walls: £2,078<br>Halogen lighting: £367<br>1 metal detector arch: £5,480<br>All paid to enhance UK/US monitor safety. |
| Nepal | Government of Nepal | 2002–03 and 2003–04 | £4.3 m total £350,000 | Explosive Ordnance Detail (bomb disposal). |
| | RNA | 2001–02, 2002–03 and 2003–04 | £125,600 | Tactical radios, night vision telescopes and binoculars. |
| | | 2001–02 and 2002–03 | £137,600 | Normal binoculars, mobile phones, laptops, compasses. |
| | | 2002–03 | £2,600,000 | Two transport helicopters. |
| | | 2001–02, 2002–03 and 2003–04 | £400,000 | Infrastructure work for UN Peacekeeping centre at Panchkal (Nepal). |
| | | 2001–02. | £182,300 | Reconditioned Land Rovers including spares.<br>*Note:* Some of these items (e.g. radios) have been gifted every year the Strategy has been running. |
| OSCE | | | | Nothing 'gifted'. |
| Small Arms, Light Weapons | | | | Nothing 'gifted'. |
| Sri Lanka | Sri Lankan Army | 2002–03 | £92,000 | EOD equipment. |
| Security Sector Reform | Uruguay Ministry of Interior | February 2004 | £7,239.83 | High visibility jackets. |
| United Nations | Government of Uruguay | 2001–02 | £27,014 | 3 NERA satellite telephones plus airtime. |
| | UN Department of peacekeeping operations | 2002–03 | £25,000 | English language training books. |
| | Uruguayan armed forces | 2003–04 | £30,000 | Firearms training simulator. |
| | Paraguayan Peacekeeping School | To be donated on 19–3–04 | £3,793 | Computer equipment to be used during a civilian/military planning exercise to develop UN peacekeeping capacity (2 PCs, 2 projectors, 4 screens). |
| Iraq | Iraqi Police, Fire and Ambulance Service | 2003–04 | £1 million | 3,200 hand-held and 300 vehicle radios to improve the responsiveness of the Iraq Emergency Services in MND(SE). |
| | Iraqi Civil Defence Corps | 2003–04 | £159,000 | To provide vehicles (13 GAZ trucks) to the 5th ICDC battalion in MND (SE) in order to improve local security and create the conditions for the transition to local, national and strategic stand off. |
| | IL-IRAQIYA (Iraqi media network) | 2003–04 | £484,937 | Supply of an outside broadcast/satellite news gathering vehicle. |

## India

**Mr. Drew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) whether he discussed inter-religious conflict on his recent trip to India; and whether he made representations to the Indian Government for an independent investigation to be carried out into the level of conflict; [160127]

(2) what representations he made to the Indian Government during his recent visit to India concerning the level of attacks on Christians by Hindu militants. [160190]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary discussed many subjects with the Indian Government during his visit to India in February although the opportunity to raise this issue did not arise on this occasion. He has however raised it on many previous occasions and will continue to do so. But the Indians can be in no doubt of our commitment to human rights, including the right to freedom of religion. Most recently, on my visit to India in January this year I was able to raise human rights concerns with the Indian authorities.

## Israel

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what matters in respect of Israel's nuclear weapons of mass destruction were discussed in his meeting with Israel's Foreign Minister Shalom on 2 March. [159940]

**Mr. MacShane:** A wide range of issues of mutual concern were discussed with Foreign Minister Shalom. Details of the discussions with members of the Israeli Government are withheld under exemption l(c) of Part 2 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

### North Korea

**Mr. Roy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what UK involvement there has been in the negotiations with North Korea. [160264]

**Mr. Rammell:** The UK fully supports the six-party talks process which was established to find a peaceful resolution to the issue of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) nuclear programmes. We have not participated directly in the talks. However, we maintain close contacts with all the participants, including DPRK. We will also continue to urge DPRK to engage constructively in the process and dismantle its nuclear programme completely, irreversibly and verifiably.

### Nuclear Materials

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has received in respect of the theft of highly enriched uranium and caesium-137 radioactive isotopes from a research institute in Sukhumi, in Abkhazia in 2002. [159946]

**Mr. MacShane:** Georgia has not reported any loss of highly enriched uranium or caesium-137 radioactive isotopes in 2002 for inclusion on the International Atomic Energy Agency's Illicit Trafficking Database.

### Pakistan

**Llew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what matters in respect of Abdul Qadeer Khan's involvement in proliferating nuclear weapons were discussed during his recent visit to Pakistan. [159941]

**Mr. MacShane:** A range of issues of mutual concern were discussed during the visit. Details of the discussions with the Pakistani Government are withheld under exemption 1*(c)* of Part 2 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

**Mr. Jenkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions his Department has had with the *(a)* Pakistani and *(b)* Indian Governments concerning the roadmap to peace between the two countries. [160079]

**Mr. Mike O'Brien:** We have been in regular contact with the governments of both India and Pakistan following the announcement at the start of January that the two countries will begin a dialogue. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary visited Pakistan last week, and India at the start of February. During both visits relations between India and Pakistan were discussed with President Musharraf, Deputy Prime Minister Advani and Foreign Minister Kasuri. Both governments were congratulated on recent progress in their bilateral relations following the breakthrough agreement to commence dialogue, and were encouraged to build a sustainable pattern of talks that will, in time, lead to the resolution of all their outstanding differences, including over Kashmir.

### Palestinian Authority

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what assurance he has received from the Palestinian Authority that it unequivocally condemns suicide bombing; [160144]

(2) what representations he has made to the Palestinian Authority about the need for municipal government elections; [160147]

(3) what recent representations he has made about the need for reform of the Palestinian Authority. [160156]

**Mr. Rammell:** Representatives of the Palestinian Authority at every level have made clear to us repeatedly their condemning of suicide bombings. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary's 8 March talks with the Palestinian Prime Minister, Ahmed Qurei, focussed on his plans for further improving security as well as on the importance of continuing reform of the Palestinian Authority. Elections are part of that reform process. We have encouraged the Palestinian Authority to complete its work on the legal and administrative framework. The successful conduct of municipal elections will, however, also require a significant easing of the occupation and associated restrictions on Palestinian freedom of movement.

### Zimbabwe

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the numbers of *(a)* children and *(b)* dependants of Zimbabwean (i) police, (ii) military personnel, (iii) civil servants, (iv) judges and (v) Government Ministers who are being educated in (A) schools, (B) colleges and (C) universities in the United Kingdom. [160728]

**Mr. Mullin:** We have made no such assessment.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with Amnesty International on prison conditions in Zimbabwe. [160734]

**Mr. Mullin:** We are in regular contact with a number of human rights organisations operating in Zimbabwe who are monitoring the situation on the ground. Our embassy in Harare and officials in London regularly receive reports from Amnesty International about the level of human rights abuses in Zimbabwe.

**Mr. Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether *(a)* Mr. Henry Doha, *(b)* Lieutenant General Solomon Mujuri and *(c)* Mr. Joseph Mwale are on the EU list of Zimbabweans who are banned from travelling to member states of the European Union. [160735]

**Mr. Mullin:** Retired General Solomon Mujuru is on the EU's list as he is a ZANU (PF) Politburo Senior Committee Member. Mr. Henry Doha, a Zimbabwean police officer, is not on the list although he was removed from the UN's mission to Kosovo following protests over his presence there by UN member states, including the UK. Mr. Joseph Mwale, a member of the War Veterans' Association, is not on the list. Mr. Jabulani Sibanda, the Chair of the Association, is on the list.

The EU renewed and extended its targeted measures on Zimbabwe on 19 February 2004. An additional 16 names were added to those caught by the travel ban and assets freeze. The list targets the top members of ZANU (PF) and the Zimbabwean Government.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### Action Teams for Jobs

**Mr. George Osborne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the *(a)* cost and *(b)* success rate of Action Teams for Jobs. [158426]

**Mr. Browne:** Action Teams are halving a positive impact on the lives of disadvantaged people in some of the most economically deprived areas of the country. Between June 2000 and the end of January 2004 Action Teams had engaged with almost 250,000 people helping nearly 100,000 of them into work. The annual budget for Action Teams for Jobs is currently £49 million.

### Asbestos

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what advice he has made available to employers concerning the implementation of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002. [159352]

**Mr. Browne:** The Health and Safety Executive has published three Approved Codes of Practice to support The Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002: one aimed at licensed asbestos removal contractors, one dealing with asbestos work that does not require a licence and the third specifically addressing the new duty to manage asbestos in non-domestic premises. These documents provide comprehensive advice on how to comply with the regulations.

The Executive has also produced a number of guidance leaflets including a free leaflet produced jointly with the Federation of Small Businesses, Asbestos Testing and Consulting and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. Practical manuals have also been produced to help workers, employers and managers on the ground fulfil their responsibilities under the regulations.

In order to raise awareness of the duty to manage asbestos, the Health and Safety Executive has also developed workshop and seminar materials, which allow presentations to be delivered on the new regulations both by HSE staff and others.

Additional useful information on complying with the regulations can be also found on HSE's web pages on asbestos on the Internet.

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the buildings occupied by his staff, including departmental agencies, which require *(a)* remedial work on and *(b)* the removal of asbestos; what that work will cost; what budgets are available for this work for (i) 2004 and (ii) 2005; and what budget is available for future asbestos surveys. [159361]

**Mr. Browne:** A list of buildings requiring remedial work on, or the removal of asbestos is not yet available as the surveys being carried out in connection with the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002 will not be completed until later this year.

A list of buildings occupied by DWP staff and already identified as containing asbestos is available in the Library. This department, and its predecessors, has been proactive in identifying these buildings and the asbestos has been either sealed or removed as necessary.

The costs of the surveys and any remedial works have not been estimated. However, under the terms of the PRIME (Private Resource Initiative for Management of the Estate) contract, the DWP's service partner, Land Securities Trillium, are responsible for arranging and funding these.

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of buildings occupied by *(a)* staff of the Department and *(b)* staff of the Department's executive agencies have been surveyed for the purpose of identifying the presence of asbestos prior to implementation of the control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002. [159370]

**Mr. Browne:** To date approximately 13 per cent. of the buildings occupied by DWP staff have been surveyed for the purpose of identifying the presence of asbestos prior to implementation of the control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002. Surveys of the remaining buildings are expected to be completed during 2004. HSE are content with the actions DWP have taken so far and the proposals for future action.

### Benefit Fraud

**Mr. Webb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the recorded benefit fraud savings for *(a)* his Department and *(b)* local authorities were in each of the last six years. [151019]

**Mr. Pond:** The available information is in the tables.

*Monetary Value Adjustments (MVA) by DSS/DWP*

| | *MVA (£)* |
|---|---|
| 1999–2000 | 27,948,245 |
| 2000–01 | 22,109,627 |
| 2001–02 | 16,382,983 |
| 2002–03 | 16,057,813 |

*Notes:*

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest pound.

2. The Monetary Value Adjustment (MVA) scheme was introduced from 1 April 1999. MVA is the difference between the weekly amount of benefit which would have been paid, or would have continued to be paid, and the benefit paid following the decision-maker's decision on the information gathered. Comparable figures for periods prior to 1999–2000 are not available.

*Source:*

Fraud Information by Sector (FIBS).

*Estimated benefit savings from fraud detection by local authorities*

| | *Weekly benefit savings (£)* |
|---|---|
| 1997–98 | 306,400,000 |
| 1998–99 | 215,900,000 |
| 1999–2000 | 167,600,000 |
| 2000–01 | 133,900,000 |

*Notes:*
1. The Weekly Benefit Savings (WBS) scheme recorded estimated savings from fraud detection. It is not possible to measure actual savings from fraud detection because it is not possible to know how long the overpayment would have continued for had if not been detected at that point in time. Estimated savings from the WBS scheme are therefore based on the assumption that the overpayment would have continued for 32 weeks had it not been detected.
2. Amounts have been rounded to the nearest £100,000.
3. Local Authority WBS rules were tightened during this period, and the fall in recorded savings may not reflect a fall in actual amounts detected.
4. For local authorities, the WBS scheme was replaced by the Security against Fraud and Error (SAFE) scheme in April 2002, with some local authorities joining in April 2001; therefore figures for WBS savings are not available for 2001–02 onwards. Like WBS, the SAFE scheme provides rewards for detected overpayments. However, it provides rewards for the detection of both fraud and claimant error overpayments.

*Source:*
Local Authority returns.

### Company Pensions

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what safeguards are in place for those who have company pensions against loss of their pension through insolvency; [160039]

(2) what support is available to those who have lost their pensions when the company which employed them went bankrupt. [160040]

**Malcolm Wicks:** In the event of employer insolvency, assistance is available to pension scheme members under the Employment Rights Act 1996 and the Pension Schemes Act 1993. Under these Acts, insolvency payments are made from the National Insurance Fund (NIF) to qualifying former employees. Claims for unpaid employees' National Insurance contributions are limited to the actual amount deducted from wages during the twelve months prior to the date of insolvency. Unpaid employers' National Insurance contributions for the twelve-month period prior to the insolvency date are also payable, but are subject to monetary limits depending on the type of pension scheme.

Assistance is also available under 'deemed buyback' provisions, introduced as part of the Pensions Act 1995. Under these provisions members of contracted-out occupational pension schemes can, in certain circumstances, have some, or all of their state scheme rights restored for the period that they were contracted-out.

Other statutory measures are in place to help safeguard the pensions that people have built up. The employer debt provisions ensure that any shortfall is treated as a debt due from the employer to the trustees of the scheme. Changes to the statutory priority order on wind-up, announced on 24 February, will help ensure a fairer distribution of the pension scheme assets between non-pensioner and pensioner scheme members.

We are also taking additional steps to protect members of defined benefit schemes. We are introducing the Pension Protection Fund, which will protect scheme members by paying compensation if their employer becomes insolvent and the pension scheme is underfunded. The Pension Protection Fund will significantly improve both protection for pension scheme members and confidence in pensions more generally. For the first time ever, individuals with defined-benefit with rights pension schemes can be assured that they will receive a meaningful level of compensation if their employer becomes insolvent and there are insufficient assets in the pension scheme to pay out the pensions promised.

We are also introducing a new Pensions Regulator with the flexibility and powers to take a targeted and proportionate approach to protecting the funds held in pension schemes.

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in *(a)* Huddersfield and *(b)* the UK lost their pensions as a result of insolvency in each year since 1997. [160041]

**Malcolm Wicks:** This information is not available. The currently available source of information on pension schemes is the Pension Schemes Registry, which is administered by the Occupational Pensions Regulatory Authority (Opra). Their database does not allow us to identify the location of scheme members affected nor the solvency status of the sponsoring employer.

### Ethnic Minority Outreach Programme

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions which private sector companies or organisations in each of the regions of England have received funding for the Ethnic Minority Outreach Programme; what auditing has been done to ensure that the organisations are able to place people in work; and which 10 organisations or companies have placed the most individuals in employment. [156121]

**Mr. Browne:** Ethnic Minority Outreach (EMO) contracts have been awarded to public, private and voluntary and community sector organisations who have demonstrated effective links with local ethnic minority communities. Contracts with private sector organisations have been awarded to: 'Talent', delivering provision in Leeds, Bradford and North London; 'Reed in Partnership' in North London; and The Training Network Group' in North and Central London.

Jobcentre Plus collects monthly management information about a range of key performance measures, including job outcomes. However, it is important to recognize that the principal aim of the Outreach pilots is one of engagement with ethnic minority individuals and communities to encourage them to participate in the labour market. This means that a range of outcomes may be considered a success, from making contact with individuals or employers, linking individuals to the local Jobcentre and the benefits and services they provide; providing work focused training or other activity; as well as helping people into work.

All EMO contracts are monitored by the local Jobcentre Plus District against the targets agreed when the contract was awarded.

The EMO providers who have achieved the most job outcomes are:

1. Business to Business—Leicester
2. At Work (Talent)—Bradford
3. At Work (Talent)—North London
4. Pro-Diverse—North London
5. Oldham College—Oldham
6. Kirklees Metropolitan Council—Calderdale & Kirklees
7. Indian Muslim Welfare Society—Calderdale & Kirklees
8. Halifax Opportunities Trust—Calderdale & Kirklees
9. Family Housing Association—Manchester
10. SITU-Bolton

### Minority Ethnic Outreach

**Mr. George Osborne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the success rate of the Minority Ethnic Outreach. [158424]

**Mr. Browne:** Ethnic Minority Outreach has been designed and implemented to test new ways of engaging with communities and individuals who have had little or no contact with Jobcentre Plus and disproportionately high levels of unemployment. It is delivered by organisations that have demonstrated their knowledge of, and ability to work effectively with, ethnic minority communities, and uses new, innovative and community-based ways to help ethnic minority people overcome the barriers they face in the labour market. To January 2004, 9,268 people had started on the Ethnic Minority Outreach programme, with 1,664 starting work. The majority of those who joined the programme but have not yet found work are still participating, with some having joined mainstream Jobcentre Plus provision.

### Long-term Unemployment

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the levels of long-term *(a)* adult and *(b)* youth unemployment in Crosby over the last seven years. [160529]

**Mr. Browne:** In the UK, claimant long term unemployment has been virtually eradicated for young people and has fallen by three-quarters for adults. In my hon. Friend's constituency, Crosby, long term unemployment for adults has fallen by 70 per cent. and for young people by 95 per cent. since 1997.

These successes exemplify the successful combination of economic stability and radical labour market reforms we have provided which, despite a period of global economic insecurity, have resulted in the UK having the best employment rate and ILO unemployment rate of the major industrialised (G7) countries.

### New Deal

**Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Wales have benefited from the *(a)* New Deal for Young People, *(b)* New Deal for Long Term Unemployed and *(c)* New Deal for Lone Parents by (i) constituency and (ii) county. [157662]

**Mr. Browne:** The available information is in the tables.

*Number of people in Wales who have benefited from the New Deal for Young People, New Deal 25+ and New Deal for Lone Parents by constituency to the end of December 2003*

| | *New Deal for Young People* | | *New Deal 25+* | | *New Deal for Lone Parents* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Individual starts* | *Individuals into work* | *Individual starts* | *Individuals into work* | *Individual starts* | *Individuals into work* |
| Aberavon | 1,430 | 890 | 570 | 200 | 840 | 470 |
| Alyn and Deeside | 900 | 590 | 570 | 210 | 920 | 490 |
| Blaenau Gwent | 1,930 | 1,210 | 820 | 320 | 1,120 | 650 |
| Brecon and Radnorshire | 820 | 540 | 560 | 250 | 630 | 310 |
| Bridgend | 1,080 | 720 | 360 | 150 | 800 | 460 |
| Caernarfon | 1,050 | 800 | 530 | 170 | 690 | 410 |
| Caerphilly | 2,050 | 1,430 | 600 | 260 | 1,250 | 730 |
| Cardiff Central | 1,410 | 830 | 990 | 400 | 670 | 380 |
| Cardiff North | 420 | 270 | 250 | 110 | 440 | 260 |
| Cardiff South and Penarth | 1,820 | 1,020 | 1,350 | 510 | 1,500 | 880 |
| Cardiff West | 1,550 | 890 | 1,100 | 400 | 1,000 | 510 |
| Carmarthen East and Dinefwr | 950 | 590 | 420 | 140 | 470 | 230 |
| Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire | 1,350 | 900 | 610 | 260 | 630 | 320 |
| Ceredigion | 1,040 | 680 | 660 | 300 | 440 | 240 |
| Clwyd South | 860 | 540 | 360 | 140 | 770 | 460 |
| Clwyd West | 820 | 530 | 300 | 60 | 900 | 460 |
| Conwy | 1,280 | 860 | 500 | 180 | 1,050 | 540 |
| Cynon Valley | 1,480 | 1,020 | 440 | 200 | 670 | 390 |
| Delyn | 700 | 480 | 430 | 170 | 770 | 420 |
| Gower | 1,030 | 690 | 680 | 330 | 580 | 340 |
| Islwyn | 1,080 | 740 | 280 | 100 | 930 | 560 |
| Llanelli | 1,770 | 1,110 | 680 | 220 | 680 | 350 |
| Meirionnydd Nant Conwy | 620 | 450 | 270 | 90 | 410 | 210 |

*Number of people in Wales who have benefited from the New Deal for Young People, New Deal 25+ and New Deal for Lone Parents by constituency to the end of December 2003*

| | *New Deal for Young People* | | *New Deal 25+* | | *New Deal for Lone Parents* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Individual starts* | *Individuals into work* | *Individual starts* | *Individuals into work* | *Individual starts* | *Individuals into work* |
| Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney | 2,040 | 1,370 | 600 | 250 | 1,260 | 740 |
| Monmouth | 760 | 510 | 500 | 220 | 320 | 200 |
| Montgomeryshire | 440 | 300 | 220 | 110 | 360 | 160 |
| Neath | 1,570 | 1,010 | 680 | 260 | 690 | 360 |
| Newport East | 1,220 | 750 | 770 | 310 | 570 | 340 |
| Newport West | 1,500 | 900 | 1,070 | 350 | 630 | 350 |
| Ogmore | 1,180 | 790 | 380 | 150 | 760 | 460 |
| Pontypridd | 1,280 | 880 | 460 | 210 | 800 | 470 |
| Preseli Pembrokeshire | 1,400 | 940 | 680 | 250 | 560 | 260 |
| Rhondda | 1,750 | 1,120 | 560 | 230 | 750 | 370 |
| Swansea East | 1,780 | 1,140 | 970 | 470 | 1,010 | 620 |
| Swansea West | 1,660 | 1,030 | 1,160 | 500 | 660 | 420 |
| Torfaen | 1,420 | 950 | 440 | 150 | 790 | 480 |
| Vale of Clwyd | 1,110 | 690 | 270 | 80 | 1,130 | 560 |
| Vale of Glamorgan | 1,490 | 970 | 840 | 350 | 1,100 | 730 |
| Wrexham | 970 | 580 | 500 | 170 | 760 | 440 |
| Ynys Mon | 1,440 | 990 | 680 | 210 | 870 | 470 |
| Wales | 51,050 | 32,720 | 24,190 | 9,430 | 31,180 | 17,520 |

*Note:*

Figures may not sum to Wales total due to rounding and missing constituency codes.

*Source:*

New Deal Evaluation Data Base.

*Number of People in Wales who have benefited from the New Deal for Young People, New Deal 25+ and New Deal for Lone Parents by county to the end of December 2003*

| | *New Deal for Young People* | | *New Deal 25+* | | *New Deal for Lone Parents* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Individual starts* | *Individuals into work* | *Individual starts* | *Individuals into work* | *Individual starts* | *Individuals into work* |
| Isle of Anglesey | 1,470 | 990 | 680 | 210 | 870 | 470 |
| Gwynedd | 2,220 | 1,580 | 1,010 | 340 | 1,380 | 750 |
| Conwy | 1,530 | 990 | 560 | 160 | 1,560 | 800 |
| Denbighshire | 1,300 | 800 | 340 | 100 | 1,300 | 660 |
| Flintshire | 1,650 | 1,070 | 1,000 | 380 | 1,690 | 910 |
| Wrexham | 1,760 | 1,060 | 820 | 300 | 1,450 | 850 |
| Powys | 1,320 | 860 | 810 | 370 | 1,010 | 480 |
| Ceredigion | 1,080 | 680 | 670 | 300 | 440 | 240 |
| Pembrokeshire | 2,300 | 1,560 | 1,110 | 440 | 960 | 490 |
| Carmarthenshire | 3,230 | 1,980 | 1,290 | 440 | 1,380 | 680 |
| Swansea | 4,510 | 2,860 | 2,810 | 1,290 | 2,250 | 1,370 |
| Neath Port Talbot | 3,010 | 1,900 | 1,260 | 450 | 1,520 | 830 |
| Bridgend | 2,080 | 1,380 | 650 | 250 | 1,400 | 840 |
| The Vale of Glamorgan | 1,770 | 1,140 | 1,090 | 480 | 1,300 | 850 |
| Rhondda, Cynon, Taff, | 4,690 | 3,120 | 1,520 | 670 | 2,340 | 1,290 |
| Merthyr Tydfil | 1,590 | 1,080 | 470 | 190 | 1,000 | 590 |
| Caerphilly | 3,600 | 2,470 | 1,020 | 410 | 2,440 | 1,450 |
| Blaenau Gwent | 1,940 | 1,210 | 830 | 320 | 1,120 | 650 |
| Torfaen | 1,520 | 1,010 | 480 | 160 | 830 | 500 |
| Monmouthshire | 840 | 570 | 520 | 240 | 360 | 220 |
| Newport | 2,590 | 1,540 | 1,770 | 630 | 1,130 | 660 |
| Cardiff | 5,050 | 2,870 | 3,480 | 1,300 | 3,450 | 1,940 |
| Wales | 51,050 | 32,720 | 24,190 | 9,430 | 31,180 | 17,520 |

*Source:*

New Deal Evaluation Data Base.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many jobseekers on the New Deal scheme there have been in each year since 1998. [158224]

**Mr. Browne:** The information is in the table:

*New Deal—Number of jobseekers on each New Deal since 1998*

| *Year started on programme* | *New Deal for Young People* | *New Deal 25 plus* | *New Deal 50 plus* | *New Deal for Lone Parents* | *New Deal for Disabled People* | *New Deal for Partners* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1998 | 212,930 | [1]77,750 | — | 6,620 | — | — |
| 1999 | 192,300 | 141,950 | — | 69,080 | — | — |
| 2000 | 174,970 | 116,330 | [2]24,830 | 71,190 | — | — |
| 2001 | 163,170 | 118,530 | 35,080 | 80,080 | [3]7,090 | — |
| 2002 | 165,450 | 113,790 | 31,830 | 109,870 | 28,740 | — |
| 2003 | 172,870 | 105,580 | [4]6,300 | [5]97,880 | 33,630 | — |
| Total | 1,081,680 | 673,920 | 98,040 | 434,720 | 69,460 | [6]7,480 |

[1] Data are for July to December.
[2] Data are for April to December and relate to starts to the ND50+ Employment Credit.
[3] Data are from July.
[4] Data are for January to March and relate to starts to the ND50+ Employment Credit.
[5] Data are to September.
[6] No annual breakdown is available for New Deal for Partners.

*Notes:*
1. All other data are for January to December each year.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.
3. All figures are starts rather than individuals and include people who may have started New Deal more than once.

*Source:*
DWP Information and Analysis Directorate.

**Sue Doughty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many jobseekers on the New Deal programme have been placed on an environmental task force in each year since 1998; [158228]

(2) if he will make a statement on the projects that have been undertaken by New Deal environmental task forces. [158229]

**Mr. Browne:** The information is in the table.

*New Deal for Young People*

| | *Number of participants on the Environmental Task Force* |
|---|---|
| 1998 | 8,050 |
| 1999 | 23,870 |
| 2000 | 21,870 |
| 2001 | 17,570 |
| 2002 | 17,630 |
| 2003 | 15,000 |

*Notes:*

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

2. Includes people who may have started on the programme more than once.

*Source:*

Department for Work and Pensions New Deal database.

The Environmental Task Force (ETF) Option for New Deal for Young People (NDYP) aims to enhance the long term employment prospects of young unemployed people through high quality work placements and job search help.

A wide range of projects are delivered through the programme, which aim to deliver environmental benefits to local communities in line with the Government's sustainable development priorities. These include among other things: improving the local landscape and conserving its wildlife; improving the energy efficiency of buildings; and bringing derelict land and buildings back into use.

**Mr. George Osborne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what the Government's definition is of sustained employment; [158380]

(2) how many New Deal participants have found sustained unsubsidised employment. [158423]

**Mr. Browne:** Sustained employment is defined as moving into work and not reclaiming benefit for 13 weeks. We only record sustained jobs for NDYP and ND25 plus. The information requested is in the table.

| | *Number of New Deal Participants that have found Sustained Unsubsidised Employment (to December 2003)* |
|---|---|
| New Deal for Young People | 353,040 |
| New Deal 25 plus | 112,250 |
| Total | 465,290 |

*Source:*

New Deal Evaluation Database, Information and Analysis Directorate, DWP.

**Mr. George Osborne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the objectives are of *(a)* the New Deal and *(b)* each New Deal programme. [158382]

**Mr. Browne:** The objectives of all the New Deal programmes are the same: to improve individuals' employment prospects and reduce the incidence of long-term sustained unemployment. New Deal also aims to work closely with employers to ensure that they are engaged in the design and delivery of local programmes. More than a million people have been helped into work by the New Deal, with the job prospects of thousands more improved by being given the skills, experience and confidence needed to succeed in the labour market.

New Deal for Lone Parents and New Deal for Partners also feed into our targets of reducing child poverty and the number of workless households.

**Mr. George Osborne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many New Deal participants have received a nationally-recognised qualification; and what percentage that represents of total participants. [158420]

**Mr. Browne:** Information on qualifications held and subsequently achieved through New Deal is recorded and monitored by New Deal personal advisers on an individual basis at local level. However, information at national level could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. George Osborne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many New Deal participants have ceased to claim Jobseeker's Allowance. [158422]

**Mr. Browne:** The following table gives the number of people who left New Deal for Young People and New Deal 25 plus whose immediate destination was not to claim JSA.

| | *Number of New Deal participants who have ceased to claim Jobseekers Allowance* |
|---|---|
| New Deal for Young People[1] | 878,840 |
| New Deal 25 plus[2] | 335,540 |
| Total | 1,214,380 |

[1] January 1998 to December 2003.

[2] April 1998 to December 2003.

*Source:*

New Deal Evaluation Database, Information and Analysis Directorate, DWP.

**Mr. George Osborne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of New Deal leavers have had their destination recorded as unknown in each year since the inception of the New Deal, broken down by New Deal programme. [158428]

**Mr. Browne:** The available information is in the table.

| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Numbers of New Deal leavers whose destination has been recorded as unknown* | | | | | | |
| New Deal for Young People | 19,540 | 54,410 | 54,080 | 51,080 | 53,120 | 61,720 |
| New Deal 25 plus | 2,460 | 12,870 | 12,110 | 13,200 | 19,270 | 23,390 |
| New Deal for Lone Parents | 360 | 7,380 | 9,790 | 21,190 | 9,480 | 15,150 |
| *Percentage of New Deal leavers whose destination has been recorded as unknown* | | | | | | |
| New Deal for Young People | 25 | 28 | 27 | 29 | 32 | 34 |
| New Deal 25 plus | 18 | 10 | 9 | 11 | 18 | 20 |
| New Deal for Lone Parents | 24 | 12 | 11 | [1]20 | 9 | 13 |

[1] Proportion leaving to an unknown destination for NDLP is higher in 2001 following an exercise which identified people who had been recorded as participating on NDLP but had no contact for at least six months.

*Source:*

New Deal Evaluation Database, Information and Analysis Directorate, DWP.

### Pension Credit

**Mr. Dhanda:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps his Department is taking to simplify the procedure for applying for Pension Credit, with particular reference to pensioners with savings. [159726]

**Malcolm Wicks:** The application process for Pension Credit has been designed to be straightforward for pensioners and their family and friends, who may apply on their behalf. The Pension Credit application line (freephone 0800 99 1234), which is the main method of applying, is working well and has taken over 2.3 million calls (to the end of January) since it became operational on 7 April 2003. The Pension Service is able to offer alternative ways of applying to suit individual circumstances. Recent independent research, a summary of which is available in the Library, found high levels of customer satisfaction with the application line and with the application process overall. We continue to review and improve the application process in the light of experience, including improvements to make it easier for people with savings to provide the required information and documentary evidence.

**Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the percentage increase is in the number of pension credit households from the introduction of pension credit to the most recent available date in each parliamentary constituency. [160217]

**Malcolm Wicks:** A table showing the percentage increase in the number of pension credit households between 17 October 2003 and 31 January 2004, for each parliamentary constituency in Great Britain, has been placed in the Library.

### Winter Fuel Payments

**Mr. Webb:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people he estimates have to make a claim for the 2003–04 Winter Fuel Payment before 30 March cut-off date; and how many of them have yet to do so. [159701]

**Malcolm Wicks:** It is not possible to provide an accurate estimate of the number of individuals eligible for a Winter Fuel Payment who have yet to submit a claim. We estimate that approximately 600,000 eligible individuals in the United Kingdom reached age 60 in the qualifying period for the 2003–04 Winter Fuel Payment. About half of these have been paid automatically. Those not paid automatically have to claim.

So far 261,007 Winter Fuel Payment claim forms have been submitted in Great Britain.

**Mr. Crausby:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have received winter fuel payments in Bolton, North East in each year since the introduction of the payment. [159849]

**Malcolm Wicks:** Details of the number of people in Bolton North East who received winter fuel payments from 1999–2000 are set out below. Figures for the previous years are not available.

| | *Number of people receiving winter fuel payments* |
|---|---|
| 1999–2000 | 15,520 |
| 2000–01 | 17,150 |
| 2001–02 | 17,260 |
| 2002–03 | 17,410 |

*Notes:*

Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.

Figures taken from the Matching Intelligence Data Analysis Service Winter Fuel Payments 1999–2000, 2000–01, 2001–02 and 2002–03 exercises.

*Source:*

IAD Information Centre, 100 per cent. sample.

We would expect the figures for 2003–04 to be similar to 2002–03.

**John Thurso:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many claim forms for winter fuel payment have been submitted to date, broken down by region. [159853]

**Malcolm Wicks:** To date 261,007 winter fuel payment claim forms have been submitted. Numbers broken down by region are not available.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Correspondence

**Ian Lucas:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter of the hon. Member for Wrexham dated 1 December 2003 on the subject of Mr. Ertan Souyaz, Home Office Reference S900223; Port Reference WIT18155. [159867]

**Beverley Hughes:** I am informed that the Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to my hon. Friend on 2 March.

**Mr. Kaufman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter to him from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton dated 5 February with regard to certain allegations. [160488]

**Mr. Blunkett:** I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 11 March.

### Driving Offences

**Mr. Laxton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the *(a)* minimum and *(b)* maximum penalties are for the offences of (i) driving with no insurance, (ii) driving with no licence and (iii) driving without a valid MOT vehicle test certificate; and what plans he has to change the penalties for each of these offences. [156316]

**Paul Goggins:** The offences of driving while disqualified, driving without valid insurance and driving without a valid MOT are subject to statutory maximum sentences:

Driving while disqualified carries a maximum sentence of £5,000 and/or six months imprisonment and a maximum of six penalty points.

Driving without insurance carries a maximum sentence of £5,000 fine, unlimited disqualification or six to eight penalty points. However this offence may also be dealt with by means of a £200 fixed penalty notice and six penalty points.

Driving without a valid MOT (excise licence) carries a maximum sentence of £1,000 fine or five times the value of the licence (whichever is greater).

There are no minimum penalties for these offences except that the two endorsable offences carry a minimum of six penalty points other than in exceptional circumstances.

There are currently no plans to change the penalties for these offences, however the Sentencing Guidelines Council will consider them in due course.

### Internet Hackers

**Michael Fabricant:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures he plans to increase the number of arrests of hackers who send viruses via spam advertising. [159750]

**Caroline Flint:** The investigation and arrest of individuals who disseminate viruses is a matter for law enforcement. Where individuals are discovered to have disseminated viruses which cause the unauthorised modification of data they can be prosecuted under Section 3 of the Computer Misuse Act.

We have set up the National Hi Tech Crime Unit (NHTCU) as part of the National Crime Squad to combat national and transnational hi-tech crime within or which impacts upon the UK. This includes the investigation of hacking and virus writing. The Unit, together with the specialist units within local forces which also deal with such investigations, have established good international links with overseas industry and law enforcement, necessary to follow the evidence trail to discover and prosecute the perpetrators of such offences.

There have been a number of successful prosecutions against virus writers and disseminators.

In December 2003, the UK introduced new controls on unsolicited direct marketing e-mails, under the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations. Direct marketing e-mails may not now be sent to individual subscribers without their prior consent. The new opt-in rules do not apply to direct marketing e-mails sent to corporate subscribers (e.g. limited companies and other organisations). However, all direct marketing e-mails, regardless of who they are sent to, are required by the regulations to contain proper sender and contact details for opt out purposes.

### Mr. Steve Moxon (Inquiry)

**Mr. Cameron:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) when he expects to publish the results of the inquiry being held into the allegations made by Mr. Steve Moxon; [160943]

(2) whether the inquiry into the allegations made by Mr. Steve Moxon will cover *(a)* the operation of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate, *(b)* the operation of the Minister of State for Immigration's private office and *(c)* the operation of his Department's press office. [160944]

**Beverley Hughes:** I refer the hon. Member to the Written Ministerial Statement which I made today.

### Offender Management

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the private sector will be allowed to bid for work with sex offenders under the National Offender Management Service structure. [159812]

**Paul Goggins:** The Government want the most effective custodial and community sentences possible for all offenders, including sex offenders, no matter who delivers them. It is keen to encourage partnerships between public and private sector providers and the voluntary and community sectors. The team tasked with implementing the National Offender Management Service will consider the specific details of the application of contestability with regard to sex offenders as part of its wider remit.

**Mrs. Gillan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether there has been an assessment of whether the probation areas will be able to deal with the reorganisation needed to establish the National Offender Management Service. [159815]

**Paul Goggins:** The National Offender Management Service implementation team intend to run regional pathfinders in order to test the proposed changes in preparation for a national roll-out.

## MINISTER FOR WOMEN

### International Women's Day

**Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Minister for Women what activities she has planned in recognition of International Women's Day. [159425]

**Ms Hewitt** *[holding answer 10 March 2004]:* To mark International Women's Day, I took part in the annual International Women's Day debate "Women, Equality

and Human Rights" in the House of Commons on 4 March 2004. I attended and made the keynote speech at the "LeicestHERday" Annual Conference "Women, Moving Forward" (3 to 5 March 2004) which included discussion groups, seminars and workshops for women in business and the community. I also spoke at the International Women's Day reception at the Trade Union Council on 8 March 2004 and lent my support to the "Funny Women" comedy event held at Café de Paris on 8 March 2004.

In addition, the House of Lords marked International Women's Day on 9 March 2004 debating the question from Baroness Gould of Potternewton "What progress has been made on the status of women in the UK?".

## DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

### Housing

**Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on how *(a)* the Starter Homes Initiative and *(b)* the Abandoned Homes Initiative have affected the residents of Crosby. [160568]

**Keith Hill:** Since September 2001, the Starter Home Initiative (SHI) has been helping key workers into home ownership in areas where the high cost of housing serves to undermine recruitment and retention of skilled staff in our key public services. The SHI has been available in London and the South East region and in some housing hotspots in the East, South West and West Midlands regions. It has not been available to key workers in the North West region.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is not aware of an Abandoned Homes Initiative. However, our Market Renewal Pathfinders are a comprehensive programme to tackle low demand and abandonment in nine English areas, including Merseyside. The boundaries of the Merseyside scheme, which covers the southern part of the Sefton council district, but not Crosby, were drawn up following an analysis of local housing markets to identify those areas most acutely affected by low demand and abandonment. The integrated approach to spatial and economic issues being adopted by the pathfinders should bring substantial benefits to the wider sub-region.

### Ministerial Travel

**Bob Russell:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he last used a train in connection with his ministerial duties. [154699]

**Yvette Cooper:** My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister travels by train regularly on official business. He last travelled by train on official business from Letchworth to London on Tuesday 9 March 2004.

All travel by my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the "Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers", copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

### Parliamentary Questions

**Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 8 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1231W, on the South East England Development Authority, why the answer was delivered to the hon. Member without the table to which it refers; when the table was placed in the Library; and what arrangements he makes to ensure answers are delivered to the *Official Report* on the day they are given. [161191]

**Yvette Cooper:** The answer to which the hon. Member refers was answered on the 23 February 2004. It only appeared on the 8 March 2004 due to circumstances at the *Official Report* but did not include the table. The Answer and associated table will be printed in full in the bound copy of the *Official Report* for the 23 February 2004. The table referred to was not intended for the Library of the House as it was due to appear in the *Official Report*. All answers are issued to the *Official Report* when they are made available to hon. Members.

### Publicity Costs

**Mr. Damian Green:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much the Government Office for the South East spent on producing and distributing the leaflet "What the Pre-Budget Report means for the South East". [161052]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The cost of producing the leaflet "What the Pre-Budget Report means for the South East" was £175.00 to the Government Office for the South East. Distribution costs were £111.00.

### Regional Government

**Ann Winterton:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much the Government's Financial Guarantee would amount to in each year from 2007 to 2013 for the *(a)* North West, *(b)* North East and *(c)* Yorkshire and the Humber Region; and where the funding would come from. [160738]

**Mr. Raynsford:** If the UK proposals for an EU Framework for Devolved Regional Policy were agreed, the Government have committed that it would guarantee that by increasing UK Government spending on regional policy, UK nations and regions receive a level of resources which ensure they do not lose out from the UK's proposals on Structural Funds reform.

It is not possible to say now exactly what the domestic institutional arrangements will be in 2007, and therefore exactly how increased domestic funding would be distributed. However the principles of distribution are detailed in a written statement by my right hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, West (Ms Hewitt) on 11 December 2003, *Official Report*, columns 95–98WS. Equally it is not possible to put a figure on the Guarantee at this stage, without the GDP data that would be used in 2006.

**Ann Winterton:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the proposed regional assemblies grant in respect of fire and rescue responsibilities will match the total grant of the existing fire and rescue services in the individual regions. [160741]

**Mr. Raynsford:** No region's fire and rescue service will be financially disadvantaged because it reports to an elected regional assembly.

The Fire White Paper, Our Fire and Rescue Service announced that Regional Fire and Rescue Authorities,

> "where there are elected regional assemblies, fire and rescue authorities will be regional bodies constituted on similar lines to the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority" (paragraph 4.15).

The Regions White Paper, Your Region, Your Choice Revitalising the English Regions, announced,

> "fairness and consistency of treatment between the English regions can be most simply demonstrated if the level of resources for the region(s) with an elected assembly is determined on broadly the same basis as for other English regions" (paragraph 5.4).

**Ann Winterton:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the national public bodies with regional or local offices in the *(a)* North West Region and *(b)* Yorkshire and the Humber Region. [160753]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The Cabinet Office publication, Public Bodies 2003, lists all the national public bodies in the United Kingdom. However, it does not break down the public bodies by region. Copies have been made available in the Library of the House.

**Ann Winterton:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what aspects of EU Regional Policy will be devolved to the English regions. [160754]

**Mr. Raynsford:** The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has overall responsibility for the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), one of the key Structural Funds—which deliver EU regional policy. Under the current round of programmes (until the end of 2006), the responsibility for the day-to-day management of the Structural Funds is delegated to the Government Offices in the regions.

The Government's 2002 White Paper Your Region, Your Choice: Revitalising the English Regions (Cm.5511) set out our proposal that where elected regional assemblies are established they would take over the role currently performed by Government Offices for any Structural Fund expenditure for future programming periods.

It is not possible at this stage to say which regions will have elected assemblies in 2007, nor what the outcome of Structural Fund reform will be. But as the White Paper made clear, the general approach for England—regional delivery within a clear national framework—will continue. This means that the management of replacement programmes, whether they involve European or domestic funds, will be devolved to regional or local level.

### Speeches

**Keith Vaz:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many speeches he made between 9 June 2003 and 1 February 2004; and where a copy of each speech can be obtained. [156143]

**Yvette Cooper:** My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister and other members of the Government make a number of speeches on a wide range of domestic and international issues. Copies of my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister's speeches are available on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at www.odpm.gov.uk.

### Telecommunications Masts

**Mr. Bill O'Brien:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister who is responsible for considering disputes on the location and application of telecommunications masts; and if he will make a statement. [161114]

**Keith Hill:** Parliament has entrusted local planning authorities with the responsibility for day-to-day planning control in their areas.

**Mr. Bill O'Brien:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what circumstances must apply for mast sharing to fulfil the conditions of the code operations licences in the application of a telecommunications development; and if he will make a statement. [161116]

**Keith Hill:** The Electronic Communications Code requires code operators to explore the possibility of sharing an existing radio site. The evidence that they have done so should accompany any application made to the local planning authority whether for prior approval or for planning permission.

**Mr. Bill O'Brien:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister at what distance from the ground under the permitted development an antenna is permitted to operate under telecommunication planning policy; and if he will make a statement. [161117]

**Keith Hill:** The permitted development right for licensed electronic communications code system operators are set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (GPDO).

### Waste and Emissions Trading Act

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the additional costs to local authorities of the Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003. [158961]

**Mr. Morley:** I have been asked to reply.

A range of costs associated with meeting the targets in the Landfill Directive are set out in Waste Strategy 2000. The additional costs to local authorities arising from the Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003 are covered in a partial Regulatory Impact Assessment that was circulated as part of the consultation package. These costs were shown to be marginal and to relate mainly to additional administrative costs linked to taking part in a trading scheme.

### Westminster Hall

**Bob Spink:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make it his policy to have senior Ministers reply to debates in Westminster Hall. [159621]

**Yvette Cooper:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by the Leader of the House of Commons, the right hon. Member for Neath (Mr. Hain) on 8 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1234W.

## CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### School Terms

**Jim Knight:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment has been made of the impact on the tourism industry of schools moving to a six term school year with shorter summer holidays. [160936]

**Mr. Caborn:** The decisions of Local Education Authorities on reform of the school year are primarily based on educational priorities. Research commissioned by the English Tourism Council in 2001 suggested that the total amount of UK trips in the family tourism market would be unlikely to change significantly as a result of a six-year term, but that the tourism season would be more constant over an extended period. Spreading the benefit of domestic tourism more evenly through the year in this way would encourage the development of more sustainable tourism.

### National Lottery

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many Lottery distributors there are; and how much money was distributed by each in each of the last three years. [160941]

**Estelle Morris:** There are currently fifteen organisations that distribute the proceeds from the National Lottery. The Millennium Commission has received no funds from the Lottery since August 2001, and it is planned that the New Opportunities Fund and the Community Fund will be merged to form a single new distributor. This merger will happen when primary legislation is in place.

The table shows how much money each distributor has drawn down from the funds raised. The column 2003–04 represents the financial year to the end of February.

£

| | *2001–02* | *2002–03* | *2003–04 (YTD)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Arts Council of England | 218,286,836.77 | 178,533,056.37 | 167,558,445.09 |
| UK Film Council | 10,393,199 | 24,497,524.59 | 50,281,632.18 |
| Arts Council Northern Ireland | 6,025,667.65 | 7,173,681.91 | 6,005,049.64 |
| Scottish Arts Council | 25,258,824.55 | 15,822,048.65 | 22,979,072.19 |
| Arts Council of Wales | 10,719,175.80 | 15,549,008.06 | 17,000,544.84 |
| Community Fund | 384,471,181.88 | 352,214,195.26 | 287,059,299.59 |
| Heritage Lottery Fund | 262,040,448.00 | 264,828,307.00 | 292.997.004.00 |
| Millennium Commission | 203,859,000.00 | 190,477,000.00 | 60,249,000.00 |
| New Opportunities Fund | 225,250,000.00 | 367,000,000.00 | 534,000,000.00 |
| Sport England | 297,500,000 | 307,958,000.00 | 210,200,000.00 |
| Sports Council for Northern Ireland | 5,213,388.14 | 5.665.747.31 | 3,547,099.06 |
| Scottish Sports Council | 23,166,398.11 | 17,395,791.75 | 26,875,130.61 |
| UK Sport | 23,036,116.00 | 25,842.042.00 | 19,023,954.00 |
| Sports Council for Wales | 10,318,000 | 20,632,199.93 | 19,661,073.85 |
| Scottish Screen | 4,021,223.10 | 4,210,613.59 | 2,641,867.47 |

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the total of unclaimed National Lottery prizes was in each of the last five years. [161438]

**Estelle Morris:** The information for the last five full financial years is shown in the table.

| *Financial year* | *Unclaimed prizes (£000)* |
|---|---|
| 2002–03 | 84,923 |
| 2001–02 | 80,805 |
| 2000–01 | 75,651 |
| 1999–2000 | 70,792 |
| 1998–99 | 78,289 |

### Olympic Games

**Mr. Roy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps she is taking to ensure that venues outside London are involved in the 2012 Olympic bid. [160263]

**Tessa Jowell:** The bidding company, London 2012, announced the venues for the bid to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games on 16 January. The rowing, sailing and shooting events will be staged at venues outside central London and the Olympic football competition will be held in stadia in Belfast, Birmingham, Cardiff, Glasgow, Manchester and Newcastle. Should the bid succeed, sporting facilities across the UK will have the opportunity to be used by national teams for training camps.

### Rowing

**Mr. Hawkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what meetings *(a)* she, *(b)* her Ministers and *(c)* officials have held with representatives of the Amateur Rowing Association since August 2003 to discuss the World Rowing Championships 2006; and if she will make a statement. [160887]

**Mr. Caborn:** I met Di Ellis, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Amateur Rowing Association (ARA), Michael Baldwin Chairman of the Organising Committee of the World Cup Regatta 2005 and the World Rowing Championships 2006, and John Scott of UK Sport on 1 December 2003 to discuss the facilities at Dorney Lake which will host both Championships.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport will shortly be convening a meeting of the ARA, the Championships Organising Committee, Sport England and UK Sport to further discuss the best way forward to ensure that the Dorney Lake course is brought to the required standard for World and Olympic rowing events.

**Mr. Hawkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether Dorney Lake will be the venue for *(a)* the World Cup Regatta 2005 and *(b)* the World Rowing Championships in May 2006. [160888]

**Mr. Caborn:** The Dorney Lake rowing course has been selected to be the venue for both the World Cup Regatta 2005 and the World Rowing Championships 2006.

**Mr. Hawkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport in what year the UK was last awarded the World Rowing Championships; and if she will make a statement. [160889]

**Mr. Caborn:** The World Rowing Championships were last held in the UK in 1986 when Nottingham was the host city.

The Government are pleased that the UK has been awarded the 2006 Championships and hopes that all interested parties will continue to work together in preparation for this event to ensure that it is an unqualified success.

**Mr. Hawkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many members of the International Olympic Committee *(a)* are also members of Fédération Internationale des Sociétés d'Aviron and *(b)* are expected to attend the 2005 World Cup Regatta. [160890]

**Mr. Caborn:** There are four members of the International Olympic Committee who are also members of the Fédération Internationale des Sociétés d'Aviron (FISA).

Invitations to the regatta are a matter for the Amateur Rowing Association and FISA.

**Mr. Hawkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what further funding is required to complete the Dorney Lake rowing course to the standard required for World and Olympic events; and if she will make a statement. [160891]

**Mr. Caborn:** The Amateur Rowing Association (ARA) has made a detailed analysis of the costs needed to complete the Dorney Lake rowing course to the standard required for World and Olympic Events. In addition to the funding already in place, the ARA have estimated that a further £1,112,000 would be needed.

The Department will continue to work closely with the ARA and other interested parties to consider what further steps should be taken to help bring the Dorney Lake facilities to the required standard.

## HEALTH

### Asbestos

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the buildings occupied by his departmental and agency staff which require *(a)* remedial work on and *(b)* removal of asbestos; what this work will cost; what budgets are available for this work for (i) 2004 and (ii) 2005; and what budget is available for future asbestos surveys. [159653]

**Mr. Hutton:** The presence of asbestos is recorded in the following buildings occupied by the Department of Health, its agencies and non-departmental public bodies, where the Department has responsibility for the building or building fabric. Plans have been established for both removal and remedial works. The estimated costs of such works are shown in the table.

| *Building* | *Estimated cost (£)* |
|---|---|
| Wellington House, London SE1 8UG | 16,500 |
| Eileen House, London SE1 6EF | 9,500 |
| Market Towers, London SW8 5NQ | 650,000 |

Costs of removal are provided by the overall maintenance budgets for the Department of Health Estate for 2003–04 and 2004–05.

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the *(a)* hospitals and *(b)* other NHS properties which have been identified as containing asbestos; what proportion of (i) hospitals and (ii) other NHS properties have been surveyed for the purpose of identifying the presence of asbestos; which (A) hospitals and (B) other NHS properties require (1) remedial work on (2) removal of asbestos; what that work will cost; what budgets are available for this work for 2004 and 2005; and what budget is available for future asbestos surveys. [159655]

**Mr. Hutton:** Data are not currently collected on the number of hospitals and national health service properties that contain asbestos. Trusts should pay for all works out of their own maintenance budgets. A consultative document, published by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in November 2001, suggested that costs relating to the control of asbestos are not major. More recently, the HSE has advised that, where possible, asbestos should be made safe rather than removed from buildings.

Trusts have a duty of care to manage asbestos under The Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2003 and they must record the location and condition of asbestos.

**Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of buildings occupied by *(a)* departmental staff and *(b)* staff of the Department's executive agencies have been surveyed for the purpose of identifying the presence of asbestos prior to the implementation of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002. [159661]

**Mr. Hutton:** The Department has had recent surveys undertaken in all its buildings, with the exception of one building where formal discussions with the landlord have proven that asbestos is not present.

### Chickenpox

**Miss Kirkbride:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment has been made of MMR-V as a childhood inoculation; and what plans he has to introduce it into the NHS. [160419]

**Miss Melanie Johnson** *[holding answer 11 March 2004]:* MMR-V vaccine does not have a licence from the European Agency for the Evaluation of Medicinal Products (EMEA) or the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Authority (MHRA). Therefore

there has not been assessment of the vaccine and there are no plans to introduce it into the national health service.

**Miss Kirkbride:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will make a statement on chickenpox as a childhood disease; [160420]

(2) what plans he has to make chickenpox a notifiable disease. [160421]

**Miss Melanie Johnson** *[holding answer 11 March 2004]:* Chickenpox is a highly contagious disease caused by the varicella-zoster virus (VZV) that most people experience in childhood. Although the chickenpox rash can be uncomfortable, for most children the infection is usually mild.

However, chickenpox disease can be serious in immuno-compromised children where it can cause serious illness and even be fatal.

The risk of chickenpox infection is also serious for pregnant women. If a women contracts chickenpox in the first 20 weeks of pregnancy, the foetus may develop abnormalities. A woman developing chickenpox one-week before or after giving birth can pass the disease to her newborn child. Chickenpox is particularly serious in newborn children, and can lead to death.

There are currently no plans to make chickenpox (varicella zoster) a notifiable disease in England and Wales. There are other sources of information currently available on the incidence of chickenpox and deaths. Information on general practitioner consultations due to chicken pox is collected through the Royal College of General Practitioners weekly returns system.

### GM Crops

**Joan Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research *(a)* he and *(b)* the Food Safety Agency has commissioned on possible effects on human health of (i) living close to GM crops and (ii) eating GM food. [161129]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Before a genetically modified (GM) crop is approved for growing or for food consumption in the European Union it is required to undergo a rigorous safety assessment. This takes into account both the potential impact on human health in growing the crop and an assessment of the safety of the crop for human consumption. The Food Standards Agency funds a large body of research to support the safety assessment of GM foods, and has not commissioned specific research in the areas mentioned.

### Gyms (Access)

**Mr. Reed:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action his Department is taking to ensure employees have access to gym equipment in or close to the workplace. [159950]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The cross-Government activity co-ordination team, which I chair jointly with my right hon. Friend the Minister for Sport and Tourism, is looking at a range of options for encouraging active lifestyles in various settings, including the workplace. We will put forward proposals shortly. This work will feed into the wider Government consultation on improving people's health, entitled "Choosing Health?" One of the areas where we are asking for views is the appropriate balance between individuals' responsibilities for their own health and the responsibility of others—including employers—to provide opportunities to sustain a healthy lifestyle, such as access to gyms.

### Health Care Workers (Communicable Diseases)

**Mr. Todd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the response to his Department's consultation paper "Health Clearance for Serious Communicable Diseases: New Health Care Workers" will be published; and if he will make a statement. [151871]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The Department received a large number of responses to the consultation on "Health Clearance for Serious Communicable Diseases: New Health Care Workers". The comments are being considered for incorporation into the final guidance, which will be made available to the national health service later this year.

### Health Protection Agency

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many serious outbreaks of infection have been reported to the Health Protection Agency since this new collection of information was announced in December 2003. [158520]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** This data is not available yet.

### Health Statistics

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his Answer of 4 February, *Official Report*, columns 964–65W, on health statistics, and the evidence to the Health Committee on 22 January, if he will break down the information by age. [158584]

**Dr. Ladyman:** Quarterly monitoring information for emergency re-admissions to hospital is collected only on an all ages basis. Hospital episode statistics data can be analysed to produce annual information on emergency re-admissions by age group, but this is not routinely done. I would be willing to request such an analysis for the hon. Member if he would find it helpful and would specify in which age groups he is interested.

Figures for delayed transfers of care for all ages, and over 75s, have been supplied for every quarter and have been placed in the Library, including the latest figures for 2003–04, Quarter 3 (December 2003).

**Mr. Burns:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 5 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1068W, on health statistics, and with reference to the evidence of the Under-Secretary of State for Health (Dr. Ladyman), to the Health Committee on 22 January, on what basis it was concluded that publishing hospital emergency re-admission statistics for over 75-year-olds by his Department was ageist. [160893]

**Dr. Ladyman:** A target and performance monitoring process for emergency readmissions of those aged over 75 could lead to a perverse incentive—the target to

reduce emergency readmissions could lead to older people being denied hospital treatment when it is appropriate for them.

### Healthcare Associated Infections (Deaths)

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how the national audit of deaths caused by healthcare associated infections announced by the Chief Medical Officer will operate in practice; [158516]

(2) if he will list the NHS organisations which did not have either a director of infection control or a head of their infection control team in place before the announcement by the Chief Medical Officer in December 2003 that all NHS trusts will in future have a director of infection control; [158539]

(3) how his Department will monitor the standards of infection control outlined by the Chief Medical Officer in December 2003; [158541]

(4) with reference to the Chief Medical Officer's infection control report in December 2003, what timetable is in place to reach appropriate provision of isolation facilities; and what definition he uses of overtime. [158543]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** It is too early to comment on the national audit of deaths as we have only recently commissioned the Health Protection Agency to develop a proposal for this audit.

No National Health Service organisation had a director of infection prevention and control (DIPC) in place last year as this new responsibility and its associated duties were only announced in December. Information on the heads of infection control teams is not collected centrally but the DIPC's remit extends beyond the infection control team.

Strategic health authorities will monitor performance against the objectives of Winning Ways. In addition, the Commission for Health Improvement has announced the new performance indicators for 2003–04 and one of them is Winning Ways—processes and procedures. This will monitor the actions identified in Winning Ways that trusts must undertake in order to reduce healthcare associated infection.

As the creation of new isolation facilities is generally linked to local plans for rebuilding and refurbishment it is not feasible to set a national timetable. Over-time is not specifically defined but provides flexibility for chief executives to implement realistic, timed work programmes for isolation facilities.

### Heart Disease

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his Answer of 15 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 768W, on heart disease, what data his Department has collated in respect of meeting the milestones for *(a)* primary care management of heart failure and *(b)* hospitals admitting patients for the management of heart failure. [158789]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** There has been good progress in reducing admissions for heart failure. This is set out in the table.

Data on the primary care milestones is not collected centrally. The responsibility for both the delivery and monitoring of these milestones has been devolved to local health services.

*Count of In year Finished Admissions for primary diagnosis Heart Failure in NHS hospitals in England 2000–01 to 2002–03*

| *Year* | *Total admissions* |
|---|---|
| 2000–01 | 72,389 |
| 2001–02 | 68,502 |
| 2002–03 | 67,765 |

*Notes:*

1. Grossing—figures have not (yet) been adjusted for shortfalls in data (i.e. the data are ungrossed).
2. A finished in-year admission is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider, excluding admissions beginning before 1 April at the start of the data year. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.

Source:
Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Department of Health.

### Hospital Staff (North-East)

**Mr. Cummings:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* doctors, *(b)* nurses and *(c)* nursing staff who work in the (i) Sunderland Royal Hospital, (ii) Durham University Hospital and (iii) Hartlepool University Hospital come from (A) the Commonwealth, (B) European accession states and (C) South East Asia; and if he will make a statement. [159318]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** This information is not collected centrally. The country of origin for staff is not gathered centrally. However, information is available for medical and dental staff based on country of qualification and is shown in the table.

*Trust Hospital, Public Health Medicine and Community Health Services (HCHS): medical and dental staff by Country of qualification within specified trusts*

*England at 30 September 2002* *Numbers (headcount)*

| | *RLN Sunderland City Hospitals NHS Trust* | *RR9 North Durham Health Care NHS Trust* | *RVW North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust* |
|---|---|---|---|
| All Countries of *Qualification of which* | 380 | 233 | 317 |
| United Kingdom | 230 | 169 | 156 |
| Rest of European Economic Area | 21 | 8 | 18 |
| Elsewhere | 111 | 56 | 142 |
| Unknown | 18 | 0 | 1 |

*Source:*
Department of Health medical and dental workforce census.

### Hospital-acquired Infection/Control

**Dr. Murrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the incidence of MRSA infections was in *(a)* NHS hospitals, *(b)* non-NHS hospitals and *(c)* nursing and residential homes was in each year for which records are available. [159674]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Information on where methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) infections are acquired is not available.

The national mandatory surveillance system for MRSA blood stream infections (bacteraemias), started in April 2001. All acute hospital national health service trusts in England now collect this information and results for the first two years are shown in the table.

*Mandatory surveillance—reported MRSA bacteraemias*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 2001–02 | 7,226 |
| 2002–03 | 7,330 |

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS trusts have not signed the controls assurance standards on infection control to indicate that they have done their reasonable best to comply with the standards. [159776]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** For reporting year 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003, all national health service trusts assessed themselves against the controls assurance standard on infection control and reported their assurance scores based on this assessment to the Department.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what monitoring his Department undertakes of NHS trusts' compliance with the controls assurance standards on infection control; and if he will make a statement. [159777]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** Under Shifting the Balance of Power, strategic health authorities assumed responsibility for monitoring national health service trusts' compliance with the controls assurance standard on infection control.

## Mercury Healthcare

**Mr. Wilshire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 2 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 861W, on Mercury Healthcare, on what date negotiations were entered into regarding the provision of an independent sector treatment centre with Capio UK. [160355]

**Mr. Hutton:** Capio UK qualified as a short-listed bidder for the independent sector treatment centre spine chain in June 2003 and awarded reserve bidder status for the chain in September 2003. The announcement of their appointment as preferred bidder was made on Tuesday 17 February 2004.

## MRSA

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many MRSA reports have been *(a)* voluntarily and *(b)* mandatorily received in (i) England and (ii) each NHS region since 1996 (A) in total and (B) as a proportion of the population. [157595]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The tables show the number of reported bacteraemia (blood stream) infections and rates per 100,000 head of the population for each region. Although data for the voluntary reporting system are available from 1996 they are known to be incomplete. Mandatory reporting was introduced in April 2001 and data for the first two years are provided.

*Number of methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus bacteraemia laboratory reports and rate per 100,000 population—voluntary laboratory surveillance: 1996–2002*

| | *1996* | | *1997* | | *1998* | | *1999* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Region* | *No. MRSA* | *Rate* | *No. MRSA* | *Rate* | *No. MRSA* | *Rate* | *No. MRSA* | *Rate* |
| North East | 10 | 0.39 | 46 | 1.78 | 138 | 5.35 | 143 | 5.55 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 50 | 0.73 | 130 | 1.89 | 197 | 2.86 | 181 | 2.63 |
| East Midlands | 40 | 0.79 | 130 | 2.57 | 143 | 2.83 | 215 | 4.25 |
| Eastern | 159 | 3.78 | 271 | 6.44 | 364 | 8.65 | 442 | 10.50 |
| London | 327 | 6.13 | 447 | 8.38 | 422 | 7.91 | 458 | 8.58 |
| South East | 228 | 4.18 | 321 | 5.88 | 375 | 6.87 | 404 | 7.40 |
| South West | 87 | 1.18 | 191 | 2.59 | 191 | 2.59 | 305 | 4.14 |
| West Midlands | 267 | 3.29 | 336 | 4.14 | 396 | 4.88 | 498 | 6.14 |
| North West | 105 | 2.11 | 173 | 3.48 | 295 | 5.93 | 367 | 7.38 |
| England | 1,273 | 2.55 | 2,045 | 4.09 | 2,521 | 5.04 | 3,013 | 6.03 |

| | *2000* | | *2001* | | *2002* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Region* | *No. MRSA* | *Rate* | *No. MRSA* | *Rate* | *No. MRSA* | *Rate* |
| North East | 185 | 7.18 | 179 | 6.95 | 236 | 9.390 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 314 | 4.55 | 378 | 5.48 | 496 | 9.955 |
| East Midlands | 331 | 6.54 | 404 | 7.99 | 441 | 10.461 |
| Eastern | 477 | 11.34 | 604 | 14.35 | 620 | 11.438 |
| London | 549 | 10.29 | 525 | 9.84 | 691 | 9.395 |
| South East | 564 | 10.33 | 724 | 13.26 | 745 | 9.269 |
| South West | 373 | 5.06 | 479 | 6.49 | 541 | 10.908 |
| West Midlands | 771 | 9.50 | 817 | 10.07 | 768 | 14.479 |
| North West | 365 | 7.34 | 453 | 9.11 | 477 | 7.068 |
| England | 3,929 | 7.86 | 4,563 | 9.13 | 5,015 | 10.12383 |

*Number of methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) laboratory reports—and rate per 100,000 population—mandatory surveillance*

| Region | 2001-02 | | 2002-03 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number MRSA | Rate | Number MRSA | Rate |
| North East | 363 | 14.42 | 380 | 15.12 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 714 | 14.37 | 671 | 13.47 |
| East Midlands | 543 | 13.01 | 494 | 11.72 |
| Eastern | 744 | 13.79 | 710. | 13.10 |
| London | 1,571 | 21.86 | 1,655 | 22.50 |
| South East[1] | 967 | 12.08 | 936 | 11.65 |
| South West | 696 | 14.11 | 738 | 14.88 |
| West Midlands | 761 | 14.45 | 812 | 15.31 |
| North West | 867 | 12.88 | 934 | 13.84 |
| England | 7,226 | 14.69 | 7,330 | 14.80 |

[1] Analysis based on 24/25 trusts in this region, due to late submission of data from one trust

## NCAA

**Dr. Murrison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average cost per case handled has been of the National Clinical Assessment Authority. [158758]

**Mr. Hutton:** The National Clinical Assessment Authority (NCAA) was established to help the National Health Service manage performance concerns about doctors and dentists. For the majority of the NCAA's casework (about 75 per cent.), the average direct cost is estimated at around £330 per case. A smaller proportion of cases (about 15 per cent.) require more detailed expert support of local case management, at an estimated average cost of between £7,500 to £8,500 per case. The estimated average cost of full clinical performance assessment is between £22,400 and £24,300 per case, depending on whether it is an hospital and community care or primary care case; full clinical performance assessment occurs in about only 10 per cent. of referrals made to the NCAA.

## NHS Dentistry

**Mrs. Humble:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average distance people living in the Blackpool, North and Fleetwood constituency need to travel to access an NHS dentist. [157912]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The average direct distance from postcodes in Blackpool, North and Fleetwood to the nearest dentist is 0.46 miles.

**Mr. Denis Murphy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dental practices provide NHS treatment in *(a)* Northumberland and *(b)* Wansbeck constituency; and where they are. [159583]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** 51 dental practices were providing national health service treatment in Northumberland Care Trust, which includes the Wansbeck constituency, as reported at 31 August 2003 by the Dental Practice Board. This covers general dental service (GDS), emergency dental service and the salaried service of the GDS.

The number of dental practices by constituency is not available.

The addresses of dental practices can be found by accessing the www.nhs.uk website.

## Obesity

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what plans his Department has to increase the number of surgical procedures to treat obesity on the NHS; and if he will make a statement; [159770]

(2) how many surgical procedures to treat obesity were carried out on the NHS in each year since 1996. [159771]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) published guidance in July 2002 on surgery to aid weight reduction for people with morbid obesity.

The Department worked with the British Obesity Surgery Society (BOSS) on a planned implementation of the NICE guidance to ensure it was implemented safely. This additional advice was issued to strategic health authorities in September 2003.

The table shows the number of finished consultant episodes for operations undertaken with a primary diagnosis of obesity.

| | Number |
|---|---|
| 1995–96 | 299 |
| 1996–97 | 272 |
| 1997–98 | 280 |
| 1998–99 | 389 |
| 1999–2000 | 388 |
| 2000–01 | 492 |
| 2001–02 | 440 |
| 2002–03 | 538 |

*Note:*
1. A finished consultant episode (FCE) is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one health care provider. The figures do not represent the number of patients. as a person may have more than one episode of are within the year.
2. The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (7 prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.
3. Ungrossed data—figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data (i.e. the data are ungrossed).
*Source:*
Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Department of Health.

## Procurement Policy

**Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health in what ways environmentally sustainable procurement strategies within the Department have driven innovation in the design and supply of products. [159104]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The Department and the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency (NHS PASA) work with suppliers to encourage research and innovation, and to take account of environmental sustainability when setting procurement strategies for the National Health Service. Initiatives so far include: encouraging suppliers of copiers and printers to continually improve their environmental performance; implementing a prostheses and prosthetic component re-use scheme; encouraging the development of new clinical waste sacks; and promoting eco-labelling to the NHS. The Department also uses "green" electricity for its buildings.

The Department and the NHS PASA fully support and contribute to the interdepartmental sustainable procurement group's activity.

### Respiratory Disease

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 13 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 720W, on respiratory disease, how the estimated cost of treating respiratory disease as a percentage of expenditure was calculated; and what the latest corresponding cash equivalent figures are. [159480]

**Dr. Ladyman:** In 1996 the NHS Executive published "Burdens of Disease: A Discussion Document" which is the source of the 13 January answer on estimated cost. This document draws together data from various sources primarily between 1989–94.

The method of calculation is quite detailed and a copy of the Burdens publication will be placed in the Library to explain the derivation of the estimates.

The latest corresponding cash equivalent figures are not available as the estimates of the percentage breakdown are now 10-years-old and would not necessarily reflect the breakdown of current expenditure.

### Salt Reduction Plans

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many salt reduction plans his Department *(a)* expected to receive and *(b)* received by 27 February; how he intends to follow up those who failed to submit a plan; and what plans he has to publish an assessment of the plans he has received. [158283]

**Miss Melanie Johnson** *[holding answer 5 March 2004]:* Stakeholders were asked to collaborate and develop partnerships to expedite the production of salt reduction plans. Plans were received from 12 manufacturing and retailing trade associations on behalf of their members, as well as 15 from individual stakeholders, who include the voluntary sector and retailers, by the deadline of 27 February. Also there were a further two plans from retail trade associations and nine from individual stakeholders received after the deadline of 27 February. An assessment is being undertaken and a summary report will be published, together with information on all respondents.

### Sexual Health

**Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the number of people who have contracted *(a)* a sexually transmitted disease, *(b)* HIV/AIDS and *(c)* Hepatitis in each London borough since 1995. [159198]

**Mr. Hutton:** Information on the numbers of diagnoses of sexually transmitted diseases made in each London primary care trust (PCT) between 1995 and 2002 have been placed in the Library. These data are not collected by London borough. The number of diagnoses made within each PCT does not reflect people who are resident within that PCT.

Information on the number of individuals with diagnosed HIV infection resident in each London local authority between 2000 and 2002 has also been placed in the Library. Data earlier than 2000 are not available.

Information on the numbers of cases of hepatitis B and C reported from London between 1995 and 2003, together with an estimate of the number sexually acquired, has also been placed in the Library. This information is not routinely collected by London borough or PCT.

### Smoking

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the Answer of 7 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 398W, on smoking, what the data is for quarters *(a)* two and *(b)* three. [159123]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The table shows the provisional results for the number of people setting a quit date through the National Health Service Stop Smoking Services, and the number who successfully quit at four week follow up.

*People setting a quit date and outcome at four weeks (based on self-report) in England: quarters 1 and 2 (April to September 2003)*

| | *Number setting a quit date* | *Number successful (self-report)* |
|---|---|---|
| April-September 2003 | 129,752 | 68,644 |

*Source:*
Department of Health Smoking Cessation Monitoring Returns.

The next NHS Stop Smoking Services Quarterly Report with data on Quarter 3 is planned for publication in May 2004.

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 5 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 1071W on smoking, what work is being undertaken by other departments to implement smoke-free policies; and which minister co-ordinates these works. [159973]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The Department of Health has taken the lead from April 2003 in making our buildings smoke-free and we continue to encourage employers and managers of public places to introduce smoke-free policies. We have not undertaken a formal review of smoking policies in all Government buildings but continue to liase and work with other Government Departments at official level. Individual Departments have provided details of their own smoking policies in previous responses to hon. and right hon. Members.

### Sperm Donors

**Mr. Nigel Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have been accepted as sperm donors in each of the last 10 years; what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the removal of the right to anonymity on the numbers of people coming forward as sperm donors; and what plans his Department has to assess the impact of a change in the number of sperm donors on childless couples. [152925]

**Miss Melanie Johnson:** The information requested on the number of sperm donors recruited in each of the last 10 years is shown in the table.

*Sperm donors recruited in the UK each year: 1 April 1994 to 31 March 2003*[1]

| | *Sperm donors recruited*[1] |
|---|---|
| 1 April 1994 to 31 March 1995 | 437 |
| 1 April 1995 to 31 March 1996 | 403 |
| 1 April 1996 to 31 March 1997 | 424 |
| 1 April 1997 to 31 March 1998 | 316 |
| 1 April 1998 to 31 March 1999 | 271 |
| 1 April 1999 to 31 March 2000 | 316 |
| 1 April 2000 to 31 March 2001 | 248 |
| 1 April 2001 to 31 March 2002[2] | 272 |
| 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003[2] | 222 |

[1] Figures represent the number of new donors recorded on the HFEA's register in each of the years.

[2] Provisional figures only.

*Source:*

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA)

The Government believe that the need of young people to know about their genetic origins is of the highest importance. For that reason we announced our intention to introduce regulations to remove anonymity for all people donating gametes from 1 April 2005.

We recognise that there is a demand for infertility treatment using donated gametes, although this demand has decreased over recent years through the development of intra cytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI).

As I said in my speech to the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority's annual conference on 21 January 2004, the decision about donor anonymity will most probably lead to an initial drop in donor numbers. Indications from other countries that have removed donor anonymity are that the initial drop is followed by a climb in donor numbers. To help increase public awareness we will support a public campaign and fund a national helpline for people who are interested in donating. The helpline will give information about donation and provide callers with a list of clinics so that they can decide which clinic is most convenient for them. Although the support we will provide will not do the actual recruitment for clinics, our intention is that it will raise awareness, create interest and provide essential information among those who may be eligible to donate.

### Strategic Health Authorities

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the key indicators are against which strategic health authorities will be monitored; and if he will make a statement on the consequences for these organisations of failing to meet these key indicators. [159778]

**Mr. Hutton:** Strategic health authorities (SHAs) are the local headquarters of the national health service and they are responsible for local delivery of the national Planning and Priorities Framework 2003–06. The Planning and Priorities Framework sets out the objectives and targets for the NHS.

Each SHA has produced a local delivery plan, which sets out the local health communities' planned progress towards delivery of the national objectives and targets. The Department assesses SHAs' performance against the local delivery plan.

### Therapist Consultants

**Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what targets have been set since 1997 for the recruitment of therapist consultants; when they were revised; and what progress has been made in meeting those targets. [158518]

**Mr. Hutton:** The NHS Plan, published in July 2000, said that by 2004 a first generation of therapist consultant will have started work. A reference to this commitment was made in 'Meeting the Challenge', published in November 2000, which also said that by 2004 the first therapist consultants would have started work. 'HR in the NHS Plan', published in July 2002, referred to an expectation that 250 new allied health professions consultants would be appointed by 2004. The latest non-medical workforce census will be published shortly.

### Treatment Centres

**Mr. Jenkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to extend the new treatment centres programme throughout England. [160077]

**Mr. Hutton:** The treatment centre programme will deliver around 80 treatment centres by the end of 2005, treating at least an additional 250,000 patients a year in total. The majority of these centres will be run by the national health service. Others will be operated by independent sector providers.

We are planning a national procurement starting later this year to provide diagnostic and surgical services through the independent sector. This will build on the current independent sector treatment centre procurement which was launched in December 2002. Two schemes—one at Daventry and the mobile cataract surgery service—are already open and treating patients.

### Variant CJD (Rachel Forber)

**Helen Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make an ex-gratia payment to the family of the late Rachel Forber to cover the cost incurred by her family in taking her to receive experimental treatment for variant CJD in the United States; and if he will make a statement. [157406]

**Miss Melanie Johnson** *[holding answer 3 March 2004]:* To disclose information without the specific consent of the family concerned would breach patient confidentiality.

### Websites

**Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost in *(a)* financial and *(b)* other terms was in (i) each financial year since 1997 and (ii) 2003–04 until the latest date for which figures are available of (A) developing and (B) maintaining (1) his Department's website and (2) each website for which his Department is responsible; and how many (C) unique hosts and (D) hits there were in each month for each website in (iii) each financial year since 1997 and (iv) 2003–04 until the latest date for which numbers are available. [155853]

**Mr. Hutton:** Information on the Department of Health's web site and those for which the Department is responsible, has been provided where figures are readily available. More historic data can only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Unless specified, costs exclude staff overheads as it is not possible to provide these without incurring disproportionate cost.

Usage figures are quoted in the currency in which they are collected and include page impression, visits, hits and unique visitors. Where multiple currencies are collected, visits have been used.

*Department of Health's Website(s) doh.gov.uk and dh.gov.uk*

The Department of Health's website (www.doh.gov.uk) was established in June 1995.

The cost of the Department's website is shown in the table.

| *Financial Year* | *Total cost £000s* |
|---|---|
| 1998–99 | 219.8 |
| 1999–2000 | 313.7 |
| 2000–01 | 457.1 |
| 2001–02 | 658.9 |
| 2002–03 | 722.6 |
| 2003–04 | [1]663.0 |

[1] estimated costs to end of March 04—excludes development as this is covered in the DotP project costs

These figures include hosting and maintenance, development and dedicated staff costs (using agreed Civil Service Staff costs including salaries, common services etc.) Costs for earlier years are not available separately from the Department's total information technology costs.

The Department launched a new website on 16 February 2004. It is available at www.dh.gov.uk. The old website was migrated onto DotP the central government content management platform. DotP has been developed in partnership with, and hosted by, the Office of the e-Envoy. The full cost of this major project is given below, and include costs associated with the project which would not be incurred annually.

| *Financial Year* | *Total cost £000* |
|---|---|
| 2002–03 | 1,121.4 |
| 2003–04 | 2,136.8 |

The Office of Government Commerce provided hosting until the end of June 2002. While its website was hosted at OGC, the Department used page impressions rather than hits as a measure of usage. The figures are available in calendar years only.

| *Calendar Year* | *Page Impressions* |
|---|---|
| 1996 | [1]200,000 |
| 1997 | [1]520,000 |
| 1998 | 4,533,775 |
| 1999 | 16,485,398 |
| 2000 | 37,504,218 |
| 2001 | 48,337,144 |

[1] These figures include both static HTML content and web accessed database content. Website usage for 1996 and 1997 is estimated (based on average weekly figures).

Between June 2002 and February 2004, EDS Ltd was the hosting provider for the Department's website. EDS provided monthly service report that included a web performance return in which traffic to the Department's website was measured in visits.

| *Month* | *Visits 2002–03* | *Visits 2003–04* |
|---|---|---|
| April | | 1,151,556 |
| May | | 1,194,097 |
| June | | 1,016,406 |
| July | 782,398 | [1]861,325 |
| August | 700,015 | [1]791,160 |
| September | 709,406 | 1,191,141 |
| October | 872,988 | 1,401,520 |
| November | 968,069 | 1,441,587 |
| December | 682,138 | [1]902,998 |
| January | 1,061,220 | 1,069,467 |
| February | 1,018,692 | |
| March | 1,171,181 | |

[1] Some data is missing for these months due to a technical fault within the reporting tool.

It should be noted that these figures do not include hits or visits to any of the 60 plus web accessible databases/ which form part of the Departments' site. Hits for these databases are currently averaging 3.62 million per month.

Information on other websites for which the Department is responsible has been replaced in the Library.

### Wind Turbines (Noise Emissions)

**Mr. Walter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research has been carried out into the health effects of low frequency noise emitted from wind turbines. [159878]

**Miss Melanie Johnson** *[holding answer 9 March 2004]:* The Department of Health has funded work on the effects of environmental noise on health but this has not included noise produced by wind farms.

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# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

## OFFICIAL REPORT

**SIXTH SERIES** **VOLUME 418**

## SESSION 2003–2004

*23 February 2004—12 March 2004*

**Printed indexes to Hansard**

The volume index is one of three printed indexes to Commons Hansard produced from the House of Commons Library's Parliamentary On-Line Indexing Service (POLIS). It contains references to material in the bound volume of Hansard. The other indexes produced are:

- The index to the daily parts of Hansard. This covers the same date range as the volume index but references may be different as a result of changes to the text and column numbering.
- The sessional index to Hansard. This contains references to material in the bound volumes for a whole session.

**Indexes on the Parliamentary website**

Daily part and volume indexes covering material from the beginning of the 1999/2000 session will also appear on the Parliamentary website at http://www.parliament.uk with links to the full text of Hansard.

*SCOPE*

The indexes include entries covering:

- The content of all material recorded in Hansard, including debates, procedural motions and questions.
- The names of all Members contributing to the Parliamentary business recorded in Hansard.
- The names of some types of Parliamentary business whenever they occur in Hansard. These are 'Ministerial statements', 'Business statements', 'Opposition days' and 'Estimates days'.

*ARRANGEMENT*

- All headings are in one word-by-word alphabetical sequence, with Members' contribution entries distinguished from other entries by italics.
- Where a Member contributes to Parliamentary business and is the subject of Parliamentary business there are separate contribution and subject entries, the subject entry coming first.
- Entries beginning 'Mac' and 'Mc' are sorted in one sequence as 'Mac'.
- 'St', when abbreviated for Saint, is filed as 'Saint'.
- Numbers are filed as if spelt out, e.g. '10 Downing Street' as if 'Ten Downing Street'.

## *HEADINGS*

### *Choice of headings*

- *Specificity*—Entries summarise the overall content of a debate or question as specifically as the various POLIS thesauruses allow. For example, Education, Higher education, Universities or the name of a particular university is used depending on the breadth of the item.
- *Name headings*—Specific entries are included for the names of people, places, institutions, organisations, committees, programmes, initiatives, publications and legislation when these constitute the overall subject of an item.
- *Organisations and subjects*—Organisation entries are preferred for material about the general performance, administration and staffing of an organisation (for example, United Kingdom Passports Agency, Standards). Subject entries are preferred for what organisations do as part of their duties (for example, Passports, Fees and charges).

### *Geographical coverage*

- *Subject headings*—Subject headings are assumed to refer to the whole of England, Great Britain or the United Kingdom unless otherwise stated.
- *Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales*—Material relating to the whole of Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales is indexed under these headings.
- *Places within the UK*—Material about specific towns, areas and institutions is entered under the name of the specific town, area or institution.
- *Foreign countries*—Most material relating to foreign countries is collected under the name of that country. Some additional material may be found under the names of—groups of countries, areas within countries, geographical features, place names associated with particular issues, politicians and heads of state, international bodies, and institutions and companies operating in those countries.
- *EC/EU material*—General material about the European Communities and European institutions as bodies is entered under 'European Communities' and 'EC institutions'. Organisational material about specific communities and institutions is entered under the name of the body, for example 'European Coal and Steel Community' or 'European Parliament'. Material about what the Communities and institutions are doing or propose to do is entered under various subject headings beginning 'EC' such as 'EC environmental policy'.

### *Parliamentary material and business*

- *Material about Parliament*—This is indexed under 'Parliament', the names of the two Houses, the 'Palace of Westminster' and parts of the Parliamentary estate (such as 'Portcullis House').
- *Committees*—Material about committees is indexed under 'Committees', types of committee (such as 'Select committees') and the names of individual committees (such as 'Home Affairs Select Committee').
- *Parliamentary proceedings/procedures*—Material discussing these is indexed under the specific type of proceeding (such as 'Parliamentary questions' or 'Oral questions'), procedure (such as 'Calling of Members') or issue (such as 'Unparliamentary expressions').
- *Legislation*—Entries for Parliamentary proceedings on bills and statutory instruments are entered under their titles. Where the lead word of the bill or statutory instrument does not provide a full or clear indication of the subject there are additional subject entries when the bill or instrument is debated. For example, debates on the 'Child Support Pensions and Social Security Bill' have entries under 'Pensions' and 'Social security benefits' as well as under the title of the Bill.
- *Members' names*—These are given in the form by which the Member prefers to be known.
- *Speaker and Chair*—Contributions by the Speaker and deputies are brought together under the heading 'Speaker and deputies'. Contributions from the chair during Committees of the Whole House are brought together under 'Chairman of Committee of the Whole House'. Significant rulings and statements (as opposed to routine comments) are indicated by the sub-heading 'Rulings and statements' in both cases.

### *Guidance on headings*

- *Cross references*—'See' references indicate all the material has been entered under another heading. 'See also' references indicate that additional information may be found under another heading.
- *Concept thesaurus*—A copy of the subject thesaurus to POLIS, listing the concept entries used in the index, is available on the Parliamentary website. A hard copy is available from the Head of the POLIS Unit, House of Commons Library, 1 Derby Gate, London, SW1A 2DG (020 7219 6456).

***REFERENCES***

- References in the indexes are to columns rather than pages.
- References to debates, but not questions, are accompanied by the date of the item.
- There are separate sequences in Hansard for the material taken on the floor of the House, Westminster Hall sittings, written statements and written questions:
  - References consisting of a number by itself indicate material taken on the floor of the House.
  - References ending in 'wh' indicate Westminster Hall sittings.
  - References ending in 'ws' indicate written statements.
  - References ending in 'w' indicate written questions.
- References under all headings except the names of Members contributing to Parliamentary business and the titles of legislation are listed in one numerical sequence irrespective of whether the material is taken on the floor of the House, is discussed at a Westminster Hall sitting, is a written statement or is a written question.
- References under the names of Members contributing to Parliamentary business and the titles of legislation are listed in numerical sequence under the following headings:
  - *Chamber Debates* (which includes interventions and points of order as well as significant contributions to debates);
  - *Westminster Hall Debates* (covering all debates held as part of the Westminster Hall sittings);
  - *Written Statements* (consisting of ministerial statements issued in writing); and
  - *Questions* (which includes all written, oral and urgent questions).

***ABBREVIATIONS***

The following abbreviations are used in connection with the progress of bills:

- 1R = First reading
- 2R = Second reading
- Com = Committee stage
- Rep = Report stage
- 3R = Third reading
- res = resolution
- amendt(s) = amendment(s)
- * = matter taken formally without debate or division
- (HL) = Bill starting in House of Lords
- (SP) = Bill in Scottish Parliament.

**Parliamentary background**

- The Parliamentary website at http://www.parliament.uk contains a range of information about Parliament and the full text of some Parliamentary papers and proceedings including Hansard.
- Information on current Parliamentary business is provided in the House of Commons Information Office *Weekly Information Bulletin*, available on the website and from The Stationery Office (020 7873 8499).
- Further information on Parliamentary proceedings and procedures is available from the House of Commons Information Office (020 7219 4272).

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